Central NSW Joint Organisation
PO Box 333 Forbes NSW 2871
Chair – Cr Kevin Beatty- Cabonne Council
Executive Officer – Jennifer Bennett
Email: jennifer.bennett@centraljo.nsw.gov.au
Ph: 0428 690 935

Agenda to the

Board Meeting
Thursday
23 February 2023

Voting Delegates

Cr R Taylor	Bathurst Regional Council	**Cr J Medcalf, OAM**	Lachlan Shire Council
Cr S Ferguson	Blayney Shire Council	**Cr M Kellam**	Oberon Council
Cr K Beatty	Cabonne Council	**Cr J Hamling**	Orange City Council
Cr B West	Cowra Shire Council	**Cr K Keith, OAM**	Parkes Shire Council
Cr P Miller, OAM	Forbes Shire Council	**Cr C Bembrick**	Weddin Shire Council

Associate member delegates and others attending

Mr D Sherley	Bathurst Regional Council	**Cr A McKibbin**	UMCC
Mr M Dicker	Blayney Shire Council	**Mr T Johnston**	UMCC
Mr B Byrnes	Cabonne Council	**Ms R Fagan**	RDACW
Mr P Devery	Cowra Shire Council	**Mr W Sunderland**	RDACW
Mr S Loane, OAM	Forbes Shire Council	**Ms O West**	Regional NSW
Mr G Tory	Lachlan Shire Council	**Ms J Bennett**	CNSWJO
Mr G Wallace	Oberon Council	**Ms M Macpherson**	CNSWJO
Mr D Waddell	Orange City Council	**Ms K Barker**	CNSWJO
Mr K Boyd, PSM	Parkes Shire Council	**Ms J Webber**	CNSWJO
Ms N Vu	Weddin Shire Council	**Ms V Page**	CNSWJO
Cr D Somervaille	CTW	**Ms A Thomas**	CNSWJO
Mr G Rhodes	CTW		
Cr M Statham	Lithgow City Council		
Mr C Butler	Lithgow City Council		

It is advised that the next meeting of the Central NSW Joint Organisation Board will be held Thursday 23 February 2023, to be held at Club Forbes, 41-43 Templar Street, Forbes beginning at 10.00am.

Please contact Jenny Bennett on 0428 690 935 with any queries.

Agenda

Agenda

1. **Welcome**
2. **Acknowledgment to Country:**
   "I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, the Wiradjuri people, and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging."
3. **Apologies applications for a leave of absence by voting members**
4. **Conflicts of Interest**
5. **Speakers**

10.00am - Mr Richard Colbeck CEO NSWRDN - Health Advisory Committee process and report.
12.00pm - Mr Sean Haylan Director, Destination Central West NSW - Overview of new Network

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11. **Late Reports**
12. **Matters raised by Members.**
13. **Speakers to the next meeting**
14. **Next Meetings:**

GMAC: 27 April - Cowra
Board: 24/25 May – Canberra (TBC Federal Parliament)

Jennifer Bennett

Jenny Bennett
Executive Officer
Central NSW Joint Organisation

Agenda

6. Minutes

a. Confirmation of the CNSWJO Board Meeting 24 November 2022 held online

Minutes of the CNSWJO Board Meeting 24 November 2022 held online via zoom

In Attendance*

Cr R Taylor	Bathurst Regional Council	**Cr P Phillips**	Lachlan Shire Council
Cr S Ferguson	Blayney Shire Council	**Cr M Kellam**	Oberon Council
Cr B West	Cowra Shire Council	**Cr J Hamling**	Orange City Council
Cr P Miller OAM	Forbes Shire Council	**Cr K Keith OAM**	Parkes Shire Council
Cr C Roylance	Forbes Shire Council	**Cr C Bembrick**	Weddin Shire Council

Mr D Sherley	Bathurst Regional Council	Mr B Reynolds	UMCC
Mr M Dicker	Blayney Shire Council	Ms R Fagan	RDACW
Mr S Loane OAM	Forbes Shire Council	Ms L Smart	RDACW
Mr G Tory	Lachlan Shire Council	Ms O West	Regional NSW
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 A Thomas	CNSWJO
Ms N Vu	Weddin Shire Council	Ms K Barker	CNSWJO
Cr D Somervaille	CTW	Ms C Griffin	CNSWJO
Mr G Rhodes	CTW	Ms G Quinton	CNSWJO
		Ms V Page	CNSWJO

*Voting members in bold

Meeting opened at 10.02am by Deputy Chair Cr Mark Kellam

1. Welcome from the Chair

2. Acknowledgement of Country

"I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, the Wiradjuri people, and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging."

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

Cr K Beatty, Cr J Medcalf, Brad Byrnes, Paul Devery and Andrew McKibbon

Resolved	**Cr S Ferguson/Cr J Hamling**
That the apologies for the Central NSW Joint Organisation Board meeting 24 November 2022 listed above be accepted.	

4. Conflicts of Interest - Nil declared

5. Speakers Essential Energy – Mr Geoff Burgess and Mr David Wilson, Mr Brendan McEntee, Mr Andrew Wykes, Mr Andrew McIntyre and Mr Hamish Wheatley
Ms J Bennett to provide feedback to Mr G Burgess on the Race to 2030 project.

6. Motion to move forward item 10

Resolved	**Cr C Bembrick/Cr B West**
The Item 10. Matters raised by Members – Lachlan has raised the need for advocacy regarding this flooding event be moved forward.	

7. Item 10. Members – Lachlan has raised the need for advocacy regarding this flooding event

Resolved	**Cr Paul Phillips/Cr K Keith**
That the Central NSW Joint endorse the following key messages in the briefing note on the recent flooding event and seek feedback from members on specific advocacy they are seeking support for: 1. There should be automatic, well-known processes switched on when natural disaster declarations are made. These should include; a. one source of truth; b. effective and known communication pathways, governance arrangements and messaging; c. a known support package including rates relief and business support tailored to the impacted engine industries of the community; and d. recognition that some natural disasters are much bigger than the local response through Council and the SES and there ought to be pre-planned responses to rapidly escalate. 2. There ought to be known escalation points to support the local effort including use of the military. 3. CNSWJO, through its Disaster Risk Reduction Program, prepare a tool that systematises mutual support between Councils for natural disasters. 4. CNSWJO ensure coordination of a debrief with affected Councils and key agency representatives to inform the above tool where this includes elected representatives. 5. There should be policy and financial recognition of the ongoing and unprecedented road impacts on the safety and economy of this region as a result of the continued La Nina event. This recognition should include; a. Supporting Country Mayors and LGNSW in their advocacy on their State-wide Roads Emergency declaration b. Extension of funding deadlines allowing Councils reprioritisation of resource from other infrastructure funding programs to the roads' effort; and c. An ongoing plan for roads recovery that recognises that this effort will take years.	

10.54am Mr G Tory and Cr P Phillips of Lachlan Shire Council left the meeting

10.57am Chair Cr Kevin Beatty joined the meeting and acknowledged the support from the region.

10.58am Cr Beatty left meeting.

Olivia West of Regional NSW gave an update on the Flood response and recovery.

- Cr Ken Keith - raised the issue of fast tracking approvals for gravel for roads
- Cr Chris Roylance - raised the issue of the need for promotion for business recovery in the Lachlan Valley
- Cr Ken Keith – suggested the need for a mental health focus given it has been major flood, drought, mouse plague, Covid and unprecedented flood in the past 5 years along the Lachlan
- Cr P Miller will share her lifeline contact
- Cr Bill West will share the free psychology service offered with Ms O West
- Cr D Somervaille **-** Advocacy water utilities disaster relief as well as General Purpose Councils where this is not currently the case. Cr D Somervaille to provide advice to Ms O West

8. Minutes

Confirmation of the Minutes of the CNSWJO Board Meeting 12 October 2022 held in Sydney at LGNSW Boardroom

Resolved	**Cr B West/ Cr K Keith**
That the Central NSW Joint Organisation Board confirm the Minutes of the CNSWJO Board Meeting 12 October 2022 held in Sydney at LGNSW Boardroom.	

9. Business Arising from the Minutes – Matters in Progress

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

10. Reports on Statement of Regional Strategic Priority

Priority One: Inter-Council Co-operation

a. Financial Report

Resolved	**Cr J Hamling/Cr K Keith**
That the Board note the Financial Report.	

b. Adoption of the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2022

Resolved	**Cr B West/ Cr S Ferguson**
That the Board adopt the CNSWJO Joint Organisation General Purpose Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2022.	

c. Lithgow City Council Joining the CNSWJO Report

Resolved	**Cr S Ferguson/Cr K Keith**
That the Board note the report on Lithgow City Council's request to join the CNSWJO and 1. Lithgow City Council be welcomed as a full member of the CNSWJO; 2. in the interim Lithgow City Council be offered an associate membership at 75% of full membership fees; 3. upon CNSWJO and Lithgow City Council finalising negotiations on membership, the Minister for Local Government be advised of the above seeking a proclamation to effect Lithgow City Council's full membership; and 4. given the timing in the electoral cycle, CNSWJO also seek support from the Shadow Minister for Local Government for progression of the proclamation.	

d. Remuneration for the Chair and or other Mayors in their capacity as Board members for the Central NSW JO

Resolved	**Cr S Ferguson/Cr C Bembrick**
That the report on the remuneration for the Chair and or other Mayors in their capacity as Board members for the Central NSW JO be noted and a. the Board commence the process to amend the CNSWJO Charter to include a fee for remuneration of the Chair of the CNSWJO; and b. the fee be $10,000pa be paid to the Chair of CNSWJO.	

e. Annual Compliance and CNSWJO Meeting dates for 2023

Resolved **Cr S Ferguson/ Cr B West**

That the Board note the Compliance report and;

1. note the Calendar of Compliance and Reporting-Requirements update;
2. endorse the 2022 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. note the report on code of conduct complaint statistics;
5. note the Pecuniary Interest Returns under s450a of the Local Government Act 1993;
6. determine the dates for GMAC and Board meetings for 2023 be:

Board	23 February	25 May	24 August	23 November
Location	Forbes	State Parliament	Federal Parliament	Lachlan
GMAC	2 February	27 April	27 July	26 October
Location	Orange	Cowra	Forbes	Orange

f. Policy and Procedure Annual Review

Resolved **Cr K Keith/Cr R Taylor**

That the Board note the CNSWJO Policy Procedure Annual Review report and adopt the updated Policy and Procedure Manual noting it includes:

1. the payment of expenses and provision of facilities to the chairperson to be adopted within 12 months of an election [LGA s252];
2. code of meeting practice to be adopted within 12 months of an election [LGA s360]; and
3. code of conduct to be adopted within 12 months of an election [LGA s440(7)].

g. The CNSWJO Organisational Structure report

Resolved **Cr J Hamling /Cr K Keith**

That the Board note the CNSWJO Organisational Structure report and

1. note that, in line with the Local Government Act, the Executive Officer is employed under a Senior Staff Contract;
2. note that there are no other senior staff positions in the organisational structure;
3. note that total costs of employing staff for the Joint Organisation identified in the budget for this year including vehicle, travel, accommodation and employment oncosts is $878,250; and
4. staff employee costs vary based on grant acquisition.

h. Adoption of the draft Review Statement of Strategic Regional Priority and Determination of Portfolio Mayors

Resolved **Cr B West/ Cr K Keith**

That the Board note the report on progress on developing the Statement of Strategic Regional Priority (SSRP) for this term of the JO; and

1. adopt the Statement of Strategic Regional Priority with the amendment adding a 5.3 the SSRP to adding disaster road funding as a priority with a report to come back to the next Board on operationalising;
2. adopt the CNSWJO Communication and Engagement Strategy;
3. adopt the Evaluation Plan for the SSRP process;
4. provide direction with regard to Portfolio Mayors for the 7 priorities for the region to the February Board meeting; and
5. note that an evaluation of the process will be undertaken and the auspices of the SSRP Subcommittee.

i. Regional Procurement and Contracts

Resolved	**Cr B West/Cr K Keith**
That the Board notes the Regional Procurement and Contracts report and 1. approve a 12-month extension of the regional road signs contract with Artcraft, Barrier Signs, Central Signs, DeNeefe, and His-Vis; 2. note that an Expression of Interest process will be conducted for a Learning Management System and other associated modules for interested Councils and that surrounding Councils will be invited to participate in the EOI; and 3. welcome Ms Grace Quinton to the CNSWJO team in the capacity of Project Officer for the procurement and contract management function.	

j. Terms of Reference for the Central NSW Joint Organisation/Charles Sturt University Local Government Policy Lab Working Group

Resolved	**Cr R Taylor/Cr S Ferguson**
That the Board note the Terms of Reference for the Central NSW Joint Organisation/Charles Sturt University Local Government Policy Lab Working Group Report and 1. adopt the Terms of Reference; and 2. nominate the following to represent the Joint Organisation: • Cr Jason Hamling, Mayor Orange, as Co-Chair • Mr David Sherley, General Manager Bathurst Regional Council • Ms J Bennett, Executive Officer CNSWJO; and 3. Provide advice on the pace at which this working group is to progress.	

k. Our PlaceMat Cover Report

Resolved	**Cr K Keith/ Cr B West**
That the Board notes the report on Our PlaceMat Cover Report and circulate it to members with Council PlaceMats	

l. Energy Program

Resolved	**Cr J Hamling/Cr S Ferguson**
That the Board notes the report on the Energy Program and 1. thank the members of the Southern Lights Group for the work they are doing to support Councils in responding to Essential Energy's consultation for the AER Determination for 2024-2029 and 2. advocate including to the Premier, Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Local Government and Opposition Leader Chris Minns, sending copies to the JO Chairs Forum, CMA and Regional Cities raising issues around level of service from Essential Energy.	

Priority Four: Regional Water Security

m. Water Update

Resolved	**Cr B West/Cr P Miller**
That the Board note the Regional Water report and: 1. endorse the CNSWJO Regional Water Loss Management Centres' Project Plan; 2. endorse the Water Utilities Alliance Strategic Plan 2022-2032; and 3. continue to advocate for the raising of the Wyangala Dam in the context of the remarkable efforts by Water NSW and proactive communication from BOM.	

n. Regional Asset Management

Resolved	**Cr P Miller/Cr J Hamling**
That the Board note the report proposing a Regional Asset Management Improvement Program and commend to members a Regional Asset Management Improvement Program coordinated by CNSWJO comprising: 1. joint procurement of asset management audits across the JO membership once every Council term (4 yearly) with procurement to be undertaken in early 2023 for audits to be completed by July 2023. 2. the development of Asset Management Improvement Plans for each Council informed by the Asset Management Audits; and 3. annual reports by Council's asset management staff to ARICs on progress towards achieving improvements detailed in their Asset Management Improvement Plans to formalise the integration of asset management **into** the ARIC process.	

11. Report to the Central NSW JO Strategic Plan and Statement of Regional Strategic Priority 2019/2021

Resolved	**Cr K Keith/ Cr P Miller**
That the Board note the report to the Central NSW JO Strategic Plan and Statement of Regional Strategic Priority and 1. endorse the following submissions: a. Review of the IPART methodology for rate peg increases; b. EPA Policy and Action on Climate Change; and 2. note that the 8 JOs making application under the Disaster Risk Reduction fund have been successful where a funding deed for $647,989 is being executed; and 3. approve an application be made under the hand of the Chair for the Joint Organisations Net Zero Acceleration (JONZA) of up to $155,000.	

12. Late reports – Nil

13. Speakers to the next meeting

Health Advisory Committee– Invite Richard Colbran to present on the progress

14. Next meetings:

Board – 30 November – Round table with Rose Jackson, Shadow Minister for Water in NSW

GMAC – 2 February 2023 Orange

Board – 23 February 2023 Forbes

Meeting closed 12.39pm

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7. 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	Advice on 21 March from Ken Harrison, Director, Central West Orana and Far West, Resilience NSW is that the Office of Drought Preparedness is still a function in the department of Regional NSW. The State Government's Future Ready Regions Strategy has been developed to guide drought management while its inter-agency coordination for drought has been discontinued. https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-nsw/future-ready- regions Advocacy continues for inter-agency coordination of water security planning and management with Local Government with a seat at the table. Most recently in meetings with various Government Ministers 12 May and 26 May 2022 in Sydney. Clarification is being sought from Ken Harrison regarding commentary on support structures in region to manage drought.
271119-P4-b-Regional Water Report. 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: 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;	MM	1. While a Regional Water Committee comprising member Councils formed in April 2020, strategic work on a.to d. has been driven and informed over the past 3 years by the State's strategic water programs including the development of the Lachlan and Macquarie Regional Water Strategies, Town Water Risk Reduction Program, review of the Water Sharing Plans and associated work. Sub-regional work by Cabonne/CTW and Orange is also seeking to address some of these. Where the JO and member Councils have been actively pursuing water security solutions and enabling policy and structures through these programs, it is suggested that with final consultations underway on the RWS and the TWRRP entering into stage 2 – implementation it may be timely for this strategic committee to re-visit these issues and plan next steps once the RWS have landed. 2. Every opportunity is being sought to engage early with the newly formed Water Infrastructure NSW who, as of 1 July, have carriage of the Wyangala and Belubula Water Security Projects. Correspondence was sent to the Premier on 25 Nov 22 seeking to bring forward the work on the Wyangala Business Case. Response from Minister Anderson received on 2 Feb 23 advises that the final business case for the Wyangala Wall Raising Project will be completed in the first half of 2023.

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 to Carcoar Dam projects with a view to being able to influence outcomes.		
271119-15a-Confidential Reports Regional Bridge Assessment Report Members give consideration to their participation in a collaborative approach and advise CNSWJO accordingly.	JB	Follow-up with members continues and at member request a grant for dynamic bridge testing was lodged in October 2022. S**uggest deletion**
270820-7j-Water 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.	MM	The Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities includes priority 6: work on Regional Water Security and Productive Water. See the Regional Water report for preliminary scoping work on productive water.
41220-9m-Western Link Work with TfNSW on aligned messages on road safety.	JB	Correspondence has been sent and follow-up through the newly formed Central NSW Regional Integrated Transport Group is anticipated once the Central West and Orana Regional Transport Plan, currently nearly four years in the making, is finalised.
110321- A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW – Refresh 1. work with RDACW and the Regional Prosperity Committee on ensuring opportunities in the Regional 20-Year Economic Vision are realised in Central NSW; 2. Seek feedback from members on the REDs to inform this discussion; and	JB	1. and 2. This matter was raised with the Regional Prosperity Subcommittee 14 May 2021. Feedback from EDOs was included. The RLE has just completed a review and this region now has its own RLE. It met for the first time 19 October 2022. It is commencing a strategic phase. At this stage a Regional Prosperity Subcommittee is not anticipated however biannual events with regional development themes are part of the new approach by RLEs.

Matters in Progress

3. seek advice from Inland Rail, Wyangala Dam, the Newell Highway taskforce and TfNSW and Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation on the outcomes from their work on traineeships.		**Suggest deletion** Ms Olivia West is invited to GMAC and Board meetings and can provide an update to members at that time. 3. A meeting was held with representatives of Water NSW and Water Infrastructure NSW. Advice in that regard is provided separately in this agenda.
030621- Progressing a Western Link Event Meet with Blue Mountains City Council, Penrith City Council and other Western Sydney Councils individually on potential opportunities.	JB	Meeting regularly with Penrith City Council.
240222 -9b- Review of the CNSWJO Advocacy position for a safe, swift link between Central NSW and Sydney Hold a workshop to revitalise strategy connection to the east coast, inviting TfNSW and including rail.	JB	While originally intended for 3 June 2022, members have provided feedback that there is just too much on. Conference held in August 2022 addressed the issue to some extent. Notably the October 2022 Federal Budget has placed a stop on funding for the GWH though funding for securing the corridor and a second crossing at Richmond is a Federal govt election commitment.
260522 – 11- Matters raised by Members Parkes: Ms J Bennett to bring a report to the Board on the potential for more activity in screen in Central NSW.	JB + CG	Underway – a meeting with Screen NSW took place on 8 December 2022 and this role within Screen NSW is now vacant. Discussions will take place again when this role has been filled and initial discussions with Screen Hunter have taken place with a meeting to be scheduled.
121022-7c-Adoption of the draft Review Statement of Strategic Regional Priority for member comment Receive advice on an enduring subcommittee to provide advocacy and strategic support to the Chair between meetings;	JB	Please see report to this meeting **Suggest deletion**
121022-8 Speakers 1. JO Board to write to follow up regarding Cr Keith's suggestion the Old Shires Association model be used with the JO Boundaries. 2. JO Board to follow up with LGNSW regarding the advocacy for more cadetships with the State.	JB	1 and 2 Correspondence sent and is an attachment to the quarterly review report. ALP unable to attend in person in December.

Matters in Progress

3. The Hon. Mick Veitch, MLC Shadow Minister for Regional NSW, Shadow Minister for Agriculture, and Shadow Minister for Western NSW- Actions: 4. Follow up with Mick's Offer to arrange a roundtable in region in November. Include Paul Scully re common planning assumptions. 5. JO to coordinate a tour in the region.		
121022 – 7d- Health and Building Surveyors Skills Shortages Working Group a. send a joint delegation to meet with Minister Roberts; and b. seek advice on insurance to enable cross Council activity.	JB/KB/ CG	a. Ministerial request lodged. Minister for Planning and Homes | NSW Government - he has advised he cannot receive this delegation. Follow-up will be undertaken with the Deputy Premier. b. underway
121022 -7g-Report of Regional Australia Institute event Regions Rising Canberra 1. co-hosting events and familiarisations in region for Federal representatives and bureaucrats; 2. progressing the alignment between this region and precincts commitments by the Federal Government including ongoing engagement with the National Farmers' Federation; 3. engaging with the Regional Australia Institute in progressing these ambitions; 4. receive a report on opportunities afforded to the region from the Rebalance the Nation Framework; and 5. seek a time to meet with Minister King's Office and provide advice on the Dutch Model.	JB	1. Currently in the plan for the State and Federal Government: a. familiarisations for State agency bureaucrats are being coordinated by RLE b. correspondence has been sent and various presentations have been made. The Regional Australia Institute has been approached for support. c. special water famil held for Rose Jackson, State Shadow Minister for water 30 November 2022 – follow-up undertaken, no response at this time. 2. The JO has been advocating for a precinct program like what was in the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) submission pre-election supported by the incoming Federal Government. Minister King recently had this to say about their approach to precincts – which is not as anticipated by the NFF: "The Growing Regions Program will provide new opportunities for regional local councils and not-for-profit organisations through an annual open, competitive grants process," she said. "The regional Precincts and Partnerships Program will provide a strategic, nationally consistent mechanism for funding and coordinating larger-scale projects that transform a place, to benefit communities in regional cities and wider rural and regional Australia. "While Coalition MPs are cynically attempting to claim election promises as funded projects, the government is delivering improvements the Australian people voted for by cleaning up the chaotic mess the previous government left behind." A meeting between Minister McBain and representatives of the region is being coordinated.

Matters in Progress

		3, 4 and 5 Underway – the RAI have been approached to deliver an event in region to better leverage the JO's membership and progress the aspirations in "rebalance the Nation Framework"
241122-7-Matters raised by Members. Lachlan has raised the need for advocacy regarding this flooding event That the Central NSW Joint Organisation endorse the following key messages in the briefing note on the recent flooding event and seek feedback from members on specific advocacy they are seeking support for: 1. There should be automatic, well-known processes switched on when natural disaster declarations are made. These should include; a. one source of truth; b. effective and known communication pathways, governance arrangements and messaging; c. a known support package including rates relief and business support tailored to the impacted engine industries of the community; and d. recognition that some natural disasters are much bigger than the local response through Council and the SES and there ought to be pre-planned responses to rapidly escalate. 2. There ought to be known escalation points to support the local effort including use of the military. 3. CNSWJO, through its Disaster Risk Reduction Program, prepare a tool that systematises mutual support between Councils for natural disasters. 4. CNSWJO ensure coordination of a debrief with affected Councils and key agency representatives	JB and JW	Correspondence was sent to Ken Harrison regarding the Systematic Tool development and the lessons learned session. A meeting was held with Ken Harrison 30 January and he has agreed to progress a lessons learned workshop.

Matters in Progress

to inform the above tool where this includes elected representatives. 5. There should be policy and financial recognition of the ongoing and unprecedented road impacts on the safety and economy of this region as a result of the continued La Nina event. This recognition should include; a. Supporting Country Mayors and LGNSW in their advocacy on their State-wide Roads Emergency declaration b. Extension of funding deadlines allowing Councils reprioritisation of resource from other infrastructure funding programs to the roads' effort; and c. An ongoing plan for roads recovery that recognises that this effort will take years.		
241122-8c- Lithgow City Council Joining the CNSWJO Report 1. Lithgow City Council be welcomed as a full member of the CNSWJO; 2. In the interim Lithgow City Council be offered an associate membership at 75% of full membership fees; 3. Upon CNSWJO and Lithgow City Council finalising negotiations on membership, the Minister for Local Government be advised of the above seeking a proclamation to effect Lithgow City Council's full membership; and 4. Given the timing in the electoral cycle, CNSWJO also seek support from the Shadow Minister for Local Government for progression of the proclamation	JB	1. Lithgow have joined as Associates until a proclamation has been made – effective from 1 Feb 2.Complete 3.Correspondence sent 4.Correspondence was also sent to Greg Warren. **Suggest deletion**
241122-8d- Remuneration for the Chair and or other Mayors in their capacity as Board members for the Central NSW JO a. the Board commence the process to amend the CNSWJO Charter to	JB	Please see report to this meeting with the revised charter attached. **Suggest deletion**

Matters in Progress

include a fee for remuneration of the Chair of the CNSWJO; and b. the fee be $10,000pa be paid to the Chair of CNSWJO.		
241122-8h- Adoption of the draft Review Statement of Strategic Regional Priority and Determination of Portfolio Mayors 1. adopt the Statement of Strategic Regional Priority with the amendment adding a 5.3 the SSRP to adding disaster road funding as a priority with a report to come back to the next Board on operationalising; 2. adopt the CNSWJO Communication and Engagement Strategy; 3. adopt the Evaluation Plan for the SSRP process; 4. provide direction with regard to Portfolio Mayors for the 7 priorities for the region to the February Board meeting; and 5. note that an evaluation of the process will be undertaken and the auspices of the SSRP Subcommittee.	JB	1.Complete see website https://www.centraljo.nsw.gov.au/strategic-plan-regional-priorities/ 2. Complete see website https://www.centraljo.nsw.gov.au/content/uploads/221108_Communication-and-Engagement-Plan-2022_2026.pdf 3 complete 4 see report to the February Board 5 complete – survey has been sent to Members for feedback on the process. **Suggest deletion**
241122-8j- Terms of Reference for the Central NSW Joint Organisation/Charles Sturt University Local Government Policy Lab Working Group Provide advice on the pace at which this working group is to progress.	JB	At the time of writing follow-up is being undertaken with CSU.
241122-8k- Our PlaceMat Cover Report circulate it to members with Council PlaceMats	JB	Complete **Suggest deletion**
241122-8l-Energy Program 1. thank the members of the Southern Lights Group for the work they are doing to support Councils in responding to Essential Energy's consultation for the AER Determination for 2024-2029 and 2. advocate including to the Premier, Deputy Premier,	KB	2. Correspondence sent, **suggest deletion**

Matters in Progress

Treasurer, Minister for Local Government and Opposition Leader Chris Minns, sending copies to the JO Chairs Forum, CMA and Regional Cities raising issues around level of service from Essential Energy.		
241122-8m-Water Update 1. endorse the CNSWJO Regional Water Loss Management Centres' Project Plan; 2. endorse the Water Utilities Alliance Strategic Plan 2022-2032; and 3. continue to advocate for the raising of the Wyangala Dam in the context of the remarkable efforts by Water NSW and proactive communication from BOM.	MM	1 & 2- **Suggest deletion** 3. Noted- to be addressed in the Water Advocacy Plan review. See also the Regional Water report where advice from Minister Anderson is that the final business case is due in the first half of 2023. **Suggest deletion**
241122-8n-Regional Asset Management commend to members a Regional Asset Management Improvement Program coordinated by CNSWJO comprising: 1. joint procurement of asset management audits across the JO membership once every Council term (4 yearly) with procurement to be undertaken in early 2023 for audits to be completed by July 2023. 2. the development of Asset Management Improvement Plans for each Council informed by the Asset Management Audits; and 3. annual reports by Council's asset management staff to ARICs on progress towards achieving improvements detailed in their Asset Management Improvement Plans to formalise the integration of asset management into the ARIC process.	MM	Procurement is underway
241122-13- Speakers to the next Meeting Health Advisory Committee– Invite Richard Colbran to present on the progress.	JB/VP	Richard Colbran has advised he will be in attendance. **Suggest deletion**

Matters in Progress

8. Reports on Statement of Regional Strategic Priority 2022-2025

Priority One: Leveraging our successful collaboration

a. Compliance Report

Regional Strategic Priorities	1: Leveraging our successful collaboration 1.1 Driving efficiencies and effectiveness saving Councils money 1.2 Building capacity across our Councils 1.3 Working well with other peak organisations
Portfolio Mayor	TBC
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Greg Tory, Noreen Vu, Brad Byrnes, Craig Butler

Report by Jenny Bennett and Verity Page, dated 13 February 2023

Recommendation/s
That the Board note the Compliance report.

Precis

This report includes an update on the Annual calendar of compliance and reporting requirements for 2022-23

CNSWJO is compliant with the annual calendar provided by the OLG for the 2022/2023 calendar year.

Reason for report

This report is procedural.

Legislative Risk and Policy considerations

The OLG Council 2022/2023 Joint Organisations Calendar of Compliance and Reporting Requirements refers to key deadlines and statutory reporting. Please see on the following page. Green are items that are complete. The region is tracking well.

An update on the Annual Compliance Calendar

Please find following the Annual Compliance Calendar for the JO. Green boxes represent completed activities.

JOINT ORGANISATIONS CALENDAR OF COMPLIANCE AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS 2022-23

JULY 2022	AUGUST 2022	SEPTEMBER 2022	OCTOBER 2022	NOVEMBER 2022	DECEMBER 2022	JANUARY 2023	FEBRUARY 2023	MARCH 2023	APRIL 2023	MAY 2023	JUNE 2023
9th: Proposed loan borrowings return to be submitted to TCorp	**30th:** Capacity Building Funding Stage 2 -Report to OLG with action plan, key delivery milestones and budget	**30th:** Lodge completed written returns of interest for voting representatives and designated persons who held office at 30 June [MCC cl 4.21(b)]. Executive Officer to table returns at next JO Board meeting [MCC cl 4.25]]	~~**17th:** Request for extension to lodge financial statements to be submitted in writing to OLG [LGA s416(2); Code]~~	**30th:** Annual Performance Statement due [LGReg cl 397J(1)]	**4th:** Joint Organisations must adopt a new policy on the payment of expenses and provision of facilities to the chairperson within 12 months of an election [LGA s252]	**30th:** Public Interest Disclosure Report due to the NSW Ombudsman [PIDA s6CA]			**30th:** Capacity Building Funding Stage 2 -Report to OLG detailing delivery progress for expenditure of the funding, benefits, and report against budget.		**30th:** Last day to adopt Statement of Revenue Policy and Budget [LGReg cl 397I]
30th: Public Interest Disclosures Report due to the NSW Ombudsman [PIDA s6CA]			**30th:** Annual Report of obligations under PIDA to the Minister and the Ombudsman [PIDA s31]		**4th:** Joint Organisation must review their organisation structure within 12 months of an election [LGA s333}						
31st: Capacity Building Funding Stage 1 - Final report on the funding and delivery. Where extensions are granted- progress report is 31 July and final on project completion			**30th:** Annual Report of obligations under GIPA to the Minister and the Information Commissioner [GIPA s125]		**4th:** Joint Organisations must adopt a code of meeting practice within 12 months of an election [LGA s360]						
			31st: Audited Financial Statements to be lodged with OLG [LGA s417(5); Code]		**4th:** Joint Organisations must review their adopted codes of conduct within 12 months of an election [LGA s440(7)]						
					4th: Joint Organisations must adopt a statement of strategic regional priorities within 12 months of an election [LGReg cl397H]						
					~~**5th:** Last day for audited financial statements to be presented to the public [LGA s 418(2)]~~						
					~~**28th:** Last day for annual performance statement to be published [LGReg cl 397J(2)]~~						
					31st: Report to JO Board [MCCP cl 11.2] and OLG [MCCP cl 11.2] on code of conduct complaint statistics						

Reports

b. Budget considerations 2023/2024 and revision of the CNSWJO Charter

Regional Strategic Priorities	1: Leveraging our successful collaboration 1.1 Driving efficiencies and effectiveness saving Councils money 1.2 Building capacity across our Councils 1.3 Working well with other peak organisations
Portfolio Mayor	TBC
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Greg Tory, Noreen Vu, Brad Byrnes, Craig Butler

Report by Jenny Bennett dated 5 February 2023

Recommendation/s

That the Board:

1. **Adopt the draft Statement of Budget and Revenue and place it on exhibition for 30 days;**
2. **Note that the budget for the next financial year includes a fee rise of 3.7% and a small profit for the year of $2,072;**
3. **Adopt the revised CNSWJO Charter with the following changes highlighted in yellow for member feedback:**

   3.2 Associate Members

   The following organisations are Associate Members of the Organisation as at February 2023:
   Central Tablelands County Council;
   Upper Macquarie County Council
   Lithgow City Council

   4.2 Non-Voting Representatives

   …..
   iv. the Mayor of Lithgow City Council
   v. the Chair of Upper Macquarie County Council
   the General Managers of Member Councils [and of Central Tablelands County Council, Upper Macquarie Country Council and Lithgow City Council …

   4.7 Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson

   …
   Remuneration for the Chair of the Central NSW Joint Organisation is $10,000 per annum and will increase in line with CPI and be paid quarterly in advance subsequent to Board meetings.

4. **Provide advice in the Mayoral Board report regarding the Statement of Budget and Revenue and Draft Charter seeking feedback ;and**
5. **Pursue funding for:**
   a. **Reducing emissions from Council waste facilities and**
   b. **Transitioning water utility strategy into Integrated Planning and reporting**

Reports

Precis

CNSWJO must adopt its Statement of Budget and Revenue at its May meeting having put it on exhibition for 30 days.

To remove the need for special meetings, a draft for public feedback should be adopted at this Board meeting.

The budget has been developed giving consideration to:

2. The recently adopted Statement of Strategic Regional Priority (SSRP)
3. Grants;
4. Councils across the region providing feedback that they are very resource constrained as they manage the poor roads condition and other challenges;
5. Remuneration of the Chair of $10K;
6. The IPART rate rise of 3.7%;
7. Feedback through the review of the SSRP that the region would like more opportunities for Councils and other key stakeholders to meet, direction set and collaborate; and
8. The addition of Lithgow City Council membership.

The budget calls for an increase of fees of 3.7% in line with the rate cap and servicing the Statement of Strategic Regional Priority is cut to cloth from there.

The unrestricted (ie no internal or external restrictions) in the surplus allows for some emergent programming including events.

Changes will need to be made to the CNSWJO Charter to include renumeration of the Chair of $10k with a CPI increase to be paid quarterly. Lithgow and Upper Macquarie County Council are included.

The Board are asked to provide feedback and adopt a draft version at this meeting.

Legislative, Policy and Risk Considerations

Financial impacts of the recently adopted Statement of Strategic Regional Priority (SSRP)

Please find following the actions anticipated from the SSRP and their budgetary implications. Notably, the region has grown its priorities from four to seven. To manage the extra load, grant funding is being sought and CNSWJO has been successful in some areas with a total grants announced for the JO for this year of around $3m. Leveraging our successful collaboration is also anticipated, in particular the new RLE and Destination Network as well as existing strong relationships with RDA Central West, Business NSW, Charles Sturt University, Arts Out West and others.

Priority One: Leveraging our successful collaboration

1.1 Driving efficiencies and effectiveness saving Councils money

Activity	Financial implications
a. Determine the regional procurement activities of the JO	Within existing budget – please find information elsewhere in this agenda on the 5 year procurement plan and its financial implications

	where income for the 23/34 year is anticipated at $131K.
b. Implement the outcomes from the Best Practice in Aggregated Procurement Program	Within existing resource.

1.2 Building capacity across our Councils

Activity	Financial implications
The region supports the operational teams and short-term projects by collaborations of Council staff that provide an opportunity for: · Information sharing · Networking · Capacity building · Procurement · Formal and informal training · Good governance · Cost savings and other value to Councils All teams and projects work to Terms of Reference adopted by the Board. There are typically 10-15 collaborations of member Councils supported by CNSWJO resource.	Current teams are: • General Managers' Advisory Committee • Water Utilities' Alliance • Transport Technical Committee • Tourism Managers Group • Planners' Group • Human Resources Managers Group • WHS/Risk Management Group • Training, Learning and Development Group • Energy Group • Regional IT Group • Building Surveyors Skills Shortages Working Group These teams are supported within existing budget. There will be teams and other structures required to support both the DRRF program and Regional NSW - Business Case and Strategy Development Fund 2022. Costs for these are included in the grant funding. Any other emerging teams will need to be considered by the Board on a case by case basis with regard to existing resource.

1.3 Working well with other peak organisations

Activity	Financial implications
Engage with LGNSW, Country Mayors, JOs and ALGA on priorities for local government	Within existing resource.
Progress actions in the MoU with RDA	Within existing resource.
Foster collaboration with a focus on the region's opportunities and endowments between CSU, Arts Out West, RDA Central West, Essential Energy, Business NSW and the RLE	The "Policy Lab" collaboration with CSU has been approved and advice is provided in Matters in Progress. Existing resource is able to provide the existing levels of support for collaboration however if significant projects come forward, more resource will be required and the Board will give consideration to this as it emerges.

Reports

Priority Two: Regional Prosperity through better infrastructure and services

2.1 Initiatives to grow the visitor economy in the context of locational preference factors

Activity	Financial implications
Review CNSW Tourism service provided by JO with consideration of future services in light of the offerings from Destination Network Central West while continuing with destination marketing	Members will be aware that as of 1 July 2022 a dedicated Destination Network for the Central West was empanelled. A meeting is being arranged with the new General Manager of DNCW, Sean Haylan. Happily, significantly more resource for the visitor economy is now in region. However, the Destination Network is unable to do destination marketing – and this is where the lion's share of effort and monies from the CNSWJO tourism budget have gone -with good ROI and then there is the recent announcement of marketing monies for the region administered through CNSWJO. There is potential to reduce resource to this function and redeploy it elsewhere and/or reduce fees. At this stage fees are held at their current level until negotiations are finalised where this region's marketing should consider, and at the minimum, retain existing financial support given its ROI.

2.2 Regional industry and population growth planning

Activity	Financial implications
a. Review and progress the implementation of the Central West and Orana Regional Plan	Within existing resource – this will be closely monitored as it is uncertain as to the extent CNSWJO will have to provide input and support.
b. Continue advocacy regarding Treasury Common Planning Assumptions including the population projections for this region.	The ramped up advocacy is within exiting resource – however if the Board wants to do even more, for example invest in collateral – more funding may be required.
c. Identification and reporting on regional planning matters.	Within existing resource
d. Community Strategic Planning Project with the Regional Leadership Executive and advocacy for better engagement between Councils and State agencies on CSP.	There is no budget for this at this time – a scoping document will need to be prepared for the next round of CSP where the budget allows room given the anticipated surplus.

2.3 Advocacy and initiatives on skills and housing shortages

Activity	Financial implications
a. Develop and implement advocacy plan in support of skills shortages	Within existing budget however if the Board wants to go further than the existing approach, given its priority- more funding or a redeployment of resource will be required.

Reports

b. Supporting Councils with skills shortages with a focus on the Health and Building staff	Any budget implications will need to be managed at quarterly review.
c. Provide regional representation to the Local Jobs Taskforce and the Parkes Special Activation Precinct Skills Subcommittee of the Regional Leadership Executive.	Within existing resource.
d. Undertake through funding from NSW Housing Taskforce a spare capacity in housing project in the region.	Advice has been sought regarding the existing invoicing included in the 2021/2022 accounts reviewed by the Auditor General as DPE have changed

2.4 Leveraging the region's endowments and opportunities

Activity	Financial implications
a. Critical minerals and mining. This priority will be negotiated with the Department of Regional NSW and the Regional Leadership Executive in the context of the Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) to seek cross agency support for programming in region. Policy will be developed and reviewed to inform advocacy plans	This will need to be investigated and scoping advice to be provided on optimally leveraging this opportunity. Australia's first critical minerals hub to make NSW a global leader | NSW Government is located in the Central West between Wellington, Parkes and Dubbo. The RLE have been approached re this and the responsible staff member in Regional NSW has been found. A this stage resourcing is within existing budget.
b. Circular economy and net zero. Resource collaboration with peak agencies in this regard in line with Board direction from the CNSWJO Emissions Reduction Plan. Leverage the Parkes SAP and potential other projects in region. Support collaborations with DPE on Net Zero.	There is significant potential in this endowment for regional programming, including funded regional programming. Grant funded RNSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund will provide some strategic direction.
c. Support the development of existing and potential activation precincts including Parkes SAP.	Some scoping conversations can be held with key stakeholders, particularly around the Orange Health and Innovation Precinct – advice can then be provided back to the Board. At this stage this can be undertaken within existing resource.
d. Inland Rail. Progress advice from Inland Rail Productivity Enhance Program with a view to entering the next Gateway.	The region did not get to this Gateway and is awaiting advice from the Dept on next steps to leverage the existing work. Anticipating advice will be provided in due course.
e. Pattern of settlement; liveability, proximity to capital cities and ports seek to work through the RLE where childcare has been identified as of particular concern	RLE has a project running on liveability– an update will be requested. The JO also invests in the RAI and there is scope to leverage this investment for a more tailored effort in region on pattern of settlement and liveability.
f. Agriculture. Produce a productive water strategy for Board consideration including considering the "Dutch Model"	Scoping will be inhouse – there may be a need for investment and advice will be provided accordingly.

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Priority Three: Advocate for better infrastructure and services in health and ageing

Activity	Financial implications
a. Provide advocacy support and programming at the direction of the Board where advocacy for better infrastructure and services in health and ageing will be reworked to align with the 44 recommendations as listed in the Health Outcomes and Access to Services report.	Advocacy plan updated and to this meeting for review. At this stage resourcing is in house.
b. Seek to work with Charles Sturt University on a policy paper on enabling growing our own health workforce. Executive Officer's advocacy advice adopted by the Board	Within in existing resource.
c. As part of its commitment to growing our own health workforce, CNSWJO provides $15Kpa for three medical students a year.	Included in budget at $15K.

Priority Four: Telecommunications

Activity	Financial implications
Advocacy and opportunities for improved outcomes for Telecommunications: delivered in collaboration with RDACW Board Annual review of advocacy plans and policy in November/ February.	Advocacy plan being drafted with RDACW – using existing resource.

Priority Five: Regional Transport Planning and Infrastructure

5.1 Transport connectivity planning

Activity	Financial implications
a. Review and implement transport advocacy plan Board	Within existing resource. The challenge here is what to do about advocacy for a safe, swift and secure link to and from western Sydney.
b. Monitor and actively engage in the TfNSW Central West and Orana Regional Transport Plan and other strategic opportunities	Within existing resource. Awaiting finalisation of TfNSW Central West and Orana Regional Transport Plan. If anything of significance requiring further investment emerges, advice will be provided to the Board.
c. Provide regional transport planning analysis with a focus on freight	This may require funding given the transport team are so busy. No allocation has been made at this time and
d. Identify opportunities for regional program funding and report on emergent transport issues	Within existing resource.
e. Implement the Reviewed Roads and Transport Technical Committee Plan	Plan in draft with the Technical Committee. Further advice on funding will be provided in due course where the current focus is on disaster risk reduction – with State funding.

Reports

5.2 Infrastructure prioritisation including using the CNSWJO Matrix

Activity	Financial implications
Using a multi criteria analysis prioritisation matrix informed by the State and Federal funding framework. Outputs from the Matrix are used to support member's grant applications. Members keep the inputs current, typically through workshops of the transport and water teams. CNSWJO staff develop outputs and letters of support on an as needs basis	Within existing resource. The challenge here is accessing Council staff for support for inputs – especially given they are so busy. Some funding may be required for glossy outputs from time to time and this may blow out the advocacy line item in the budget.

5.3 Natural disaster road funding

Activity	Financial implications
A report will be provided to the February 2023 Board meeting outlining the program.	Within existing resource -included in advocacy plan and Disaster Risk Reduction Funded program is including this work.

Priority Six: Regional Water Security and Productive Water

6.1 Regional Water network planning and best practice skills development

Activity	Financial implications
a. Advocacy plan	Within existing resource.
b. Regional Water Strategies in the Lachlan and Macquarie - implementation	At this stage this is an unknown.
c. Resource the Regional Water Loss Management Centre of Excellence for Central NSW codesigned with the NSW Government	Within existing resource.
d. Resource Stage 2 implementation of the new Regulatory and Assurance Framework for LWUs including a potential pilot of regional work on the integration of strategic water planning with the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. This to align with the Regional Asset Management Working Party is also being resourced to support members in the management of assets.	Within existing resource.
e. Balance of program identified in the CWUA Strategy supporting leading practice, measured and benchmarked in the delivery of quality secure water and sewer services	Within existing resource.

Reports

6.2 Productive Water

Activity	Financial implications
a. Advocacy plan to support the value of town water and alternative approaches to water use, for example the Dutch Model	See advocacy plan to this meeting. Within existing resource.
b. Resource the development of a productive water strategy leveraging the huge amount of strategic reform underway in water management at both the State and Federal level.	See advice to this meeting. Financial implications will need to be managed at quarterly review.

Priority Seven: Transition to a sustainable, secure and affordable energy future

7.1 Energy Efficiency and Emissions Reduction

Activity	Financial implications
a. Review advocacy plan for an orderly transition to a secure renewable energy future with an emphasis on Social License issues .	Within existing resource.
b. Collaborate with State agencies in delivering programming in reducing member Council emissions. Resource collaboration with peak agencies in this regard in line with Board direction from the CNSWJO Emissions Reduction Plan.	JONZAG program fully funded and backfills Kate Barker's position. Waste emissions are being explored in the RNSW Business Case funded program.
c. Support Council collaboration under the 5 pillars of: Streetlighting Electric Vehicles Renewable energy production and storage, including Distributed Energy Resources (DER) · Energy efficiency and demand management The nexus between water and energy	JONZAG program fully funded and part backfills Kate Barker's position.
d. Leverage the contractual relationship with electricity retailers to enable emissions reduction	JONZAG program fully funded and part backfills Kate Barker's position.

7.2 Circular Economy

Activity	Update
Support regional collaboration on circular economy as directed by the Board from the CNSWJO Emissions Reduction Plan	JONZAG program fully funded and part backfills Kate Barker's position. Waste emissions are being explored in the RNSW Business Case funded program.

Reports

7.3 Environment

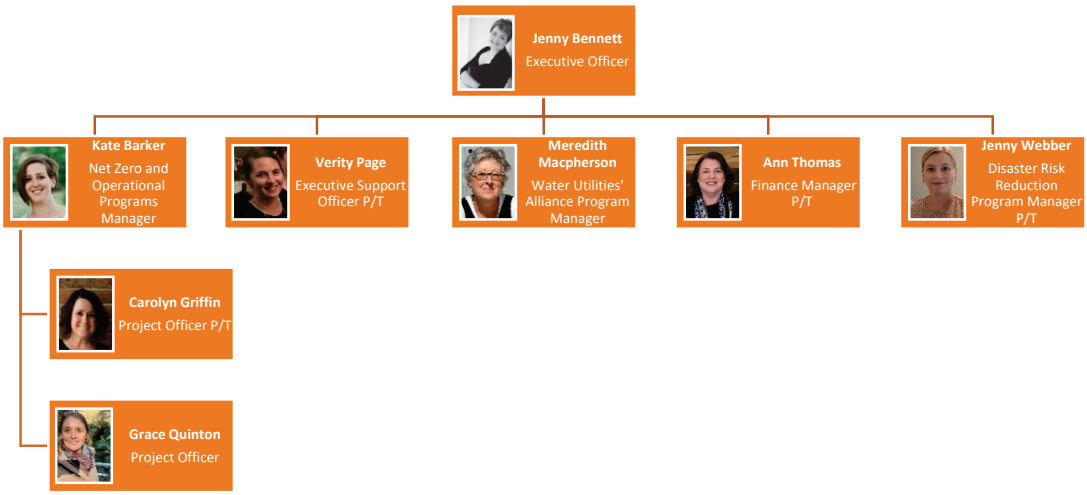
Activity	Update
a. Review policy approach to the anticipated rapid transition to a renewable energy future on the Social Licensing issues and raise awareness for renewable energy infrastructure	Within existing resource
b. Develop policy with regard to: · Biodiversity · Urban environments during climate change including tree canopy · Waste and landfill emissions.	Scoping and high level policy advice will be within existing resource. Strategic work may be required and in the first instance grant funding will be sought at the Board's direction.
c. Provide advocacy support to members in regard to weed management issues	On an as requested basis. Within existing resource.

7.4 Understanding our energy (fuel and electricity) security, capacity and scalability

Activity	Update
Undertake strategy and scoping for Board review	Initial scoping advice will be within existing resource.

As advised previously, 70% of the organisation's time is spent delivering value to Council operations through procurement, training, capacity building and sharing of information.

The staff structure is as follows:



This team operationalises the CNSWJO Statement of Strategic Regional Priority including the following functions;

- Supports 11 Council teams, GMAC and the Board including governance, administration and the coordination of parliamentary visits and other advocacy;
- Administers State agency funded programs at the direction of the Board, currently through

5 programs;
- Seeks funding to deliver the priorities the Board identifies;
- Delivers national award-winning work through a brokered training service to members where the focus is on water training;
- Delivers national award-winning work in support of quality secure water and sewage services;
- Delivers an average of $1.9m per year of PR value through tourism editorial content;
- Lodges around 20 submissions a year in line with Board policy;
- Provides conservative cost savings to members of $2.2m through 25 contracts being administered through the Best Practice in Procurement Program;
- Coordinates the Joint Organisation Executive Officers' Network; and
- Delivers media and social media support to the Board's priorities.

Grant funding

As advised previously, the JO model is beginning to get some funding recognition. While early days, the intention is to build on this recognition. At the time of writing a significant amount of this funding advice has been embargoed. Please request a verbal update in the closed section of the meeting.

The milestones payments due in the 2023/2024 year are included in the budget.

Funding is also flowing directly to Councils through the OECC program.

The intention is to immediately pursue funding for programming identified in the SSRP, that being:

- Reducing emissions from Council waste facilities
- Transitioning water utility strategy into Integrated Planning and Reporting

It is anticipated that the activities above will identify other Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities for example disaster road funding as part of the Disaster Risk Reduction program.

The Board may have a view on priority programming that the JO should pursue funding for and feedback would be welcomed.

The IPART rate rise of 3.7%

In its 29 September Information Paper (nsw.gov.au) IPART has advised that the rate peg for NSW Councils will be between 3.7% and 6.8% depending on population growth.

Four member Councils are able to increase rates above 3.7% with the highest being Cabonne at 4.1%.

It is suggested that CNSWJO raise its fees in line with the 3.7% figure. Councils across the region are providing feedback that they are very resource constrained as they manage the poor roads condition and other challenges and so anything above this amount should not be countenanced. Rather, should the Board wish to resource its SSRP in different ways, existing resource can be redeployed or grant funding can be sought. Again, direction would be welcomed.

Reports

Feedback through the review of the SSRP that the region would like more opportunities for Councils and other key stakeholders to meet, direction set and collaborate.

Feedback taken at the time and subsequently through the evaluation survey is that Councillors would like more opportunities to network, build capacity and undertake strategy. There are quite a few opportunities being developed or pursued across the region.

- CSU Policy Labs – two per year where reports on progress will come to the Board where Councillors would be key stakeholders and attendees
- The Regional Leadership Executive is planning 2 events per year
- The Regional Australia Institute has been approached with a view to leveraging our membership by having an event in this region in the near future and Councillors would be key stakeholder and attendees
- RDA are considering a number of events including in circular economy

No expenditure regarding any of the above events has been included in the budget at this time where the costs of the conference 25 August 2022 was $8300.

The budget anticipates a small surplus of $2,072 and expenditure on events can be considered at quarterly review given carry over unrestricted funds are likely to be in the order of $270K.

Lithgow City Council membership.

Lithgow joined the JO on 1 February 2023 as an associate member. Full membership is included in the budget for 2023/2024 with total fees including WRAS being $94,673.

Amendment of the Charter to include the Remuneration of the Chair of $10K and changes to membership

Members will recall resolving at the last meeting to remunerate the Chair at $10K pa. To effect this a revised Charter is provided as an attachment to members for feedback.

It is suggested that this occur concurrently with the broader budgetary considerations and this be included in the next Mayoral Board report for member feedback.

Remuneration of the Chair of the Central NSW Joint Organisation has been included in the Budget for the 2023/2024 year of $10,000 per annum and will increase in line with CPI and be paid quarterly in advance subsequent to Board meetings.

Regarding membership, Lithgow City Council and Upper Macquarie County Council are included as follows.

Additions are highlighted in yellow.

3.2 Associate Members

The following organisations are Associate Members of the Organisation as at the date of its establishment: as of February 2023:
Central Tablelands County Council;
Upper Macquarie County Council
Lithgow City Council

Reports

4.2 Non-Voting Representatives

…..

iv. the Mayor of Lithgow City Council

v. the Chair of Upper Macquarie County Council

the General Managers of Member Councils [and of Central Tablelands County Council, Upper Macquarie Country Council and Lithgow City Council …

4.7 Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson

…

Remuneration for the Chair of the Central NSW Joint Organisation is $10,000 per annum and will increase in line with CPI and be paid quarterly in advance subsequent to Board meetings.

Attachment/s:

1. The Draft 2023 CNSWJO Statement of Budget and Revenue
2. Draft CNSWJO Charter

Reports

c. The CNSWJO Governance Structure Report

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

Report by Jenny Bennett, dated 6 February 2023

Recommendation/s

That the Board note the CNSWJO Governance Structure Report and

1. Nominate Portfolio Mayors to the various portfolios of:

- **Leveraging our successful collaboration**
- **Regional Prosperity through better infrastructure and services**
- **Advocate for better infrastructure and services in health and ageing**
- **Telecommunications**
- **Regional Transport Planning and Infrastructure Prioritisation**
- **Regional Water Security and Productive Water**
- **Transition to a sustainable, secure and affordable energy future; and**

2. Form a subcommittee to meet monthly to progress advocacy strategy.

Precis

With the adoption of the revised Statement of Strategic Regional Priority (SSRP), three new Portfolio Mayors are needed to lead the following priorities

- Leveraging our successful collaboration
- Regional Prosperity through better infrastructure and services
- Advocate for better infrastructure and services in health and ageing
- Telecommunications
- Regional Transport Planning and Infrastructure Prioritisation
- Regional Water Security and Productive Water
- Transition to a sustainable, secure and affordable energy future;

A recommendation from the Mayors who led the review of the SSRP was to form an enduring subcommittee of interested Mayors on an opt in basis to continue progressing advocacy strategy and provide a sounding board between quarterly for the Chair and Executive Officer. Should this be resolved, Terms of Reference will be draft by those Mayors opting in for Board adoption at its next meeting.

Reason for the Report

This report asks for Mayors to determine:

1. who will be Portfolio Mayors for the period of the Statement of Strategic Regional Priority and
2. the creation of a subcommittee of Mayors to meet monthly to provide greater input and direction particularly to advocacy for the region.

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Legislative, policy and risk considerations

Portfolio Mayors

In its Advocacy Policy the following advice is provided on Portfolio Mayors.

Mayors who are elected to represent portfolios will:

- *Make themselves aware of the Advocacy Plan for their portfolio and provide feedback;*
- *Be invited to relevant meetings and be supported with briefing advice to these meetings;*
- *Be expected to represent the organisation from time to time at the request of the Chair; and*
- *Use opportunities in other forums to proffer the advocacy agenda under their portfolio.*

The SSRP identifies 7 priorities, three of which are new. Priorities in the new SSRP are:

1. Intercouncil cooperation (usually the Chair given the JO Chairs Forum role, currently Cr John Medcalf)
2. Regional Prosperity (currently Cr Bill West)
3. Transport and Infrastructure (currently Ken Keith)
4. Health (new)
5. Telecommunications (new)
6. Water (currently Cr David Somervaille)
7. Energy and environment (new)

An email was sent to members 24 October providing the above advice and at the Board's discretion Portfolio Mayors can be nominated at this meeting. To inform decision making please find on the following pages more detail on operationalising these priorities.

The CNSWJO Advocacy Policy reviewed and adopted in November 2022 calls for Portfolio Mayors.

Mayors in this region have a reputation for collaboration, are involved in a number networks and are well positioned to proffer the case of the region's priorities. The following information is not exhaustive.

Mayoral roles outside the region	
Country Mayors	Executive Mayors: Cr J Medcalf, Cr K Keith and Cr P Miller.
LGNSW	Board members: Cr P Miller and Cr S Ferguson (Country Vice President)
Regional Health Ministerial Advisory Panel	Cr K Keith

Many Mayors have a significant number of other regional roles such has Regional Cities, Mining Related Councils, Murray Darling Basin Association and Lachlan Regional Transport Committee.

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Sponsoring General Managers for the 7 Priorities are:

- *Leveraging our successful collaboration* – Greg Tory, Noreen Vu, Brad Byrnes, Craig Butler
- *Regional Prosperity* - Noreen Vu, Steve Loane, Paul Devery, Craig Butler
- *Health and Ageing* – Gary Wallace, Brad Byrnes and Craig Butler.
- *Telecommunications* – Gary Wallace and Paul Devery
- *Regional Transport and Infrastructure Planning and prioritisation* – Kent Boyd, Steve Loane, Gary Wallace and Paul Devery.
- *Water Security and Productive Water* – Gavin Rhodes, Kent Boyd and Dave Waddell
- *Transition to a sustainable, secure and affordable energy future* – Dave Waddell, Brad *Byrnes, Greg Tory and Paul Devery.*

Please find following advice on the activities anticipated for the term of the SSRP.

Priority One: Leveraging our successful collaboration	
1.1 Driving efficiencies and effectiveness saving Councils money	
#	**Activity**
a)	Determine the regional procurement activities of the JO
b)	Implement the outcomes from the Best Practice in Aggregated Procurement Program
1.2 Building capacity across our Councils	
a)	The region supports the operational teams and short-term projects by collaborations of Council staff that provide an opportunity for: • information sharing • networking • capacity building • procurement • formal and informal training • good governance • cost savings and other value to Councils All teams and projects work to Terms of Reference adopted by the Board. There are typically 10-15 collaborations of member Councils supported by CNSWJO resource.
1.3 Working well with other peak organisations	
a)	Engage with LGNSW Country Mayors and ALGA on priorities for local government
b)	Progress actions in the MoU with RDA;
c)	Foster collaboration with a focus on the region's opportunities and endowments between CSU, Arts Out West, RDA Central West, Essential Energy, Business NSW and the RLE
Priority Two: Regional Prosperity through better infrastructure and services	
2.1 Initiatives to grow the visitor economy in the context of locational preference factors	
a)	Review CNSW Tourism service provided by JO with consideration of future services in light of the offerings from Destination Network Central West while continuing with destination marketing.
a)	Review and progress the implementation of the Central West and Orana Regional Plan
b)	Continue advocacy regarding Treasury Common Planning Assumptions including the population projections for this region.
c)	Identification and reporting on regional planning matters.
d)	Community Strategic Planning Project with the Regional Leadership Executive and advocacy for better engagement between Councils and State agencies on CSP.
2.3 Advocacy and initiatives on skills and housing shortages	
a)	Develop and implement advocacy plan in support of skills shortages
b)	Supporting Councils with skills shortages with a focus on the Health and Building staff
c)	Provides regional representation to the Local Jobs Taskforce and the Parkes Special Activation Precinct Skills Subcommittee of the Regional Leadership Executive.
d)	Undertake through funding from NSW Housing Taskforce a spare capacity in housing project in the region.
2.4 Leveraging the region's endowments and opportunities	
a)	**Critical minerals and mining** This priority will be negotiated with the Department of Regional NSW and the Regional Leadership Executive in the context of the Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) to seek cross agency support for programming in region. Policy will be

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	developed and reviewed to inform advocacy plans.
b)	**Circular economy and net zero.** Resource collaboration with peak agencies in this regard in line with Board direction from the CNSWJO Emissions Reduction Plan. Leverage the Parkes SAP and potential other projects in region. Support collaborations with DPE on Net Zero.
c)	Support the development of existing and potential activation precincts including Parkes SAP
d)	**Inland Rail.** Progress advice from Inland Rail Productivity enhance Program with a view to entering the next Gateway
e)	**Pattern of settlement; liveability, proximity to capital cities and ports** Seek to work through the RLE where childcare has been identified as of particular concern
f)	**Agriculture** Produce a productive water strategy for Board consideration including considering the "Dutch Model"
Priority Three: Advocate for better infrastructure and services in health and ageing	
#	**Activity**
a)	Provide advocacy support and programming at the direction of the Board where advocacy for better infrastructure and services in health and ageing will be reworked to align with the 44 recommendations as listed in the Health Outcomes and Access to Services report.
b)	Seek to work with Charles Sturt University on a policy paper on enabling growing our own health workforce
c)	As part of its commitment to growing our own health workforce, CNSWJO provides $15Kpa for three medical students a year.
Priority Four: Telecommunications	
a)	Advocacy and opportunities For improved outcomes for Telecommunications: delivered in collaboration with RDACW
Priority Five: Regional Transport Planning and Infrastructure Prioritisation	
5.1 Transport connectivity planning	
a)	Review and implement transport advocacy plan
b)	Monitor and actively engage in the TfNSW Central West and Orana Regional Transport Plan and other strategic opportunities
c)	Provide regional transport planning analysis with a focus on freight
d)	Identify opportunities for regional program funding and report on emergent transport issues
e)	Implement the Reviewed Roads and Transport Technical Committee Plan
5.2 Infrastructure prioritisation including using the CNSWJO Matrix on including using the CNSWJO Matrix	
a)	Using a multi criteria analysis prioritisation matrix Informed by the State and Federal funding framework. Outputs from the Matrix are used to support member grant applications. Members keep the inputs current typically through workshops of the transport and water teams. CNSWJO staff develop outputs and letters of support on an as needs basis.
5.3 Natural disaster road funding	
a)	A report will be provided to the February 2023 Board meeting outlining the program.
Priority Six: Regional Water Security and Productive Water	
6.1 Regional Water network planning and best practice skills development	
a)	Advocacy plan
b)	Regional Water Strategies in the Lachlan and Macquarie -implementation
c)	Resource the Regional Water Loss Management Centre of Excellence for Central NSW codesigned with the NSW Government
d)	Resource Stage 2 implementation of the new Regulatory and Assurance Framework for LWUs including a potential pilot of regional work on the integration of strategic water planning with the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. This to align with the Regional Asset Management Working Party is also being resourced to support members in the management of assets.
e)	Balance of program identified in the CWUA Strategy supporting leading practice, measured and benchmarked in the delivery of quality secure water and sewer services
6.2 Productive Water	
a)	Advocacy plan to support the value of town water and alternative approaches to water use, for example the Dutch Model
b)	Resource the development of a productive water strategy leveraging the huge amount of strategic reform underway in water management at both the State and Federal level.
Priority Seven: Transition to a sustainable, secure and affordable energy future	
7.1 Energy Efficiency and Emissions Reduction	

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#	Activity
a)	Review advocacy plan for an orderly transition to a secure renewable energy future with an emphasis on Social License issues
b)	Collaborate with State agencies in delivering programming in reducing member Council emissions. Resource collaboration with peak agencies in this regard in line with Board direction from the CNSWJO Emissions Reduction Plan.
c)	Support Council collaboration under the 5 pillars of: • Streetlighting • Electric Vehicles • Renewable energy production and storage, including Distributed Energy Resources (DER) • Energy efficiency and demand management • The nexus between water and energy
d)	Leverage the contractual relationship with electricity retailers to enable emissions reduction
7.2 Circular Economy	
#	Activity
a)	Support regional collaboration on circular economy as directed by the Board from the CNSWJO Emissions Reduction Plan
7.3 Environment	
#	Activity
a)	Review policy approach to the anticipated rapid transition to a renewable energy future on the Social Licensing issues and raise awareness for renewable energy infrastructure
b)	Develop policy with regard to: • Biodiversity • Urban environments during climate • change including tree canopy • Waste and landfill emissions.
c)	Provide advocacy support to members in regard to weed management issues
7.4 Understanding our energy (fuel and electricity) security, capacity and scalability	
#	Activity
a)	Undertake strategy and scoping for Board review

Opt-in Advisory Subcommittee

The subcommittee of Mayors with oversight of the Statement of Strategic Regional also provided other advice and support to the Chair and Executive Officer under its Terms of Reference.

Given the broader scope of work in the new SSRP and that the Board only meets quarterly, they suggested that monthly meetings of Mayors to progress advocacy would be a good idea. This would be an opt in Subcommittee for those Mayors who have time where the Terms of Reference would be drafted for the first meeting.

The SSRP Subcommittee met at 7;30am once a month on a Friday for around an hour and a half.

Attachments/: Nil

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d. SSRP Evaluation

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

Report by Jenny Bennett, dated 10 February 2023

Recommendation/s
That the Board note the Evaluation Report for the Statement of Strategic Regional Priority (SSRP) found the process and outputs compliant, good value for money and well received. Where possible in future iterations; **1. The strategy itself should be developed in-house;** **2. A subcommittee of Mayors similar to that used for this iteration should provide oversight of the process;** **3. Any expenditure on consultants should be for "new eyes" on the region for a background document to inform strategy like the https://www.centraljo.nsw.gov.au/content/uploads/CNSWJO-Enviromental-Scan.pdf of strategic and plans at the regional, state, national and international levels that are relevant to this region;** **4. Give greater thought to engagement with State agencies; and** **5. The highest priority for any funding for renewal of strategy is for a conference for new Councillors.**

Precis

This report seeks adoption of the Statement of Strategic Regional Priority (SSRP), for this term of the JO and associated Communication Plan. The Draft SSRP was adopted at the October meeting and provided to members and various other stakeholders for comment. No feedback has been received.

Once the SSRP is in effect JO Advocacy Policy has Portfolio Mayors providing leadership for this term for each priority. As the Local Government Act provides for a two year term for the Chair there will be no election this year.

An email was sent to members 24 October providing advice on current Portfolio Mayors and the new priorities. At the Board's discretion, Portfolio Mayors can be identified at this meeting.

Policy, risk and legislative considerations

Statement of Strategic Regional Priority Review Evaluation Report

Background

The Office of Local Government provide the following guidance with regard to the mandatory Statement of Strategic Regional Priority at https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Integrated-Planning-Reporting-Handbook-for-Local-Councils-in-NSW.pdf

Joint Organisations (JOs) have a streamlined planning and reporting framework under the 'Local Government (General) Regulation 2021' and 'Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines for local councils in NSW'.

JOs are required to develop a Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP) which sets out a vision

for the region and provides an overview of the actions required to deliver the vision.
The SSRP should draw from the Community Strategic Plans (CSPs) of member councils, regional-level plans and other state strategic documents to clearly identify the highest regional priorities.
As a minimum, each SSRP should include:

- *Vision for the region*
- *Regional priority areas (around 5)*
- *Strategies and/or actions required to deliver the regional priorities*
- *Overview of the stakeholders, agencies and organisations required to help deliver activities and achieve regional priorities.*

Developing the SSRP The SSRP is a 4-year document that aligns with the IP&R reporting cycle and must be prepared within 12 months of ordinary election of councillors for all member councils.
The following process is generally used to develop and promote the SSRP:

- *Review of CSPs of member councils and key regional plans and strategies.*
- *Consultation with member councils, e.g. mayors, general managers and senior staff.*
- *Preparation of a draft statement for review and adoption by the JO Board.*
- *Publishing of SSRP on JO website. As the priorities in the statement draw on the community strategic plans of member councils, there is no requirement for the JO to carry out community consultation on the statement of regional priorities.*

Reviewing the SSRP The SSRP should be reviewed at least annually and a complete review of the statement should be a carried out every 4 years and within 12 months of each ordinary election of councillors for all member councils.

Reporting on the SSRP JOs are required to prepare audited financial reports and annual performance statements. Communicating about the SSRP JOs must develop a Communication and Engagement Strategy that:

- *includes key messages about its role and commitment to achieving strategic priorities*
- *outlines methods for communicating effectively with member councils and stakeholders on progress in strategic priorities, including the achievement of key milestones and successes*
- *identifies monitoring and regular review processes, to ensure the Communication and Engagement Strategy remains relevant and effective.*

Accordingly, at the February Board meeting, delegation was given to a subcommittee of Cr Beatty, Cr Kellam, Cr Medcalf, Cr Ferguson, Cr West and Cr Miller for the development of a Risk Management Plan and oversight of the SSRP process. Please see the Terms of Reference adopted in May. Given JO Board meetings are quarterly, these 6 Mayors nominated to take on the role of development of the strategy. The mandated Statement of Strategic Regional Priority (SSRP) is due in December 2022.

Terms of Reference were developed for this Subcommittee that included the following role:

- Direct the “plan for the plan” for the development of the Statement of Strategic Priority due December 2022. This to include:
    - The Work Breakdown Strategy for developing the Plan
    - The Risk Management Plan
    - The Communication Plan
    - The role of a Summit in the Strategic Development
- Report to the Board on progress
- Undertake other support to the Chair between meetings, where useful, leveraging the meeting frequency of the Committee.

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Central NSW JO Board Meeting 23 February 2023

As part of the Work Breakdown Strategy for developing the SSRP an Evaluation Plan with associated implementation and reporting was identified.

The Evaluation Plan including advice on the Stakeholder Survey was adopted by the Board in its November 2022 meeting.

Survey responses

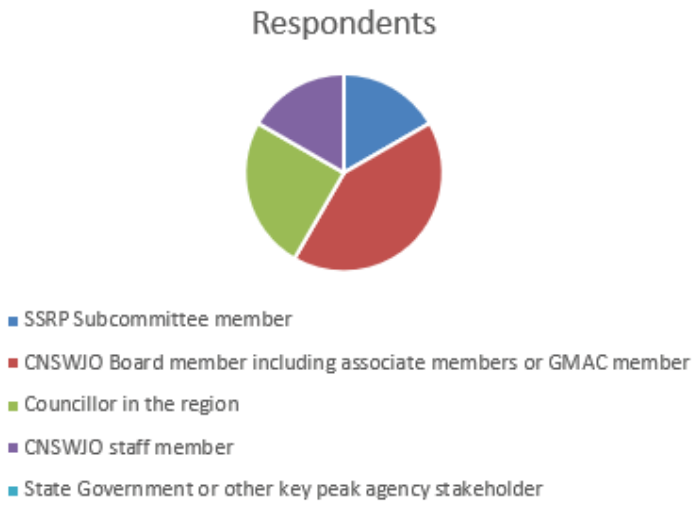
Strategic Regional Priority (SSRP) Survey Monkey Results – Summary
This Survey Monkey was created to offer the opportunity to provide feedback to the CNSWJO Board of Mayors of the region regarding the development of this term's Statement of Strategic Regional Priority (SSRP) which was adopted by the Board in November 2022.

The advice received will inform a report to the Board that will seek to improve the process when it occurs in the next term of Local Government (from 2025).

12 responses were received.

The Survey was issued to:

- SSRP Sub Committee Members
- CNSWJO Board member including associate members or GMAC members
- Councillors in the region
- State Government or other key peak agency stakeholders
- CNSWJO staff members



Respondents were asked what their involvement in the development of the CNSWJO Statement of Strategic Regional Plan was and noting that respondents could choose more than one answer:

- 8 respondents attended the conference;
- 3 respondents received the SSRP for review as part of their role with Council
- NIL respondents were provided advice on the SSRP through an agency role
- 2 respondents had oversight over the process as a Board member
- 3 respondents were involved in driving the process as a member of the SSRP

Additional comments provided:

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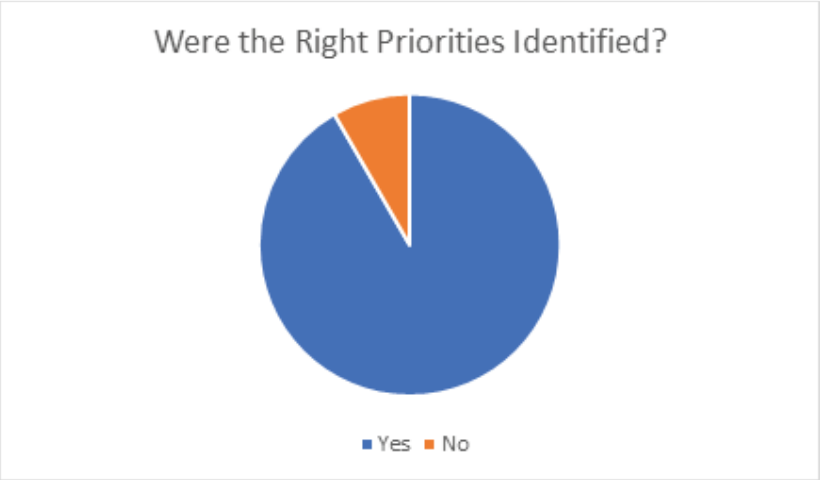
- 2 respondents advised they had no involvement in the development of the SSSRP
- (As well as attending the conference) As a member of GMAC, this respondent contributed for the Council

Respondents were asked for their recommendations to the CNSWJO Board on changing the consultation process, the comments provided were:

- A workshop would have been good
- No changes, it was very informative
- Consultation at a JO level was effective and for future consideration some Councillors may have wanted more involvement.
- How the event was set up and how priorities could be chosen was liked
- The day did give me a higher perspective

When asked if the right priorities were identified:



Additional comments provided:

- The strategic priorities cover a broad and important range of areas that are key for the success and development of regional communities throughout NSW. After the recent floods throughout Central West NSW Priority Five and specifically road funding is very important moving into 2023, in addition to this investing in people and skills development of local people to carry out much needed works on central NSW roads is perhaps an area of consideration.
- The priorities are reasonable but only time will tell.
- Good mix
- We need to be careful to ensure that we priorities and use our resources effectively - not be all things to all people and not be sent down rabbit holes- be diligent with our limited resources
- More emphasis could be placed on how a changing climate will impact on every single one of these initiatives
- No further comments were provided for the respondent who answered no above

Do you feel you had sufficient influence over the process?

- 2 x NA
- 1 x not answered
- 7 x yes
- 1 x yes and no
- 1 x sort of

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When asked if the respondent wished to provide more influence and to provide suggestions on ways to review the strategy in a different way next time, the following responses were received:

- I think those that represent their Councils at regular meetings should provide greater feedback and/or reports to keep other Councillors up to date, or maybe a quarterly newsletter to all relevant stakeholders
- A second session would have been good

Suggestions on budget recommendations for the Board to consider at the next iteration:

- No comment at this point
- All councils to get together once a year which will keep all informed about the CNSWJO direction
- Well worth the cost, ensure sufficient budget allocation for next iteration
- Consider wider input from interested Councillors
- Structure was right and budget reflects what was required to implement this process
- The conference is the highest priority – especially given the timing in the council term
- NIL – the priorities are forever changing
- Unsure what is next and what is needed

Final comments and/or feedback

e. These strategic initiatives form a good basis to grow and develop regional areas.

- The process was very good. Identified all the key areas and has been actioned accordingly.
- Good process - the long term of success of JOs will be determined by Council engagement and we need to keep this front and centre.
- CNSWJO does great work!

Response to the Key Reporting Areas

The Evaluation Plan calls for a report to be considered by the Board where the Key Reporting Areas are below.

Key Reporting Area	Monitoring and Evaluation Key Performance Indicator (measurement unit/format)	Target date	Responsibility
Compliance Did the review of the SSRP achieve compliance with the Local Government Act and optional guidance?	Table identifying mandatory and optional guidance reviewed to Subcommittee and Board satisfaction (Y/N) See table below showing 100% compliance	February 2023	JO EO, Subcommittee and CNSWJO Board
Benefit Cost Did the process lead to the right outcome? Have we identified the right priorities? What did the process cost, was it worth it? What budget recommendations would you make to the Board for the next iteration? Is the process replicable? What should be repeated and what not?	Advice from SSRP Subcommittee in response to the Benefit Costs questions. Report to the Board responds to the benefit cost questions to the Board's satisfaction. (Y/N) See responses to these questions below informed by survey.	February 2023	JO EO, Subcommittee and CNSWJO Board

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Stakeholder engagement Was the Board sufficiently informed of progress? Were Councils and Councilors sufficiently engaged? Did the Subcommittee feel it had control over the process? To what extent have State agencies and other key stakeholders been afforded input into the SSRP? To what extent did State agencies and other key stakeholders provide input into the SSRP?	# Survey responses Board resolves satisfaction with the process subsequent to feedback from Survey. (Y/N) 12 survey responses received - see more detail above. See responses to these questions below informed by the Survey.	February 2023	JO EO, Subcommittee and CNSWJO Board
Other advice What other recommendations should be made to the Board regarding the process?	Board resolves satisfaction with the process subsequent to feedback from Survey. (Y/N) See responses to these questions below informed by the Survey.	February 2023	JO EO, Subcommittee and CNSWJO Board

Compliance

Please find advice in the table below that shows that the review of the SSRP complied with the Local Government Act and optional guidance.

Direction from the OLG	**Extent to which the CNSWJO Review of the SSRP complied**
Vision for the region	Included
Regional priority areas (around 5)	7
Strategies and/or actions required to deliver the regional priorities	More detailed strategy also developed
Overview of the stakeholders, agencies and organisations required to help deliver activities and achieve regional priorities	Listed
Must be prepared within 12 months of ordinary election of councillors for all member councils.	Complies
Review of CSPs of member councils and key regional plans and strategies.	Complies, https://www.centraljo.nsw.gov.au/content/uploads/221007_CNSWJO-Enviromental-Scan-CSPs_Final.pdf https://www.centraljo.nsw.gov.au/content/uploads/221007_CNSWJO-Enviromental-Scan-LSPS_Final.pdf https://www.centraljo.nsw.gov.au/content/uploads/CNSWJO-Enviromental-Scan.pdf
Consultation with member councils, e.g. mayors, general managers and senior staff.	Workshops and a conference, feedback from members on draft was sought.

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Draft adopted November 2022	Draft adopted November 2022
Publishing of SSRP on JO website. As the priorities in the statement draw on the community strategic plans of member councils, there is no requirement for the JO to carry out community consultation on the statement of regional priorities.	Complies
Reviewing the SSRP The SSRP should be reviewed at least annually and a complete review of the statement should be a carried out every 4 years and within 12 months of each ordinary election of councillors for all member councils.	Quarterly review
Communicating about the SSRP JOs must develop a Communication and Engagement Strategy that: • *includes key messages about its role and commitment to achieving strategic priorities* • *outlines methods for communicating effectively with member councils and stakeholders on progress in strategic priorities, including the achievement of key milestones and successes* • *identifies monitoring and regular review processes, to ensure the Communication and Engagement Strategy remains relevant and effective.*	Draft Communication and Engagement Strategy adopted November 2022.

Benefit Cost

Did the process lead to the right outcome? Have we identified the right priorities?
Survey responses were broadly positive regarding the right priorities having been identified.

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What did the process cost, was it worth it? What budget recommendations would you make to the Board for the next iteration?
Costs for this project are as follows where it was fully funded from OLG Capacity Building Funds.

Input reports on LSPS, Environmental Scan and CSPs	$9900
Conference in August	$8340
Part funding PlaceMats	$6760
Total	$25,000

Survey responses were broadly positive about the expenditure. Given this iteration of the SSRP was fully funded by the NSW Government, should there be less money for this work next time, the following heads of consideration should be included:

1. The strategy itself should be developed in-house
2. A subcommittee of Mayors similar to that used for this iteration should provide oversight of the process
3. Any expenditure on consultants should be for "new eyes" on the region for a background document to inform strategy like the https://www.centraljo.nsw.gov.au/content/uploads/CNSWJO-Enviromental-Scan.pdf of strategic and plans at the regional, state, national and international levels that are relevant to this region
4. The highest priority for any funding is for a conference for new Councillors

Is the process replicable? What should be repeated and what not?
The process is broadly replicable and has been well documented. However, there are funding dependencies and the Board will need to prioritise inclusions in the next iteration.

Feedback from the Survey priorities the conference for Councillors and more interaction with Councillors in region.

Was the Board sufficiently informed of progress?
The Board received quarterly reports adopting key inputs and attended a workshop. Feedback from the Survey suggests this is sufficient.

Were Councils and Councilors sufficiently engaged?
Feedback from the Survey priorities the conference for Councillors and more interaction with Councillors in region.

Did the Subcommittee feel it had control over the process?

2 respondents identified as SSRP Subcommittee members and responses were positive.

To what extent have State agencies and other key stakeholders been afforded input into the SSRP?
RLE representatives were invited to the conference and attended. There was some State agency representation at the conference.

The RLE was provided with a presentation at its first meeting and asked to provide feedback on the SSRP. None received.

Reports

To what extent did State agencies and other key stakeholders provide input into the SSRP?

Both TfNSW and Regional NSW provided input into the conference.

The RLE was provided with a presentation and asked to provide feedback. None received.

Conclusion

In summary, the SSRP Process

- complied with legislation and guidance from the OLG;
- was well received by the region;
- showed the need for more engagement with Councilors in region;
- could have engaged better with State agencies and the RLE.

Attachment/s:

3. SSRP Evaluation Plan

Reports

e. Procurement and Contract Report

Regional Strategic Priorities	1: Leveraging our successful collaboration 1.1 Driving efficiencies and effectiveness saving Councils money
Portfolio Mayor	TBC
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Mr G Tory, Ms N Vu, Mr B Byrnes, and Mr C Butler

Report by Grace Quinton and Kate Barker dated 13 February 2023.

Recommendation/s

That the Board notes the report on the Regional Procurement and Contract Management Report and approves;

1. **The approval of a 12-month extension the regional traffic control contract;**
2. **The approval of a 12-month extension of the Supply of bitumen emulsion regional contract;**
3. **The approval of an Asset Management Audit RFQ process inclusive of a 5% contract management fee; and**
4. **Approve a regional process for a Modern Slavery Risk Assessment of suppliers for regional councils, provided more than 5 councils express interest in participating.**

Precis

This report seeks Board approval for the 12-month extensions of the existing Traffic Control Training Regional Contract, and the Supply of Bitumen Emulsion Regional Contract. Approval for an RFQ process for an Asset Management Audit is sought, inclusive of a 5% management fee.

Interest is also being sought from members on interest in participating in a regional process to conduct a risk assessment for all suppliers and contractors. This report seeks approval for JO to conduct this process on behalf of interested member councils.

Reason for the Report

This report seeks the Board's approval for a number of procurement projects.

Legislative Policy and Risk Considerations

Given procurement is an operational support program designed to bring cost savings and other benefits from aggregation, prior to commencing a procurement process a report is considered by GMAC where they are notified of the background and asked to approve the process. All procurement processes are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act and the CNSWJO procurement policy.

The region is continuing to engage with the best practice in aggregated procurement program which was a collaborative effort with neighbouring JOs that assists in informing optimal processes that can be leveraged by the changes in legislation enabling the work and actions of the JO.

Related risks from the Strategic Plan include:

7 – Despite the efforts by the OLG subsequent to the JO Review, all Councils in the JO footprint do not engage.
12 – Confused messaging on what JO does.
19 – Long term viability and financial sustainability.
20 - Turnover staff in councils who are working on JO projects – loss of corporate knowledge.

Discussion

Traffic Control Training Regional Contract - Extension

GMAC received a report at their February meeting and subsequently resolved to commend to the Board that it extend the Traffic Control Training Regional Contract with the panel of three providers which is to expire 31 March 2023. It is noted that there is low usage on this contract however GMAC agreed that there was still sufficient benefit in continuing the contract into the 12-month extension period.

It is recommended that the Board approve this 12-month extension.

Supply of Bitumen Emulsion Regional Contract - Extension

The regional contract for the Supply of Bitumen Emulsion – with Bitupave Ltd. is due to expire 31 May 2023. The contract is currently used by 10 member councils with an annual spend of approx. $1m – 1.5m. There is a 0.5% management fee linked to this contract payable by the supplier to CNSWJO.

At its February meeting GMAC resolved to commend to the Board that it approve a 12-month extension of the existing contract with Bitupave Ltd (Boral). It is therefore recommended that the Board approve this 12-month extension.

Asset Management Audit

At its November meeting the Board endorsed a Regional Asset Management Improvement Program including procurement of asset management audits. This builds on previous audits and benchmarking of participating Council's asset management practices completed in 2020 using the IPWEA National Asset Management Assessment Framework (NAMAF).

At its February meeting GMAC resolved to commend to the Board that it approve an Asset Management Audit RFQ process, with a 5% contract management fee which would provide an estimated income of $5k for the project. It is therefore recommended that the Board approve this RFQ process to be conducted by CNSWJO.

Modern Slavery Risk Assessment

CNSWJO is seeking interest from member and associate members councils to participate in a regional project for a Modern Slavery Risk Assessment. This Project will replicate work completed by the Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation (ISJO), which assessed the suppliers of goods and services currently working with councils against Modern Slavery requirements.

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Where councils use many of the same suppliers and contractors throughout the region, conducting a regional process will be an efficient model. Currently, two-member councils have responded with their interest in participating in the project.

Once interest is received from members, it is anticipated that CNSWJO will seek funding for the project, which may be available through LGP and other sources.

It is expected that more councils will respond prior to the meeting of the Board, and as such it is recommended that the Board approve the CNSWJO to conduct the regional process pending interest from at least 5 member councils. Please see scoping document attached to this report.

Value for Members

Value for members in relation to regional procurement and contract management can be found in the cost savings table elsewhere in this business paper.

Financial Implications

Some contracts administered by CNSWJO contain a management fee which is a percentage of total spend by members under the contract. The management fee is incorporated into the cost to Councils for the goods or services and is paid to CNSWJO directly by the provider. The JO is continuing to do research to identify the value stack from the provider's perspective, where to date the majority are advising the management fee is either fully absorbed or party absorbed (50/50) by the provider.

Attachment/s:

4. Scoping Document - Modern Slavery Risk Assessment.

Reports

Priority Two: Regional Prosperity through better infrastructure and services

f. Advocacy Plan for Regional Prosperity through better Infrastructure and Services Report

Regional Strategic Priorities	2:Regional Prosperity through better infrastructure and services
Portfolio Mayor	TBC
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Noreen Vu, Steve Loane, Paul Devery, Craig Butler

Report by Jenny Bennett dated 13 February 2023

Recommendation/s
That the Board adopt the Advocacy Plan for Regional Prosperity through better Infrastructure and Services.

Precis

The Statement of Strategic Regional Priority adopted in November 2022 made changes to the Regional Prosperity priority as follows:

- Telecommunications, Health and Ageing now have their own advocacy plans;
- Leveraging endowments for the region is now included; and
- Advocacy for skills and housing has now been included.

Accordingly, the Advocacy Plan for Regional Prosperity has been updated.

This report provides the Background to the Advocacy Plan where the full document including key messaging is an attachment. Given the breadth of the priority, there are a significant number of key messages.

An advocacy plan for skills is elsewhere in this agenda.

Reason for the Report

This report seeks adoption of the revised Regional Prosperity Advocacy Plan.

Legislative, Policy and Risk Considerations

Advocacy is a key role of Joint Organisation. This report provides the Background to the Advocacy Plan where the full document including key messaging is an attachment. Given the breadth of the priority, there are a significant number of key messages in the attachment so the Background is provided as a summary.

The CNSWJO Advocacy Policy calls for the development of Advocacy Plans that are reviewed annually.

Related risks in the CNSWJO Risk Management Plan

27 - Risks associated with poor data for example Treasury Common Planning Assumptions
44 - Business withdrawal from small towns continues eg banks

Background to the Advocacy Policy

As identified in its Strategic Plan for 2022-2025, the purpose of the Central NSW Joint Organisation is to provide cohesive leadership that aligns all tiers of government to deliver our region's community derived strategic priorities.

Optimal advocacy is critical to the success of the role of the Central NSW Board. The Board seeks to advocate in context of its vision which is *Prosperous communities, dynamic local government, a collaborative and strong region – when one Council succeeds, we all succeed.*

Regional prosperity is a broad church and the Board has articulated this priority as follows:

> *Regional Prosperity through better infrastructure and services:*
>
> 5. *Initiatives to grow the visitor economy in the context of locational preference factors*
> 6. *Regional industry and population growth planning*
> 7. *Advocacy and initiatives on skills and housing shortages*
> 8. *Leveraging the region's endowments and opportunities*
> - *Critical minerals and mining*
> - *Circular economy and net zero*
> - *Support the development of existing and potential activation precincts including Parkes SAP*
> - *Inland Rail*
> - *Pattern of settlement; liveability, proximity to capital cities and ports*
> - *Agriculture*

To achieve better infrastructure and services the voices of this region need to be heard, investment in the region needs to optimised and decision making needs to be more localised.

As prescribed under the Local Government Act, CNSWJO will work more collaboratively with relevant State, Federal and other agencies to improve regional development outcomes. Given resourcing, this work will occur where value to the communities of Central NSW is likely.

This region suggests that 'growth' in NSW is understood as population growth. Arguably much of NSW has concerns regarding the methodology used for calculating population growth and decline. We would suggest that regional growth is about economic contribution and its enablement. Further, the application of population projects in NSW, known as Treasury Common Planning Assumptions, is leading to a rapidly worsening situation not just for this region, but for all of regional NSW and the high growth areas in Western Sydney.

This region needs to plan to ensure it has the freight links, water supply, digital connectivity, social structures and services, access to skills and the like, to sustain and grow our economy. Regional planning should inform a raft of activities including land use planning and control. Instead, we have to manage death by a thousand cuts as services and infrastructure are either provided or withdrawn inflexibly on the basis of capitation using, we believe, a flawed methodology.

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Further, we need to manage the economic shocks to our key economic drivers exacerbated climate change, pandemic and the commodity market. This is particularly challenging for smaller communities and effort is required to build capacity to adapt to this forecast period of change.

The State has invested in its Regional Economic Vision including Regional Economic Development Strategies. There are 5 of these relevant to this region and the JO Strategy has reviewed these for areas of commonality. Continuity and optimisation of the strategic framework including the DPE Regional Plans and the Regional Economic Vision are seen as critical to ensuring best outcomes for this region.

Please note a more detailed approach to advocacy on transport, energy, health and aging, skills shortages, telecommunications and water is provided in their respective advocacy plans. For some of the above, for example policing, there is little policy and advice would have to be sought from the membership to inform key messaging in this area.

In the past three years the region has seen a substantial shortage in both skills and housing. The WRI "Region Shapers" report commissioned by DPE Planning estimated a further 64,000 jobs will need to be filled in the next 5 years as a result of the construction challenge. Clearly this will have further population impacts with its corollary need for better and more planning, infrastructure and service delivery.

Finally, the impacts of Covid are yet to be measured or understood to any extent. However, it has exposed weaknesses in our society including supply chains and the potential for independence in key areas of manufacturing.

Advocacy will take into account the electoral cycle and the likelihood for change.

Advocacy will take into account optimising outcomes from infrastructure prioritisation and feedback from member annual consultations. Consideration is given to the State and Federal funding framework including the quasi independent authorities of Infrastructure NSW, Jobs NSW and Infrastructure Australia. Advice from the broader national building and NSW Regional Devt Frameworks is also considered.

Subsidiarity is a principle of social organisation that originated in the Roman Catholic church, and was developed following the First Vatican Council. ***In its most basic formulation, it holds that social problems should be dealt with at the most immediate (or local) level consistent with their solution.*** The Oxford English Dictionary defines subsidiarity as the idea that a central authority should have a subsidiary (that is, a supporting, rather than a subordinate) function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level…. It has been associated by some with the idea of decentralisation.

Advocacy for regional prosperity is based on the principles of subsidiarisation, decentralisation and place based planning for:

- Local control over land use including LEPs, native vegetation and SEPPS;
- Support for Special Activation Precincts;
- A review of the population projection methodology in NSW that recognises the need for infrastructure and services to grow the economy as well as the population where even the population figures are wildly wrong;
- Empowering communities including:
    - Their access to data;
    - Supporting and building on the Community Strategic Planning process;

    - To increase their influence over plans at other levels of government that affect them and
    - Local Government Reform reflecting community aspirations (JO policy is no forced amalgamations);
- Less sectoralisation, restructuring and centralisation of State agencies;
- Enabling collaborative intergovernmental structures in regional NSW to deliver the regional plans in water, transport and planning where Local Government has a seat at the table;
- Sustaining Local Government, including but not limited to:
    - Funding for infrastructure
    - Asset management
    - Financial management
    - Recognising the value to the State of a healthy network of Joint Organisations through funding
- Planning and prioritisation frameworks to align the aspirations of communities with those of the State and Federal Government using a consistent regional footprint;
- Optimising the Regional Plan for Central NSW; and
- Other emerging issues as they become apparent recognising the constant churn and change in the bureaucracy in NSW.

While evidence based competitive investment is supported, the types of evidence that are regarded as compelling are rejected. For change to occur, decentralisation to continue to happen in Central NSW to optimise its role in the State and Australia, we need be aspirational rather than basing investment on looking backwards.

It is anticipated that the messaging and policy position of this Advocacy Plan will be progressed through:

- Supporting regional strategic and technical groups in their efforts to provide deep knowledge and support to advocacy, prioritisation and intergovernmental collaboration;
- Developing policy with other regions;
- Media;
- Providing submissions to government;
- Meeting with State and Federal representatives; and
- Intergovernmental collaboration.

Financial implications

Nil at this time.

Attachment/s

5. Advocacy Plan for Regional Prosperity through better Infrastructure and Services.

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Priority Two: Regional Prosperity through better infrastructure and services

g. Skills Shortages Report

Regional Strategic Priorities	2:Regional Prosperity through better infrastructure and services 3.3 Advocacy and initiatives on skills and housing shortages
Portfolio Mayor	TBC
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Noreen Vu, Steve Loane, Paul Devery & Craig Butler

Report by Carolyn Griffin and Kate Barker dated 16 February 2023

Recommendation/s
That the Board note Skills Shortages report and **1. Give consideration to progressing a relationship with another council; and** **2. Note the draft key messages of the advocacy plan and delegate the finalisation of the plan to the Portfolio Mayor and Sponsoring General Managers.**

Precis

This report provides an update on the following:

- Building Surveyors Working Group;
- LGNSW Mentoring Program; and
- Broader Skills Shortages Program

The report seeks consideration by the Board in Councils progressing relationships with other Councils, and also provides the draft key messages for the skills shortage advocacy plan, where it is recommended that the finalisation of the plan be delegated to the Portfolio Mayor and the Sponsoring General Managers.

Reason for the Report

This report is provided as an update to the Board on the progress being made in the skills shortages area where this is a new priority for the JO.

Legislative, Policy and Risk Considerations

A skills shortages advocacy plan is under development and will be provided to the Working Group in due course for comment.

Related risks from the Strategic Plan include:

7 – Despite the efforts by the OLG subsequent to the JO Review, all Councils in the JO footprint do not engage.
12 – Confused messaging on what JO does.
19 – Long term viability and financial sustainability.

Discussion

Building Surveyors Working Group Update

At its October 2022 meeting, the Building Surveyors Working Group received a presentation from Jennifer James, Workforce Development Consultant from LGNSW who provided an introduction to Careers at Council. The Working Group was interested in discussing the opportunities available and a possible building surveyor focused campaign through Careers at Council. The purpose of the campaign would be two-fold – to increase the exposure and knowledge of the industry, as well as to promote any vacancies.

LGNSW will be providing costings for the campaign and what it would look like and once the information has been provided, will be tabled for discussion during the next meeting.

Previous discussions have been held with the Working Group on facilitating a regional approach to the delivery of training to trainees. During the October 2022 meeting, the Working Group resolved the following:

1. seek advice from councils whether there is interest in exploring a regional approach to training and if so, explore the possibility of bringing a trainer to the region to support the online delivery;
2. identify a mentor to support the trainees with their online learning; and
3. facilitate a network of trainees to support their online learning.

LGNSW Mentoring Program

On the mentoring front, Ms James has advised that she doesn't expect anything will progress until next financial year when she can build a business case to include mentoring as an offering under Careers at Council. As it's not budgeted in 2022/23, she will struggle to progress it further this financial year, unfortunately.

Advice on a regional mentoring program is currently being drafted and will be sought from Sonia Battye Consulting as well. Once received, the information will be provided to the Working Group for discussion.

CNSWJO staff are currently working on the Regional Skills Shortages Advocacy Plan and will provide to the Working Group for comment once further developed. It is anticipated that the Regional Skills Shortages Advocacy Plan will align with LGNSW Advocacy Plan for skills shortages.

The Working Group will continue to meet on an approximate 6 weekly basis – the date for the Group's next meeting has not yet been scheduled.

The Broader Skills Shortages Program

The Sponsoring General Managers for the Skills Shortages Program (Bathurst, Cowra and Oberon) met with Carly Jayet, Manager People and Strategy, Forbes Shire Council and CNSWJO staff to consider options involved to progress the skills shortages program, Start Your Career Here. Riverina JO has kindly provided their collateral for the Start Your Career Here Program and is keen to collaborate with CNSWJO on this program however work in this space has not yet commenced.

While the working group for the building surveyors is looking at a very specific set of challenges, the broader skills shortages priority could be a project to be progressed through the HR Managers Group, rather than setting up a new working group. During the above meeting, the Group discussed

which initiatives from the Start Your Career Here program that were of interest and which could be progressed in the short term.

Further scoping will take place and an update will be provided in due course.

Sister City Relationships

Members would recall a previous report to the Board (in February 2020) and the Centroc Council's Sister City Relationships document which follows as an attachment again for your interest.

Discussions around sister city relationships have arisen through the Building Surveyors Working Group and how the relationships may benefit the regional councils. The Group were very fortunate to have received a presentation from Greg Tory, General Manager Lachlan Shire Council who discussed the friendship agreement (not 'Sister City') that's in place with Lachlan Shire Council and Penrith City Council. This has led to the employment of a Lachlan Shire Council employee who is based at Penrith City Council.

Greg Tory was very supportive of the relationship with Penrith, it is working very well for Lachlan Shire Council and he would encourage members to consider a similar arrangement with another council who also has the capacity and willingness to work cooperatively and provide support and opportunity in a mutually beneficial arrangement. This may not have to be a Sydney council – other councils such as Wollongong, Newcastle, Port Macquarie/Hastings, Tamworth, Dubbo, Wagga Wagga etc may also be in a position to work with a smaller council.

A copy of the Friendship Agreement between Lachlan Shire Council and Penrith City Council is available upon request.

Skills Shortages Advocacy Plan

The advocacy plan for skills shortages is under development at time of writing this report. The following provides the key messages identified in the draft plan:

1. More investment is needed in training to support a skilled workforce

   Sub-messages include:

   1.1 More funding is needed to support a skilled workforce.
   1.2 The Smart & Skilled Funding framework is not fit for purpose.
   1.3 There is an opportunity for the State and Federal Government to work with Joint Organisations to design better skills funding programming.
   1.4 All federal government initiatives are targeting the unemployed rather than what the skills shortages are.
   1.5 Explore partnership opportunities with the State and Federal Governments to offer a program where HECS fees are subsidised if a recent graduate gets a job in the regions and remains there for a specified period of time
   1.6 Focus on regional funding initiatives to ensure equitable outcomes

2. The fragmented training sector is costly, complex, and difficult to navigate

Sub-messages include:

2.1 Best practice in training sees accredited, quality training delivered in place at a reasonable price.
2.2 The Council or JO should be the funding proponent rather than the RTOs, otherwise councils have no control over quality.
2.3 Skills shortages programs need to tackle areas of skills shortages, not just unemployment.

3. Improved access to quality, affordable training in regional NSW

Sub-messages include:

3.1 Training delivery is becoming very expensive, particularly for those in regional NSW where access to quality trainers is difficult.
3.2 support local training and education providers where possible
3.3 Improve access to professional training opportunities and address difficulties in meeting continuing professional development requirements, particularly in rural and regional areas.
3.4 Ensure regional and rural communities have equitable access to VET and tertiary courses and educational institutions.
3.5 Clearer pathways to training and accreditation which are equitable for regional councils are needed.

4. All federal government initiatives need to be more nimble

5. Investment is needed in initiatives to attract and retain skilled workers

Sub-messages include:

5.1 Acknowledge the strain on existing employees when required to work beyond capacity to provide services
5.2 Advocate for better remuneration in local government to close the gap with private industry.
5.3 Develop retain and reward programs for existing staff

6. Prioritise programming in a “Growing our Own” program

Sub-messages include:

6.1 Build partnerships with universities
6.2 Support graduate programs, both paid and unpaid
6.3 provide mentoring opportunities to trainees across the region, including engaging the private and retired workforce where the Councils do not have the capacity currently to undertake this role

7. Build partnerships with other key stakeholders

Sub-messages include:

7.1 Encourage Sister-City Relationships
7.2 Build partnerships across the JO network to leverage work others are doing in relation to skills shortages
7.3 Build partnerships with larger/metro Councils to:
    a. form an exchange whereby staff members gain more experience in different sized Councils for instance with health and building surveyors

Reports

b. facilitate remote working where councils are unable to recruit local staff

8. Support collaborations

Sub-messages include:

8.1 Support trainees and cadets in the region by forming an ecosystem to facilitate networking, collaboration, camaraderie, shared learnings and support

It is recommended that the finalisation of the plan be delegated to the Portfolio Mayor and Sponsoring General Managers.

Financial Implications

The work currently undertaken in the skills shortages space is being done through existing CNSWJO resource while in the scoping phase. Once quotations are obtained and a pathway forward is determined, funding from members may be required.

Attachment/s:

6. Directory of Australian Sister City Affiliations 2020

Priority Three: Advocate for better infrastructure and services in health and ageing

h. Health Advocacy

Regional Strategic Priorities	3: Advocate for better infrastructure and services in health and ageing
Portfolio Mayor	TBC
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Gary Wallace, Brad Byrnes and Craig Butler.

Report by Jenny Bennett dated 10 February 2023.

Recommendation/s
That the Board notes the report on the Health Advocacy and **1. Adopt the key messages on health and ageing;** **2. Note the balance of the advocacy advice will be provided to the next Board meeting; and** **3. Seek to have the Health and Social Profiles developed by the Western Area Local Health District's Health Intelligence Unit updated.**

Precis

This report provide advice in two areas:

1. The Health and Ageing Advocacy Plan key messages; and
2. A refresh of health and social profiles for the region.

Health and ageing is a new priority for the Statement of Strategic Regional Priority. The Board adopted the following as areas to focus action:

- Provide advocacy support and programming at the direction of the Board where advocacy for better infrastructure and services in health and ageing will be reworked to align with the 44 recommendations as listed in the Health Outcomes and Access to Services report.
- Seek to work with Charles Sturt University on a policy paper on enabling growing our own health workforce.
- As part of its commitment to growing our own health workforce, CNSWJO provides $15Kpa for three medical students a year.

Informing the advocacy plan is a review of key documents and websites including but not limited to

- Inquiry Into Health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales.
- The Infrastructure Australia Report.
- Member LGA health profiles provided by the Health Intelligence Unit.
- Consultation with various stakeholders including the Rural Doctors Network.

Please find attached the health profile of LGAs of the region. This information was used in the PlaceMats project and the last round of Community Strategic Planning and has been useful when considering the differential health outcomes between local communities and the NSW average. It is recommended that Western Area Local Health District's Health Intelligence Unit be approached to update this information leading into the next round of Integrated Planning &Reporting.

Reports

Reason for the Report

Leadership including advocacy and intergovernmental collaboration are two key functions of Joint Organisations. As the Board adopted its new Statement of Strategic Priority in November, Health and Ageing have received greater focus. Accordingly, more effort is anticipated in intergovernmental collaboration and advocacy. Therefore, the Board is asked to:

- Adopt the key messages for the Health Advocacy Plan; and
- Seek to have the health data packs developed by the Western Area Local Health District's Health Intelligence Unit updated.

Please note that Dr Richard Colbran has been invited to speak to the meeting to update on progress on the 44 recommendations from the *Inquiry Into Health outcomes and Access to Health and Hospital Services in Rural, Regional and Remote New South Wales.*

Legislative, Policy and Risk Considerations

While Councils do not have legislative responsibility for health and aging infrastructure and services as providers of last resort they often find themselves more engaged in this work than their metropolitan counterparts. Further, Councils do have a key role in providing passive and active recreational infrastructure, safe roads and footpaths, quality drinking water, heath and building services and many other functions that impact on the health of local communities.

Despite decades of investment, health workforce shortages and investment in health infrastructure is still not meeting needs. Regional NSW including Central NSW are particularly impacted.

There is an opportunity to both build better relationships with key State and peak agencies with responsibility for health and to advocate for better outcomes.

As a new priority, work has been undertaken on developing key messages for advocacy to inform submissions, media and representation. Please find these below.

Related risks from the Strategic Plan include:

29. - Aged care – not enough places due to a variety of factors including the compliance framework and workforce shortages.
30. - Health workforce shortages.

Key Messages

1. The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members.[1]
2. People living in regional and remote regions still have a shorter life expectancy than their city counterparts. On average, people living in regional and rural LHDs live 2.2

[1] Mahatma Gandhi Quote: "The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members." (quotefancy.com)

years less than people in metropolitan LHDs (81.4 years compared with 83.6 years, respectively).[2]

3. The first finding of the *Inquiry Into Health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales* is *That rural, regional and remote patients have significantly poorer health outcomes, greater incidents of chronic disease and greater premature deaths when compared to their counterparts in metropolitan areas.*[3]
4. Critical to health outcomes is health workforce:
    a. Think about provider numbers – regional loading item number;
    b. HECCS payback for regional Drs – very helpful for junior doctors;
    c. Recruitment and RETENTON – the big new shiny thing often annoys existing staff;
    d. Building collegiality is important particularly for the more remote areas; and
    e. Place based support for family and friends of health workforce.
5. The Australian Treasury's 2015 Intergenerational Report noted that, without intervention, Australian governments will need to double spending on health care per person by 2054–55 in order to maintain current service levels.[4]
6. Australia's expenditure on preventive health is low compared to other OECD countries, at around 1.5% of total health expenditure.[5]
7. Covid 19 has exacerbated existing challenges in the health system.
8. Central NSW communities rightly expect a level of health service comparative to metropolitan areas. The city/country divide in health outcomes needs to be a catalyst for change.
9. There is still a significant shortage of generalist and proceduralist GPs in regional areas.
10. Long wait times are leading to fracturing of continuity of care as patients seek help from whoever and wherever they can get it.[6]
11. Regional Communities including those of Central NSW typically have an older age profile and therefore there is a need for special attention to be paid to aged care.
12. Social determinants of health exacerbate matters more so in Central NSW and require attention

[2] Report (nsw.gov.au) p 12
[3] Report (nsw.gov.au) p xii
[4] Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019 | Infrastructure Australia p 400
[5] Ibid page 402
[6] Report (nsw.gov.au) p 22

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- *lower median incomes and greater levels of poverty*
- *lower rates of employment, educational attainment and quality housing options*
- *higher rates of disability (particularly in older residents), obesity, domestic and family violence, smoking, alcohol and drug use*
- *more road traffic accidents and fatalities*
- *greater occupational and physical risks due to dangerous rural occupations, such as mining and farming.* [7]

13. Local government is the front line of regional communities and a part of the solution for a sustainable regional health workforce.
14. There are significant governance challenges as responsibility for policy development, funding and service delivery lies across all levels of government.[8]
15. This region supports "growing our own" health workforce and seeks to have this enabled.
16. Accordingly it is investing $75,000 in medical scholarships with Charles Sturt University.
17. The total number of hospitals in Australia has not grown steadily over time, having reduced between 2012-2013 and 2016-17 by 13. Over this period, the number of public hospitals reduced by 51 and this is largely attributed to changes in reporting from states and amalgamation of hospital infrastructure. Over the same period, the number of private hospitals grew by 38.[9]
18. Despite larger public hospitals and a growing number of private hospitals, growth in total hospital beds across Australia (1.2% per annum) is not keeping pace with population growth (around 1.6% per annum).[10]
19. This infrastructure deficit is exacerbated in NSW due to Treasury Common Planning Assumptions undercooking population projections for Central NSW where all agencies must use these for their infrastructure and service planning.
20. Local Government is willing to be part of the solution and invest in health infrastructure, but requires support from State and Federal Governments to do so.
21. The constant churn and change of structural arrangements in providing regional health services creates uncertainty and risks continuity of services.
22. Continue to support the growth of cancer care services in the region.

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[7] Report (nsw.gov.au) p 13
[8] Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019 | Infrastructure Australia p399
[9] Ibid page 401
[10] Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019 | Infrastructure Australia page 402

23. Mental Health issues are worse in regional Australia and this is exacerbated by Covid, drought and other recent challenges.
24. Information sharing, case management and health workforce outcomes are all improved in precincts
25. Precincts, particularly the Orange Health Precinct, will lead to better health outcomes in Central NSW.
26. Aged care issues are exacerbated in regional NSW.
27. The aged care system is difficult to navigate.
28. Residential aged care as a sector has significant financial stress.
29. Smaller, community based residential aged care institutions have better human outcomes than larger for profit.

Health and Social Profiles

Please see attached individual LGA health data packs for those involved in the Community Strategic Planning project 2021/2022. Two examples follow over the page.

This information is very useful for both conversations in community about their health and to inform advocacy. It is recommended that the Board ask the Western Area Local Health District's Health Intelligence Unit to update this advice leading into the next round of Community Strategic Planning.

Financial Implications

Nil at this time. It is anticipated that the data will be provided from the Health Intelligence Unit at Western NSW Local Health District.

Attachment/s:

7. Health LGA Individual Data Packs

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Health Intelligence Unit
Western New South Wales

Blayney Local Government Area

Health & Social Profile, 2021

Key Insights

Population

- The population will increase by **1.3%** from 2021 to 2031
- The Aboriginal population makes up **3.7%** of the population
- The 65+ years age group will increase by **25%** from 2021 to 2031

Health determinants (compared to NSW)

- Smoking rates among pregnant mothers are **2.1 times** higher
- Adult smoking & risky alcohol use are **25%** & **31%** higher, respectively
- Obesity is higher among adults by **39%** and among kids/teens by **57%**
- Child developmental vulnerability on 2+ domains is lower by **21%**

Service access (compared to NSW)

- Dwellings (%) without internet are higher by **40%**
- Non-urgent Emergency Department presentations are **3.1 times** as high

Burden of disease (compared to NSW)

- Deaths are higher for smoking by **20%**, circulatory diseases by **20%**, cancer by **25%**, diabetes by **25%**, injury/poisoning by **36%**, & COPD[1] by **56%**
- Hospitalisations are higher for diabetes by **21%** and for COPD[1] by **31%**
- Self-harm hospitalisations are higher by **55%** for males & **27%** for females

[1]COPD=Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder

DEMOGRAPHY	POPULATION	ABORIGINAL POPULATION	BIRTHS	0-4 YRS	65+ YRS	LIFE EXPECTANCY
	2021 = **7,421** 2031 = **7,516** % change = **1.3** (NSW=13.6)	**266** (2016) % of 2016 pop = **3.7** (NSW=2.9)	**78** (2019)	2021 = **405** % of pop = **5** (NSW=6) 2031 = **417** % of pop = **6** (NSW=6)	2021 = **1,505** % of pop = **20** (NSW=17) 2031 = **1,883** % of pop = **25** (NSW=20)	At birth = **81.9** yrs (NSW=83.1) At 65yrs = **85.3** yrs (NSW=86.4)
	MEDIAN AGE = **42** yrs (NSW=38)					

Notes. Yrs=years, pop=population. Reporting year: 2021 & 2031 population projections (2019), Aboriginal Population (2016), Births (2019), Life Expectancy (2018), Median Age (2016).

SOCIAL PROFILE & SERVICE ACCESS	INCOME	MOTOR VEHICLES	INTERNET	DISABILITY*	EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT	SCREENING
	Median **$1,227** (NSW=$1,486)	Dwellings without **93** % dwellings without **4** (NSW=9)	Dwellings without **544** % dwellings without **21** (NSW=15)	Number of people **362** % population **5** (NSW=6)	Non-urgent presentations (per '000) **12,125** (NSW=3,955)	Bowel (% invited) **38** (NSW=38) Breast (% women 50-69 yrs) **58** (NSW=53)

Notes. Yrs=years. *Profound/severe. #100,000. Reporting year: Income, Motor Vehicles, Internet & Disability (2016), Emergency Department presentations (2018-19), Screening – Bowel (2016-2017), Breast (2015-2016).

Health Intelligence Unit, Western NSW Local Health District (November 2021)

MUMS & KIDS	FERTILITY	SMOKING	BIRTH WEIGHT	DEVELOPMENTAL VULNERABILITY		OVERWEIGHT	OBESITY
	Children per female **2.29** (NSW=1.76)	In pregnancy **18.9%** (NSW=8.9%)	Low birth weight **4.9%** (NSW=6.3%)	1 or more domains **17%** (NSW=20%)	2 or more domains **8%** (NSW=10%)	2-17 years **17** (per 100) (NSW=17)	2-17 years **11** (per 100) (NSW=7)

Notes. Overweight & obesity rates are age-standardised per 100. Reporting years: Fertility (2019), Smoking in Pregnancy (2017-2019), Birth Weight (2016-2018), Developmental Vulnerability (2018), Overweight (2018-19), Obesity (2020).

HEALTH DETERMINANTS	SMOKING	ALCOHOL	FRUIT	EXERCISE	WEIGHT	BLOOD PRESSURE	PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS
	Current **18.0** (per 100) (NSW=14.4)	>2 drinks per day **21** (per 100) (NSW=16)	Adequate intake **52** (per 100) (NSW=53)	Inadequate **72** (per 100) (NSW=65)	Overweight **33** (per 100) (NSW=35) Obesity **43** (per 100) (NSW=31)	High BP **23** (per 100) (NSW=23)	High or very high **11** (per 100) (NSW=12)

Notes. All rates are age-standardised per 100 adults (18+ years). Reporting year: All data (2017-18).

BURDEN OF DISEASE	DEATHS	CANCER	CIRCULATORY	RESPIRATORY*	DIABETES	SELF-HARM^	INJURY/POISON
	Avoidable (per '000)# **118** (NSW=99)	Incidence (per '000) **555** (NSW=495)	Deaths (per '000) **163** (NSW=136)	Deaths (per '000) **39** (NSW=25)	Deaths (per '000) **74** (NSW=59)	Hosps (per '000) Males=**107** (NSW=69) Females=**150** (NSW=118)	Deaths (per '000) **49** (NSW=36)
	Smoking (per '000) **80** (NSW=67)	Deaths (per '000) **191** (NSW=153)	Hosps (per '000) **1,852** (NSW=1,666)	Hosps (per '000) **302** (NSW=230)	Hosps (per '000) **188** (NSW=156)		Hosps (per '000) **2,090** (NSW=2,147)

Notes.*Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease only. ^Intentional. #Per 100,000. Hosps=hospitalisations. Rates are spatially adjusted & age-standardised per 100,000. Reporting years: Cancer data (2013-2017), Avoidable deaths (2017-18), Injury/Poisoning deaths (2016-2018) & hospitalisations (2018-19). All other deaths (2017-2018) and hospitalisations (2017-19).

DATA SOURCES

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census Data. Australian Government. (Aboriginal Population, Median Age, Median Income.)
2. Australian Early Development Census, 2018. Australian Government. (Child Developmental Vulnerability.)
3. Centre for Epidemiology & Evidence. HealthStats NSW. Sydney: NSW Ministry of Health. (Births, Life Expectancy, Smoking in Pregnancy & Burden of Disease except Cancer.)
4. Department of Planning, Infrastructure & Environment, NSW Government. (Population Projections.)
5. NSW Cancer Institute, NSW Government. https://www.cancerinstitute.org.au (Cancer Incidence and Deaths.)
6. Public Health Information Development Unit, 2021. Social Health Atlas of Australia, Torrens University. (Social Profile & Service Access except Income & Aged Care; Health Determinants; Low Birth Weight, Overweight/Obesity 2-17 year olds, Bowel & Breast Screening.)

Health Intelligence Unit, Western NSW Local Health District (November 2021)

Health Intelligence Unit
Western New South Wales

Oberon Local Government Area

Health & Social Profile, 2021

Key Insights

Population

- The population will decrease by **1.3%** from 2021 to 2031
- The Aboriginal population makes up **3.4%** of the population
- The 65+ years age group will increase by **19%** from 2021 to 2031

Health determinants (compared to NSW)

- Smoking rates among pregnant mothers are **2.6 times** higher
- Adult smoking & risky alcohol use are **33%** & **30%** higher, respectively
- Obesity is higher among adults by **42%** and among kids/teens by **50%**
- Child developmental vulnerability on 2+ domains is lower by 76%

Service access (compared to NSW)

- Dwellings (%) without internet are higher by **67%**
- Non-urgent Emergency Department presentations are higher by **25%**

Burden of disease (compared to NSW)

- Deaths are higher for smoking by **9%**, circulatory diseases by **14%**, injury/poisoning by **19%**, & COPD[1] by **31%** but lower for cancer by 16%
- Hospitalisations are higher for diabetes by **10%** and for COPD[1] by **12%**
- Self-harm hospitalisations are lower by 2% for males & 5% for females

[1]COPD=Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder

DEMOGRAPHY	POPULATION	ABORIGINAL POPULATION	BIRTHS	0-4 YRS	65+ YRS	LIFE EXPECTANCY
	2021 = **5,399** 2031 = **5,467** % change = **1.3** (NSW=13.6)	**179** (2016) % of 2016 pop = **3.4** (NSW=2.9)	**45** (2019)	2021 = **304** % of pop = **6** (NSW=6) 2031 = **307** % of pop = **6** (NSW=6)	2021 = **1,269** % of pop = **24** (NSW=17) 2031 = **1,507** % of pop = **28** (NSW=20)	At birth = **82.2** yrs (NSW=83.1) At 65yrs = **85.6** yrs (NSW=86.4)
	MEDIAN AGE = **45** yrs (NSW=38)					

Notes. Yrs=years, pop=population. Reporting year: 2021 & 2031 population projections (2019), Aboriginal Population (2016), Births (2019), Life Expectancy (2018), Median Age (2016).

SOCIAL PROFILE & SERVICE ACCESS	INCOME	MOTOR VEHICLES	INTERNET	DISABILITY*	EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT	SCREENING
	Median **$1,239** (NSW=$1,486)	Dwellings without **72** % dwellings without **4** (NSW=9)	Dwellings without **460** % dwellings without **25** (NSW=15)	Number of people **244** % population **5** (NSW=6)	Non-urgent presentations (per '000) **4,928** (NSW=3,955)	Bowel (% invited) **40** (NSW=38) Breast (% women 50-69 yrs) **55** (NSW=53)

Notes. Yrs=years. *Profound/severe. #100,000. Reporting year: Income, Motor Vehicles, Internet & Disability (2016), Emergency Department presentations (2018-19), Screening – Bowel (2016-2017), Breast (2015-2016).

Health Intelligence Unit, Western NSW Local Health District (November 2021)

MUMS & KIDS	FERTILITY	SMOKING	BIRTH WEIGHT	DEVELOPMENTAL VULNERABILITY		OVERWEIGHT	OBESITY
	Children per female **2.29** (NSW=1.76)	In pregnancy **23.0%** (NSW=8.9%)	Low birth weight **8.0%** (NSW=6.3%)	1 or more domains **16%** (NSW=20%)	2 or more domains **2%** (NSW=10%)	2-17 years **17** (per 100) (NSW=17)	2-17 years **11** (per 100) (NSW=7)

Notes. Overweight & obesity rates are age-standardised per 100. Reporting years: Fertility (2019), Smoking in Pregnancy (2017-2019), Birth Weight (2016-2018), Developmental Vulnerability (2018), Overweight (2018-19), Obesity (2020).

HEALTH DETERMINANTS	SMOKING	ALCOHOL	FRUIT	EXERCISE	WEIGHT	BLOOD PRESSURE	PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS
	Current **19.2** (per 100) (NSW=14.4)	>2 drinks per day **20** (per 100) (NSW=16)	Adequate intake **49** (per 100) (NSW=53)	Inadequate **71** (per 100) (NSW=65)	Overweight **33** (per 100) (NSW=35) Obesity **44** (per 100) (NSW=31)	High BP **23** (per 100) (NSW=23)	High or very high **12** (per 100) (NSW=12)

Notes. All rates are age-standardised per 100 adults (18+ years). Reporting year: All data (2017-18).

BURDEN OF DISEASE	DEATHS	CANCER	CIRCULATORY	RESPIRATORY*	DIABETES	SELF-HARM^	INJURY/POISON
	Avoidable (per '000)# **100** (NSW=99)	Incidence (per '000) **464** (NSW=495)	Deaths (per '000) **155** (NSW=136)	Deaths (per '000) **32** (NSW=25)	Deaths (per '000) **60** (NSW=59)	Hosps (per '000) Males=**68** (NSW=69) Females=**113** (NSW=118)	Deaths (per '000) **42** (NSW=36)
	Smoking (per '000) **73** (NSW=67)	Deaths (per '000) **128** (NSW=153)	Hosps (per '000) **1,688** (NSW=1,666)	Hosps (per '000) **257** (NSW=230)	Hosps (per '000) **172** (NSW=156)		Hosps (per '000) **1,915** (NSW=2,147)

Notes.*Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease only. ^Intentional. #Per 100,000. Hosps=hospitalisations. Rates are spatially adjusted & age-standardised per 100,000. Reporting years: Cancer data (2013-2017), Avoidable deaths (2017-18), Injury/Poisoning deaths (2016-2018) & hospitalisations (2018-19). All other deaths (2017-2018) and hospitalisations (2017-19).

DATA SOURCES

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census Data. Australian Government. (Aboriginal Population, Median Age, Median Income.)
2. Australian Early Development Census, 2018. Australian Government. (Child Developmental Vulnerability.)
3. Centre for Epidemiology & Evidence. HealthStats NSW. Sydney: NSW Ministry of Health. (Births, Life Expectancy, Smoking in Pregnancy & Burden of Disease except Cancer.)
4. Department of Planning, Infrastructure & Environment, NSW Government. (Population Projections.)
5. NSW Cancer Institute, NSW Government. https://www.cancerinstitute.org.au (Cancer Incidence and Deaths.)
6. Public Health Information Development Unit, 2021. Social Health Atlas of Australia, Torrens University. (Social Profile & Service Access except Income & Aged Care; Health Determinants; Low Birth Weight, Overweight/Obesity 2-17 year olds, Bowel & Breast Screening.)

Health Intelligence Unit, Western NSW Local Health District (November 2021)

Priority five: Transport and Infrastructure

i. Transport Advocacy

Regional Strategic Priorities	3: Advocate for better infrastructure and services in health and ageing
Portfolio Mayor	TBC
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Kent Boyd, Steve Loane, Gary Wallace and Paul Devery.

Report by Jenny Bennett dated 10 February 2023.

Recommendation/s
That the Board notes the report on the Transport Advocacy and adopts the Transport and Infrastructure Advocacy Plan.

Precis

Subsequent to the adoption of the revised Statement of Strategic Regional Priority, the Advocacy Plan for Transport and Infrastructure has been reviewed. Key changes include adding the priority on funding for roads damaged during disasters.

Please find attached the full Transport Plan where the key messages are provided below for member consideration.

Reason for the report

Leadership including advocacy and intergovernmental collaboration are two key functions of Joint Organisations.

As the Board adopted its new Statement of Strategic Priority in November, the Transport and Infrastructure Priority have been reviewed for better alignment.

This report seeks adoption of the revised Transport and Infrastructure Advocacy Plan.

Legislative Policy and Risk Considerations

Standing on the shoulders of advocacy undertaken by Centroc, Central NSW Joint Organisation (CNSWJO) advocacy recognises its transport constraints. In its Strategic Plan transport has been identified as one of seven priorities. CNSWJO seeks to work with other stakeholders to achieve better connectivity for the region's communities.

The CNSWJO Advocacy Policy calls for the development of Advocacy Plans that are reviewed annually.

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Related risks
2.-Changing State and Federal government – support for JO priorities not continuing eg East West transport linkage into Sydney, Raising the Wyangala Dam Wall and Inland Rail.
25.- Increasing costs to Councils of storms etc – more extreme events Councils will find themselves unable to plan and just be reactive Climate change - more storms and more drought – their impacts

Please find following Key Messages from the Transport and Infrastructure Advocacy Plan where the full plan is attached.

Standing on the shoulders of advocacy undertaken by Centroc, Central NSW Joint Organisation (CNSWJO) advocacy recognises its transport constraints. In its Strategic Plan transport has been identified as one of seven priorities. CNSWJO seeks to work with other stakeholders to achieve better connectivity for the region's communities.

CNSWJO key messages of for transport advocacy for the CNSWJO are:

1. *A safe swift and secure link between Central NSW and Sydney for both passenger and freight:*

   a. *Seeking a similar level for service as communities to the north and south of Sydney as well as those west of Brisbane*
   b. *Supporting the NSW government in its aspiration for a $2.5b expenditure on the GWH and seeking Federal support*
   c. *seeking to have speeds of 100k along the route and able to service High Productivity Vehicles.*
   d. *Seeking to have the corridor sequestered for a future upgrade of a safe swift link between Sydney and Central NSW along the Castlereagh Corridor alignment.*
   e. *Seeking a multi modal approach to shorter journey times including faster rail.*

2. *The potential of Inland Rail for this region needs to be realised including leveraging linkages from the region to ports including airports and the Special Activation Precinct in Parkes.*

3. *There needs to be a modal shift from road to rail. This is to include*
   a. *the Blayney/Demondrille Line*
   b. *Maldon Dombarton*
   c. *branch lines and*
   d. *Support for Very Fast Rail between Sydney and Parkes where links in region beginning with Bathurst to Orange are prioritised.*

4. *Central NSW is uniquely positioned with regard to ports, Canberra, rail freight, significant highways and Inland rail. Its role as a transport hub must be better recognised with funding.*

5. *Air services are vital to the social and economic life of our regional communities including regional services at Kingsford Smith Airport (KSA).*

6. *Air services to Parkes, Orange and Bathurst should be supported and future expansion to both these services or into other LGAs is encouraged.*

7. *Connectivity of the region needs to be enabled through early understanding and adoption of new technology that adds value to the lives of our communities.*

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8. *Work by the NSW on transport corridors needs to be reinstated including*
    - *The Bells Line and associated roads between Lithgow and the M7.*
    - *Key freight linkages in region including the Lachlan Valley Way, Mid Western Highway, State Road 90, Newell Highway, Escort Way and the Great Western Highway.*

9. *Transport planning in region use population data that better reflects the growth being experienced by all member Councils.*

10. *There must be a regionally supported accountability frameworks for the Central West and Orana Transport Plan.*

11. *This region has identified its transport priorities using Infrastructure Australia and Infrastructure NSW guidelines.*

12. *This region expects to continue repairing roads for the next decade from the past three years of rain including significant flooding events. The funding framework must recognise this challenge.*

13. *Road funding to Councils has declined in real terms and needs to be reinstated.*

CNSWJO is keen to work more collaboratively with relevant State, Federal and other agencies to improve transport infrastructure outcomes for the region. For the next twelve months work with TfNSW on a regional land use and transport plan is anticipated. CNSWJO supports principles of codesign, place based activities and the embedment of implementation of plans for the region. The region seeks to see adequate resourcing to ensure delivery.

Attachment/s:

8. Advocacy Plan for Transport and Infrastructure

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Priority six: Regional Water Security and Productive Water

j. Regional Water Report

Regional Strategic Priorities	6:Regional Water Security and Productive Water 1.1 Regional Water network planning and best practice skills development
Portfolio Chairman	TBC
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Gavin Rhodes, Kent Boyd and Dave Waddell

Report by Meredith Macpherson, dated 10 February 2023

Recommendation/s
That the Board note the Regional Water Security report and adopt the updated Advocacy Plan for Regional Water.

Precis

This report provides an update on regional water related activities to inform an updated Advocacy Plan:

- Town Water Risk Reduction Program- Phase 1 Evaluation and announcement of Phase 2;
- Progress on the CNSWJO Regional Water Loss Management Centres Project;
- Status of the Regional Water Strategies for the Lachlan and Macquarie catchments;
- Advice on the NSW Groundwater Strategy;
- Advice on the Natural Resources Commission Water Sharing Plan reviews - Belubula Regulated River Water Sources 2012 and Lachlan Unregulated River Water Sources 2012;
- Status of the Wyangala Dam wall project; and
- Status of the Belubula Water Security project.

Advocacy plan advice is provided in the later half of the report.

Reason for the Report

This report seeks Board approval of the updated Advocacy Plan for Regional Water Security and Productive Water. It also provides context for separate reports to this meeting on Transitioning Local Water Utility Strategic Planning into the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and on Productive Water.

Legislative Policy and Risk Considerations

Town Water Risk Reduction Program- Phase 1 Evaluation and announcement of Phase 2

Following an external evaluation of Phase 1 of the Town Water Risk Reduction Program (TWRRP) a report was provided to Cabinet in late 2022. On 14 December Phase 2 of the Town Water Risk Reduction Program was announced by the Minister for Lands and Water.

The evaluation report includes insights and key findings from Phase 1 which have informed recommendations for a future work program. See Phase 2 below.

The evaluation of the two-year Phase 1 Town Water Risk Reduction Program (PDF, 1440.73 KB) report found the program to be *valuable, has made encouraging progress in achieving its foundational outcomes and stakeholder feedback strongly supports its continuation. Given the ambitious nature of the program, sustained effort and resourcing will be required to achieve its longer-term outcomes.*

Summary of key findings

Appropriateness

- The Program has begun to address key barriers and risks to effective operational and strategic risk management of water supply and sewerage services.
- The Program's workstreams and activities have appropriately targeted risks but there is insufficient information at present to assess which pilot projects can be scaled for the future (noting that pilots will be evaluated separately by the Program team later in 2022).
- The Program has addressed several risks outside of the initial program scope, which have helped strengthen the Program's implementation.

Efficiency and effectiveness

- The Program has been delivered efficiently within a tight timeframe.
- Progress has been made against the Program's intended Phase 1 outputs, however external factors have affected Program delivery.

Achievement of foundational outcomes (0-2 years)- Evaluation findings on the achievement of foundational Program outcomes are as follows:

Optimised regulatory mechanisms

- The Regulatory and Assurance Framework represents a positive, outcomes-based, practical and cost-effective approach to addressing barriers and reducing risks to water supply and sewerage services.
- Changes to the eligibility criteria and application processes for funding for strategic planning under the Safe and Secure Water Program could encourage the further uptake and delivery of strategic planning by local water utilities.
- The improved communication and willingness to collaborate with the water sector that was shown by the Department, and the co-design process to develop the Regulatory and Assurance Framework, were largely valuable for participants and has built sector support for ongoing collaboration with the Department.
- All interviewees and most survey participants reported that they largely understand the new Regulatory and Assurance Framework and their roles and responsibilities. This understanding will improve as the Regulatory and Assurance Framework is implemented, and guidance material becomes available.

- The Department's understanding of local water utility performance, risks and maturity is expected to develop as performance and risk monitoring is established.

Overcoming scale and remoteness

- Local water utilities and Joint Organisations (JOs) have an improved awareness of opportunities to work collaboratively and are motivated to continue to collaborate in the future.

- The Program has somewhat improved the Department and SOCs collaboration, approachability, and effectiveness in helping Local water utilities to address barriers and risks.

- Improved alignment in modelling, risk and options analysis relating to town water supplies between regional water strategies and local water utility strategic planning is expected in the future.

Skills and training

- Some progress has been made to improve access to skills and training, including the development of a draft Water Industry Skills and Training Action Plan (Plan). However, a lack of suitable water operator training and trainers remains an industry-wide problem. Significant work remains to implement the Plan before measurable improvements in the availability and accessibility of suitable training, and the number, capacity and capability of trained water operators can be realised, to address skills shortages and capacity challenges.

- The Program has developed better information and resources for Councillors to raise awareness of the risks in water management and their role and accountabilities as decision makers for local water utilities.

Recommendations from Phase 1

The Evaluation report made two overarching recommendations and ten recommendations against the specific program workstreams. Notable is the focus on training where significant work is required and the number of recommendations to improve the regulatory and support framework- indicative of the focus of Phase 1.

Overarching recommendations:

- The Town Water Risk Reduction Program should continue and be strengthened, with at least an equivalent level of resourcing over the next five years.

- To ensure maximum effectiveness, the Department should consider if Phase 2 of the Town Water Risk Reduction Program should remain a dedicated separate team or be co-located with other programs that support water utilities.

Improve the regulatory and support framework

Recommendation 1:
The Department should continue to develop and deliver education and engagement activities to complement the guidance material for the Regulatory and Assurance Framework, to help ensure stakeholders understand the content and their roles and responsibilities.

CNSWJO Comment**:** *Advice was provided to DPE that the guidance material requires work for it to be of use to LWUs. The issue here will be more around the implementation of the Regulatory and Assurance Framework by DPE and the tendency for DPE staff to default to their long established 'regulatory' as opposed to 'support' way of working. The Evaluation Report suggests the need for further communication and engagement with councils and local water utilities about the guidance material.*

Recommendation 2:
The Department should continue to implement and expand its targeted change-management process to drive any future stage of the Program and embed its new collaborative, risk and outcomes-focused regulatory, assurance and support posture within the Department's Water Utilities Branch.

Recommendation 3:
The Department should ensure that it has done the necessary policy and preparation work ahead of the next local government elections in September 2024, to be able to encourage councils to integrate their local water utility strategic planning with the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework of the Local Government Act 1993 by the next cycle of IP&R (i.e., July 2025 to June 2029).

CNSWJO Comment: *This is a good recommendation that goes to the heart of the findings from the CNSWJO TWRRP Strategic Planning pilot. Hopefully it will drive engagement by DPE in the proposed JO project to transition local water utility strategy into the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework over the next two years. See advice later in this report.*

Recommendation 4:
The Department should develop and test options to optimise the integration of RWS (and WaterNSW) modelling, options and risk analysis with local water utility/council strategic planning to further implement the strategic direction of the Auditor General's 2020 Performance Audit Report entitled 'Support for regional water infrastructure'.

CNSWJO Comment: *This recommendation is in line with the CNSWJO Board's long-term advocacy seeking shared data and modelling.*

While modelling has been undertaken by the Department, it is reported in the Evaluation Report that work has not yet commenced to incorporate or align modelling, risk and options analysis between Regional Water Strategies and local water utility strategic planning. Further, WaterNSW indicated that it had undertaken sustainable yield modelling that could also be helpful in local water utility strategic planning. This will be good news for Oberon who have struggled to obtain this data. It is understood that the Orange/CTW/Cabonne sub-regional town water strategy is attempting to pilot the sharing of data and modelling.

Recommendation 5:
The Department should explore options and incentives, in consultation with the wider water sector, to address critical gaps in local water utilities regulation. Potential focus areas identified through this evaluation include local water utility strategic planning, performance standards and requirements for skills and training.

CNSWJO Comment: *Legislative changes were outside of the Phase 1 Program scope. While there is limited detail about what these critical gaps are, the Evaluation Report includes commentary as follows:*

some stakeholders noted that the absence of legislative incentives, including no mandatory requirement for local water utilities to undertake strategic planning (including asset management planning) and no minimum performance standards, may hinder implementation and compliance.

Therefore, additional options and incentives may be needed to achieve regulatory outcomes in the future. If legislative changes are within scope for future phases of the Program, they could consider:

- *mandating minimum skills and training requirements for water operators.*
- *mandating the development and maintenance of effective strategic water plans by local water utilities.*
- *better defining the roles and responsibilities of local water utility regulators in relation to the provision of support, advice, approvals, assurance, compliance and enforcement.*

Any changes should be made in line with the Department's new regulatory approach, including appropriate engagement and collaboration with the wider water sector, and ensure the Regulatory and Assurance Framework maintains a positive outcomes-based, practical and cost-effectiveness approach to regulation.

The CNSWJO continues to advocate that the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework of the Local Government Act 1993 is the mandatory strategic framework for Councils and that transitioning local water utility strategy into the IP&R framework is the way forward.

Encourage greater collaboration among local water utilities (and others)
Recommendation 6:
Given the success of the Program's stakeholder engagement approach, the Department should consider how to leverage this for any future stage of the Program and other major reforms, while also ensuring that consultation is coordinated, planned and communicated in a timely manner.

Facilitate greater State government support for local water utilities
Recommendation 7:
Now that the new Regulatory and Assurance Framework is in place for local water utility strategic planning, the Department should review its Safe and Secure Water Program guidelines to ensure that they are aligned, to embed the new framework approach and encourage the further uptake and delivery of strategic planning by local water utilities.

CNSWJO Comment: *This recommendation will need to be monitored given issues associated in the past with the Department's poor administration of strategic planning processes and approvals and its need for oversight of the expenditure of public monies where strategic planning is linked to funding*.

Improve access to skills and training
Recommendation 8:
The Department should, as soon as possible, update its draft Skills and Training Action Plan and lead the implementation of actions to establish an effective, accessible and sustainable training market for water operators.

CNSWJO Comment: *This recommendation informs the priority focus for Phase 2. Research by the Program has identified that over the next 4 years, there is an expected deficit of 1,476 water*

operators' qualifications and a shortfall of up to 21 trainers and assessors to deliver training. This research highlights that the current skills shortages and capacity challenges are an industry-wide problem. A separate report on the CNSWJO Water Operator Training Program is provided to this meeting and seeks GMAC direction on next steps.

Investigate alternate funding models
Recommendation 9:
The Department should progress the Phase 1 findings to investigate fit-for-purpose funding models to reduce service risks and better support local water utilities to meet their service obligations under local circumstances.

CNSWJO Comment: *It is important to continue to monitor the Government's intentions regarding governance structures for water utilities.*

Other
Recommendation 10:
The Department should continue to collaborate with the Local Water Utility sector (including local water utilities, JOs, other regulators and SOCs) in the implementation and delivery of future stages of the Program to ensure continued buy-in and support.

CNSWJO Comment: *More than 'buy-in and support', it is hoped that this continued collaboration will seek and be informed by local knowledge, experience and expertise in designing, implementing and delivering fit-for-purpose processes that meet the needs of regional Local Water Utilities and the communities they serve.*

It is understood that where a Stakeholder Advisory Panel (SAP) that included representation from the CNSWJO and Mayor Bill West, representing LGNSW was a central element of the partnership approach for Phase 1, DPE will utilise the SAP to advise, help design, facilitate and refine the program and to identify broader engagement opportunities.

As identified in the Evaluation Report there is a long way yet to go and sustained effort and resourcing will be required to achieve its longer-term outcomes.

See activity 6d in the JO Strategic Regional Priorities Plan which is to resource Stage 2 implementation of the new Regulatory and Assurance Framework for LWUs including a potential pilot of regional work on the integration of strategic water planning with the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. This is to align with the Regional Asset Management Working Party also being resourced to support members in the management of assets.

Next steps- Phase 2

Informed by the Evaluation Report findings and recommendations the NSW Government is now investing $32.8M into a suite of initiatives aimed at providing greater support for Local Councils and Local Water Utilities. (Presumably this would be supported should there be a change of Government.)

Phase 2 of the Program will:

- address critical skills shortages and boost water operations training and employment opportunities in regional NSW for school leavers, Aboriginal and First Nations students and existing water operators, in partnership with Training Services NSW.

- deliver a new program in partnership with NSW Health to help optimise the performance of high-risk water treatment infrastructure using innovative technology so that more regional towns have reliable, resilient and safe water services.
- enable local water utilities to accelerate responses to audits to improve local dam safety and address water quality risks, leveraging the systems and expertise of WaterNSW.

Notably, Phase 2 includes funding to implement the Water Operations Skills and Training Action Plan. It will also initiate an investigation into the regulatory gaps identified in Phase 1, which includes establishing a minimum training requirement for NSW water operators. This was an action consistently identified by stakeholders as a major barrier for operator training. This one action will be transformational as a driver for operator training in NSW and underpins many of the actions in the plan. More detail is available in the plan.

In addition to funding for dedicated positions for the delivery of the Plan, Training Services NSW has ringfenced $8.12M for fee free training. See the report to this meeting on Water Operator Training.

Aside from recommendations included in the Phase 1 Evaluation Report and detail in the Training Action Plan there is limited detail around Phase 2.

CNSWJO Comment Arguably, the solution to the training issue is better coordination - not mandating training. CNSWJO has ably demonstrated how better coordination will deliver alignment with the National Certification Framework. It seems that no other entity responsible for this work is delivering it and any amount of mandating may or may not make any difference while concurrently increasing LWUs compliance burden.

The success of the Regulatory and Assurance Framework and achievement of future outcomes will depend on the Department's implementation of its new regulatory, assurance and support approach

The Phase 1 Evaluation Report notes significant concerns from stakeholders that without cultural change in DPE, implementation of the Regulatory and Assurance Framework could risk becoming more prescriptive over time, which would “lose the overall value of the Program”.
It comments that:

While stakeholders acknowledged that change was starting to occur, particularly among the Program team and associated senior executives, many perceive that there may be resistance among parts of the Department to the new regulatory, assurance and support posture and Regulatory and Assurance Framework. It will be important to ensure that implementation of the Regulatory and Assurance Framework maintains the same culture of transparency and accountability that has been emblematic of the Program, and that the implementation team seek to build trust with stakeholders early on.

Progress on the CNSWJO Regional Water Loss Management Centres Project

To recap, a presentation was provided to the October GMAC meeting on the CNSWJO Regional Water Loss Management Centres’ Project and the Project Plan as approved by DPE was endorsed by the Board at its November meeting.

With the impact of the flood emergency in November and risks for Councils in flood recovery and covid outbreaks, the Project Steering Committee (PSC) agreed to officially pause the project until January. It is generally acknowledged that there will be project slippage. Where the project funding deed requires delivery of a mid-program review for Milestone 3 in December 2022, the PSC agreed

that this be reviewed in January. The Department has indicated that a variation to the project timeframe will be accepted once this review is completed.

Progress on this project so far can be summarised as follows:

- ✓ Milestone 1- funding deed signed.
- ✓ Milestone 2 - Project Plan including Risk Management Plan completed and accepted by DPE.
- ✓ Project Steering Committee formed, ToR developed, meeting weekly.
- ✓ Communications Plan – co-designed with DPE completed and accepted by DPE. A Media Release is in negotiation with DPE for release through Mayors prior to the NSW Government caretaker period.
- Milestone 3- a mid-program review has been held over by the PSC until January 2023 and at the time of writing is being finalised in discussion with the PSC and Project Technical Committee (PTC).
- Training for LWU staff in delivered in Parkes the week beginning 6 February 2023 to 27 staff from 6 Councils and CTW.
- Project resources identified and program delivery including maturity audits and benchmarking is being rolled out at participating councils.
- Data challenge, project reporting and metrics are in discussion with relevant state agency staff. A meeting was convened on 23 January 2023 to discuss methodologies to determine energy savings. A small working group has now been identified to follow up on this.

There remains a lot of work to do and while there is good engagement, collaboration and willingness of Department staff to work with the JO on this project, ensuring alignment of the project with other programming activities underway by DPE through the roll-out of their Water Efficiency Program and optimisation of these remains challenging. In addition to this moving forward will be resourcing at the Council level, given the flood recovery efforts. The PSC is keeping a watching brief on this on a weekly basis.

Commencing 6 February, a Project Technical Committee has commenced meeting weekly.

Next Steps

As part of the Milestone 3- Mid Term Review the PSC is awaiting finalisation of reports on the findings from the maturity audits and recommendations from the PTC on the programmisation of water loss management including business cases for work by individual Councils and opportunities for regional procurement. This will inform discussion by the PSC of next steps and the financial implications for individual Councils.

Please request any documentation including the Communications Plan, Milestone Reports or PSC Meeting Minutes.

Status of the Regional Water Strategies for the Lachlan and Macquarie catchments

Lachlan Regional Water Strategy

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The draft Lachlan Regional Water Strategy was on a second public exhibition from Wednesday 5 October until Friday 18 November 2022. Due to the extensive and ongoing flooding across the Lachlan region, a decision has been made to re-exhibit the draft Lachlan Regional Water Strategy in early 2023.

Any submissions that were made will be reviewed and feedback considered for inclusion in the re-exhibited documents.

For more detail:
https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water/plans-and-programs/regional-water-strategies/public-exhibition/macquarie-castlereagh-regional-water-strategy

Macquarie-Castlereagh Regional Water Strategy

The draft Macquarie-Castlereagh Regional Water Strategy was on a second public exhibition from Wednesday, 5 October until Friday, 18 November 2022.

A number of representatives from Macquarie catchment Councils including Orange and Bathurst attended a session in Dubbo with stakeholders from across the catchment. The CNSWJO made a submission under the hand of the Executive based on Board endorsed policy.

A summary of feedback received and a copy of respondent submissions (including the CNSWJO submission) is published on the DPE website. Also on the website are Communiques from the focus sessions held in Dubbo and Orange in November.

https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water/plans-and-programs/regional-water-strategies/public-exhibition/lachlan-regional-water-strategy

Advice from Ms Shagofta Ali in December is that the DPEs intention is to hold off releasing the final version of the Macquarie- Castlereagh RWS until mid-2023 to enable time for greater engagement with stakeholders.

This will include the opportunity to work closely with the JO and LWUs on the development of the RWS Implementation Plan in early 2023.

NSW Groundwater Strategy

Following public consultation, to which the CNSWJO made a submission (August 22), the final draft of the NSW Groundwater Strategy was released on 21 December.
https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/news/a-smarter-groundwater-future-starts-now

The strategy includes actions to:

- Support towns and cities that use groundwater improve their urban water planning
- Support Aboriginal people's rights, values and uses of groundwater
- Support resilient groundwater-dependent industries in NSW
- Better share and integrate groundwater information
- Improve our understanding of groundwater resources
- Expand and target our groundwater data collection
- Refresh, consolidate and expand our groundwater policy framework
- Improve protection of groundwater-dependent ecosystems and baseflows to streams

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- Review and update approaches to sustainable groundwater extraction
- Protect groundwater quality within natural limits
- Better integrate groundwater management with other land and water management processes
- Develop the groundwater components of a water knowledge plan

The first implementation plan will chart how actions are delivered over the next two years. It will be published early in 2023.

Wyangala Dam Wall Project

Correspondence from Minister for Lands and Water, the Hon Kevin Anderson dated 2 February has confirmed that the final business case for the Wyangala Dam wall raising project is on track for completion in the first half of 2023.

The Wyangala project is just one infrastructure option, along with other infrastructure and non-infrastructure options, being investigated by the NSW Government to improve water security for the people of the Lachlan Valley. These options are included in the draft Lachlan Regional Water Strategy.

Belubula Water Security Project (BWSP) update

Below is an update on the BWSP as provided by the Project Manager from Water Infrastructure NSW (WINSW):

- The project team is continuing to work on the development of the final business case.
- The project is also aware that the draft Regional Water Strategies for the Lachlan and Macquarie-Castlereagh are in development with public consultation to continue.
- Tender documents for the technical services scope of works for the Lake Rowlands Augmentation were released to preferred tenderers in December 2022 with responses expected in February 2023. The scope is requesting a technical solution and cost estimate on meeting dam safety requirements and the augmentation option of raising the wall.
- This latest tender document release follows the expression of interest process for prospective tenderers for BWSP Design Services that was completed in July 2022.

As WINSW is responsible for delivering the BSWP, further information regarding the project is available on DPE Water's website at: https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water/water-infrastructure-nsw/regional-projects/belubula-water-security-project

Natural Resources Commission Review of the Water Sharing Plan for the Belubula Regulated River Water Source 2012 and the Water Sharing Plan for the Lachlan Unregulated River Water Sources 2012.

The Natural Resources Commission has commenced its review of the *Water Sharing Plan for the Belubula Regulated River Water Source 2012* and the *Water Sharing Plan for the Lachlan Unregulated River Water Sources 2012*. The Commission has contacted the JO and member Councils who submitted to a request for feedback on these Plans in late 2022 to discuss their submissions and seek insights into issues raised. Further advice will be provided.

Reports

Advocacy Plan for Regional Water Security & Productive Water

Background

This report and two separate reports to this meeting on a project to Transition Local Water Utility Strategic Planning into the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and on Productive Water provide detail on the strategic context for an updated Advocacy Plan for Regional Water Security and Productive Water.

It is a huge and complex portfolio across multiple areas including planning and strategy, regional and local infrastructure, LWU regulation and operational priorities.

Relevant to any review of the Advocacy Plan is the timeframes for the strategic reform by the NSW Government of water planning and management, particularly the development of the Regional Water Strategies and implementation of the overarching State Water Strategy. These strategies will have significant implications for water planning and management and infrastructure and non-infrastructure solutions at the local and regional levels.

Where completion of the Regional Water Strategies is long overdue, advocacy messaging remains largely unchanged. Particularly, where the CNSWJO has long advocated that their success will be determined by Governance and Implementation Plans enabled regionally with Local Government with a seat at the decision-making table. This is discussed earlier in this report and in the report on Productive Water.

While good progress has been made on the integration of town water challenges and solutions to these in the RWS, there is still a lot to be done on the recognition of the value of town water to the economy. Further, as our members well know, work on the RWS has not yet translated to the implementation of infrastructure solutions needed to secure town water supplies for the region prior to the next drought.

Work on the long-term regional water security solutions including the Wyangala Dam Wall raising and the Belubula Water Security Project has been slow and local solutions including for Bathurst and Orange continue to struggle with the state bureaucracy. Despite work by the TWRRP phase 1 this has not yet improved.

Again, the timeframes for the TWRRP are problematic with much work required in Phase 2 to successfully implement the new Regulatory and Assurance framework in line with the intention of the program being to *enable local water utilities to manage risks and priorities in town water systems more strategically and effectively and, as a result, reduce risks in regional NSW communities over time.* We are really just at the beginning with much yet to be done to secure water supplies for our region.

A refreshing outcome from the TWRRP Phase 1 is a new approach by DPE Water to working collaboratively with the Local Government sector to deliver better outcomes for our communities in town water. Where great work has been done to date, the proof will be in collaborative, place-based whole-of-government implementation processes moving forward. Continued advocacy on this point is needed where the challenge will be ensuring that DPE Water continue to support the forums needed for on going collaboration as opposed to returning to the information delivery style of collaboration of the past.

The new collaborative model has enabled the JO to progress one of its key advocacy priorities being to co-design programming through a potential regional approach to strategic planning for LWUs with DPE

Water. The CNSWJO has proposed that its established collaborative approach could be used to enable groups of councils with common regional interests to undertake strategic water planning in a more cost effective and less resource intensive manner, and act as a bridging mechanism between the strategic plans of local water utilities and the NSW Government's Regional Water Strategies. The intention is, with the support of the Board, to scope a pilot to transition LWU strategic planning into the IP&R framework. See the report to this meeting.

The collaborative model and strong reputation of the CNSWJO and its Water Utilities Alliance has also enabled the JO to secure the grant funded program for water loss management aimed at optimising existing infrastructure to assist with water security.

In line with Board endorsed policy, these opportunities seek to incentivise work by the JO at a regional level delivering good value to members and their communities and the State Government by reducing costs, duplication of effort and ensuring greater alignment with work in water planning and management by other levels of government.

With the growing popularity of the regions through covid and economic pressures from the impact of the war in the Ukraine and trade sanctions with China, there are great opportunities to optimise strategic work in water management to deliver increased productivity in the region while ensuring water for critical human needs. This informs the Board priority for the development of a Productive Water Strategy.

Locally many member Councils continue to struggle with resourcing and budget pressures exacerbated by the successive natural disasters and ever-increasing regulatory requirements around, for example, drinking water quality. With ageing infrastructure and water security needs already causing pressures feedback from members is that it could take decades to recover from the November 2022 floods that impacted the region.

Continued advocacy will also be needed through TWRRP Phase 2 to ensure the $32.8M committed for programming including in the critical area of water operator training delivers fit-for-purpose results on the ground for member Council's workforces.

Where through the TWRRP the NSW Government has continued to provide assurances that the Government has no intention of changing the institutional arrangements for Local Government owned and operated LWUs, at the time of writing, privatisation by the NSW Government of the large metropolitan state-owned corporations, Sydney and Hunter Water, is back in the news.

In its 2019 report Infrastructure Australia provide the following commentary:

The true value of water is poorly understood by users and many in the sector. Unreliable and incomplete evidence undermines the effectiveness of decisions, and community confidence in water managers. Overcoming the challenges faced by the water sector and preparing for the future will require a shift in planning and decision making to ensure the long-term interests of a range of stakeholders are protected. Water services in some parts of the country do not meet an acceptable standard. Advances in urban water in metropolitan areas risk leaving large parts of the country behind. There are significant barriers and costs for delivering safe and reliable water and wastewater to all Australians. Without action, these barriers could drive further inequality, and undermine progress towards national targets and commitments.

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Summary of Key Messages

Where the Advocacy Plan for Regional Water is very detailed and nuanced, given the long timeframes in reforming the strategic and regulatory framework by the NSW Government outlined above, key messages remain largely unchanged. These are summarised below.

1. *The supply of secure, quality drinking water for Central NSW communities is of the highest priority for the CNSWJO Board.*

2. *As the failure of urban water supplies is socially unacceptable and economically enormously costly, the CNSWJO Board support investment in long-term options that offer substantive improvements in security and reliability of water for town, agricultural, industrial and mining needs as well as flood management.*

Sub messages

2a. Towns use around 2% of the water stored in dams in NSW. It is critical to the sustainability of the region's towns that it is not overlooked.

2b. 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.

3. *Further investigation of preferred options from the Lachlan Valley Water Security Investigation to improve water security for the Lachlan Valley are welcomed with the expectation that the outcome will ensure evidence-based decision making on options including the Lake Rowlands to Carcoar pipeline (now Belubula Water Security Project) and the raising of the Wyangala Dam wall and, subject to greater certainty, clarity about the management of water.*

4. *The CNSWJO Board support opportunities along the Lachlan Valley to do business differently to support the nation's growth aspirations. Raising the dam wall at Wyangala is an important first step to deliver better flood immunity and water security to enable the agricultural sector.*

Sub messages

4a. Increasing storage capacity in Wyangala Dam will improve flood mitigation capability and will have a major economic benefit which must be factored into any business case.

4b. The Lachlan and Macquarie Regional Water Strategies and the Wyangala Dam wall (and Belubula Water Security) projects present the opportunity to ensure policy and water management settings are right in a whole of catchment approach, not just for urban water, but for productive uses to drive growth and prosperity through increased reliability of supply.

4c. Investment in additional storage must be augmented with improvements in distribution networks for town water supplies.

5. *The CNSWJO Board support the development of the Lachlan and Macquarie Regional Water Strategies as 50 year strategic plans that together with the Wyangala Dam wall and Belubula Water Security Projects will potentially solve drought emergency urban water needs for the region's towns and communities while delivering an economic driver through increased high security water.*

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Sub message

5a. The Belubula Water Security Project does not discount the need for a significant new or increased storage for the Lachlan Valley that provides both improved security and flood mitigation capability, given the losses that farmers downstream of Cowra suffered in the November 2021 flooding.

6. *The CNSWJO Board supports advice from the Productivity Commission and others that water planning and management requires a whole-of-government approach that includes Local Government with a seat at the decision-making table.*

Sub message

6a. The missing piece in regional water planning and management is effective inter-governmental collaboration at the regional level in strategic water management.

6b. The role of Town Water Security Co-ordinator needs to be made permanent with a structure that enables authentic engagement with communities, particularly elected representatives.

7. *The CNSWJO Board support institutional arrangements that maintain Local Government responsibility for the operation and management of water supply and sewerage services and infrastructure in regional NSW.*

Sub messages

7a. Local Government management of water utilities in Central NSW is being undertaken on a solid basis through the Central NSW Joint Organisation's Water Utilities Alliance with demonstrable cost savings and efficiencies being achieved.

7b. 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 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.

8. *The Central NSW JO Board seek a whole of government Drought Policy.*

Sub message

8a. 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.

Key messages in response to strategic activity in this space at all levels of Government continue to be:

- The need for inter-governmental collaboration on strategic regional water planning and management through a multi-agency committee.
- The need for the role of Town Water Security Co-ordinator to be made permanent with a structure that enables authentic engagement with communities, particularly elected representatives.

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- Implementation and governance plans for the delivery of the place – based Regional Water Strategies (including appropriate delegation of agency staff in regional areas and a seat at the table for Local Government).
- Enablement of Local Government through a seat at the decision-making table for the prioritisation of options in the Regional Water Strategies.
- The sharing of new modelling and data with Local Government.
- Ground-truthing of policy and methodologies around how town water is valued for regional communities (particularly where this has an implication for funding).
- Enabling of water for critical human needs under the Water Management Act.

Potential Changes

Based on resolutions by the Board and submissions endorsed over the past 12 months there are some additional sub-messages to be added to a reviewed Advocacy Plan. These include messages around:

- reviews of the Water Sharing Plans
- to reflect state and federal government priorities for water for cultural purposes
- to align advocacy with LGNSW priorities.

The change of Priority 6 of the SSRP to Regional Water Security and Productive Water will see the need for the inclusion of Productive Water policy as this is developed. See report to this meeting suggesting that this be referred to the CSU Policy Lab for consideration.

Further, where the Board supports member Councils in their advocacy for their priority water infrastructure projects particularly for town water security, updates are being sought on the listing and will be included as an appendix.

There is also the need for a greater emphasis on additional space for flood mitigation in addition to storage for increased water security.

Additional messaging includes:

From meeting with Lachlan Valley Mayors and the MDBA – Parkes June 2022

- Raise Wyangala Dam is No 1 priority. Forbes raised strongly the need to ensure there was "additional" space for flood mitigation in addition to storage.
- Environmental Flows need to be better explained to the community, especially when timing seems incongruous
- Water for "social well-being" should receive a special, prioritised category. For example, Forbes Ski Lake, Gum Bend Lake at Condobolin
- Industry needs to be identified and supported in the MDBA plan. High security water needs to be available for industrial purposes.

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LGNSW 2023 State Election Priorities

It is suggested that the following messages to align with LGNSW advocacy for the water sector be added as sub messages.

Resilience to natural disasters

- Increase financial support and funding for restoration, remediation and betterment of local community infrastructure, including water and sewerage assets, in advance of disasters where the risks are identified and in the recovery stage.

Roads and Infrastructure

- Protect local government ownership and management of council water utilities and invest in them to bolster water security. * Note here the addition of 'invest in LWUs'.

Intergovernmental Agreement

- A new model for collaboration between the State and local governments is required, underpinning a shared commitment to working in partnership to achieve positive social, economic, environmental and civic outcomes.

Stronger Communities

- Equitable access to essential infrastructure and services is the cornerstone of a democratic society, and councils must be supported in their critical efforts to ensure no communities are left behind.
  *This goes to the heart of the development of Community Service Obligations for the delivery of critical LWU services in more rural and remote communities.

Planning

- Councils must be supported with a planning system that enables them to determine local and regional planning processes according to the needs and expectations of their communities.
  *This is relevant to the integration of planning for water into the IP&R framework and synergies between land use planning and water infrastructure.

Skills and Labour Shortages

- Allow for greater flexibility/overcoming barriers to accreditation/registration of professional and trades employees.

- Ensure all areas of need have equitable access to VET and tertiary courses and educational institutions – including face-to-face training.
  * This is relevant to the challenges faced by LWUs in the training of Water Operators where lack of training poses a serious risk to community health and safety and exposes Councils and elected representatives to liability.

Other messaging suggested for inclusion:

- Engage with and support the GNSW and JO Local Water Utility Working Group and NSW Water Directorate to boost advocacy capacity of the regional water sector.

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- Establish and maintain close relationships with regulatory bodies to ensure that Local Government has a 'seat at the table' when government decision-making occurs around policy and programming with implications for communities in central NSW.

- In collaboration with LGNSW, engage in government enquiries and reviews at an early stage so that the regional water sector is appropriately represented in government discussions.

- Assist in the production of information to help keep elected councillors informed of the nature and importance of the industry for their communities.

Value to Members

Work by the CNSWJO in the regional water portfolio supports member councils in the planning and management of quality, secure water and sewer services for central NSW communities. The work of the collaborative Water Utilities Alliance supports the Board's key advocacy priority for Local Government ownership and management of Local Water utilities in regional NSW.

Financial implications: Nil

Attachment/s:

9. Advocacy Plan for Regional Water Security and Productive Water

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k. Transitioning Local Water Utility Strategic Planning into the IP & R Framework

Regional Strategic Priorities	6: Regional Water Security and Productive Water 6.1 Regional Water network planning and best practice skills development
Portfolio Chairman	TBC
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Gavin Rhodes, Kent Boyd and Dave Waddell

Report by Meredith Macpherson, dated 10 February 2023

Recommendation/s
That the Board note the report on transitioning what was Integrated Water Cycle Management Planning for Local Water Utilities into the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework report and **1. Approve the Terms of Reference and Project Scope;** **2. Note that the Subcommittee of General Managers is Mr B Byrnes, Mr K Boyd, Mr G Rhodes and Mr G Tory; and** **3. Note that the region is seeking funding to progress this project while expending $25K of the Office of Local Government Capacity Building Funds to commence work.**

Precis

This report seeks Board approval for the Terms of Reference and Project Scope for a project to transition what was Integrated Water Cycle Management Planning for Local Water Utilities into the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. It provides advice on the strategic context for the project and foundational work undertaken to date to inform the project scope and terms of reference.

Reason for the Report

The Board has adopted the CNSWJO Water Utilities Alliance Strategic Plan with a key objective being: *To support the effective and efficient delivery of value to members and other stakeholders in quality and secure water and wastewater services through Integrating strategy (once IWCM) into IP&R.*

General Managers received a presentation at their October 2022 meeting on this matter and subsequently resolved to form a sub-committee to provide oversight. This advice was provided to the Board at its meeting on 24 November along with the presentation.

This report seeks Board approval of the Terms of Reference and project scope for a project to transition what was Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) Planning into the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework for our member Council's Local Water Utilities strategic planning.

Legislative Policy and Risk Considerations

Background

1. NSW Auditor General's Report & Recommendations

The NSW Auditor General released a report on *Support for Regional Town Water Infrastructure* (September 2020).

https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/support-for-regional-town-water-infrastructure

In summary the Auditor General found that DPIE (now DPE):

- had not effectively supported and overseen town water infrastructure planning
- did not have a clear regulatory approach
- lacked internal procedures and data to guide its support for LWUs
- had no strategy to target investments to the areas of greatest priority.

The Auditor General made 7 recommendations to DPIE aimed at:

- *improving the administration and transparency of its oversight, support and funding for town water infrastructure, and at strengthening its sector engagement and interagency coordination on town water planning issues and investments.*

The Auditor General found that the system administered by DPE Water for strategic planning by LWUs was not working stating that:

- *the department has had limited impact on facilitating Local Water Utilities' (LWU) strategic town water planning. Its lack of internal procedures, records and data mean that the department cannot demonstrate it has effectively engaged, guided or supported the LWU sector in Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) planning over the past six years. Today, less than ten per cent of the 92 LWUs have an IWCM strategy approved by the department.*

2. DPE Water Response - Town Water Risk Reduction Program

In response DPE established the Town Water Risk Reduction Program (TWRRP) to work in partnership with the LWU sector to:

- *develop and implement a new approach of working together that enables local water utilities to manage risks and priorities in town water systems more strategically and effectively and, as a result, reduce risks in regional NSW communities over time.*

The TWRRP established a Strategic Planning working group to work in collaboration with the LWU sector on setting outcomes focused requirements for service levels, performance standards, Integrated Water Cycle Management, financial planning and price monitoring.

Notably, it was recognised early in the Program that funding ought to be separated from LWU strategy however this has not materialised, indeed commentary now is more akin to "the department needs to ensure its investment…"

Where the CNSWJO was represented on this working group, it became clear that the TWRRP solutions being developed did not sufficiently recognise that Councils and County Councils must operate under the Local Government Act - 8C (and other references) and are regulated through the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework of the Local Government Act 1993.

When the consultation draft Regulatory Framework was put out for submission by DPE Water in April 2021, the CNSWJO sought legal advice and following resolution by the Board at its April meeting made a submission that in summary supported that:

- *Strategic Planning for LWUs be removed from the regulatory framework recognising strategy is also regulated in the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework of the Local Government Act 1993.*

As a result of advocacy by the CNSWJO and others, DPE Legal reviewed the Draft Regulatory Framework to ensure there was no language that creates or implies powers they do not hold. The following response was provided:

- *…the department acknowledges it is not expressly empowered under legislation to regulate strategic planning or to enforce compliance related to the strategic planning of local water utilities.*

- *The department acknowledges that, in instances where it does not have legislated regulatory authority, it cannot bind or direct utilities, and there are no compliance requirements or enforcement measures that the department can use.*

Further, advice was provided that DPE Water:

- does not intend that funding agreements set requirements of strategic planning that would be on top of the regulatory framework.
- supports the use of the IP&R framework for strategic planning by LWUs and the intention is for the finalised documents to make clear the Department's commitment to enabling its use.
- is aware that cultural change is needed. The DPE staff will be supported in their implementation of the new framework with intensive training in outcomes-based regulation.

The final version of the Regulatory and Assurance Framework (the framework) for local water utilities came into effect from 1 July 2022.

The framework details the *expectation* that a LWU will, amongst other things, *conduct effective, evidence-based strategic planning for water supply and sewerage services that applies the principles of adaptive planning and integrated water cycle management, and considers climate risks.*

Under its assurance role, the department establishes what outcomes it expects effective, evidence-based strategic planning to achieve (see section 3.2) and assesses whether a LWU's strategic planning achieves these outcomes to a reasonable standard (see sections 3.3 and 3.4).

https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/water-utilities/best-practice-mgmt

To enable LWUs to meet these expectations, the DPE is in the process of producing:

- 12 Guidance Notes on the expectations for achieving strategic planning outcomes to a reasonable standard.
- Optional 'how-to' guidance on how strategic planning outcomes can be achieved using the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.
- Optional templates, case studies and tools to support utilities in achieving the strategic planning outcomes to a reasonable standard.

The Guidance Notes can be found here:

https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/water-utilities/best-practice-mgmt/iwcm/how

Detailed advice regarding Strategic Planning for LWUs as described in the Regulatory and Assurance Framework is provided in the Confidential Briefing Note No. 12 provided as an attachment.

Key points are that:

- The department will perform an *assurance* role for strategic planning and will use the framework to highlight the importance of effective strategic planning by local water utilities.
- While the department sets expectations for the outcomes that strategic planning needs to achieve to be effective and evidence-based, utilities can decide what approach to take to meet them.
- DPE will give ongoing support to ensure that LWUs can do planning in a way that will meet the outcomes set by the department.
- The department may request information from utilities to complete this assessment. It cannot compel utilities to comply with these requests.

- The department will assess whether a local water utility's strategic planning achieves the outcomes described in section 3.2 of the framework to a reasonable standard. A reasonable standard for each outcome is met if the utility considers and addresses an outcome in a way that is:
  - sufficient – underpinned by evidence-based analysis that supports the conclusions reached
  - appropriate – underpinned by relevant departmental guidance and industry standard approaches to conduct planning and reach conclusions
  - robust – underpinned by evidence that draws on appropriate sources and recognises and rebuts potential alternative interpretations.

- If a utility is unable to provide requested information, an assessment of 'unsatisfactory due to incomplete information' may be reached and will be published on the DPE Water website.

3. Transitioning from an IWCM Process

Important for member Councils who have been funded under the Safe and Secure Water Program for the development of Integrated Water Cycle Management Plans are assurances that they will not be disadvantaged by any of the changes. The department has been working with each utility to develop an appropriate transition plan, including where funding agreements are in place.

4. Regionally based local water utility strategic planning

Section 3 of the Regulatory and Assurance framework makes specific reference to the option for groups of LWUs to work together to do elements of strategic planning on a regional basis through Joint Organisations or other groups of LWUs facing similar strategic and operational issues.

It recognises that there may be efficiencies in such an approach and that it *could help to better integrate strategic planning of individual local water utilities with relevant regional water strategies and improve coordination of the delivery of regional water strategy outcomes at both the regional and local level.*

Details are also provided on the development of a regional town water strategy where elements needed for this could be an outcome of a regional approach to transitioning from the IWCM approach to IP&R for LWU strategic planning. For example:

- assessment of how regional cross-boundary solutions can be integrated into each local water utility's own strategic planning, including governance, asset ownership and ongoing management and pricing arrangements. Regional, catchment-based data collection or analysis could inform individual local water utility's strategic planning, especially water security analysis

- identification, assessment, and development of options and processes to integrate with priorities identified in regional water strategies

- development of regional contingency and emergency response planning, including water restriction rules, and resource sharing.

Why transitioning of what was Integrated Water Cycle Management Planning for Local Water Utilities into the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework is recommended as an approach

Through the TWRRP the CNSWJO and many other council-owned water utilities expressed interest in using the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework as a vehicle for LWU strategic planning.

The DPE is supporting this approach by providing optional 'how-to' guidance on how strategic planning outcomes can be achieved using the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

As detailed in the Regional Water report, the Evaluation of TWRRP Phase 1 makes the following recommendation for Phase 2 announced in December 2022:

> ***Recommendation 3:***
> *The Department should ensure that it has done the necessary policy and preparation work ahead of the next local government elections in September 2024, to be able to encourage councils to integrate their local water utility strategic planning with the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework of the Local Government Act 1993 by the next cycle of IP&R (i.e., July 2025 to June 2029).*

Also of note are recommendations 4, 5 and 7 that relate to:

- the sharing of data and modelling for LWU strategic planning
- investigation of legislative changes mandating the development and maintenance of effective strategic water plans by local water utilities.
- review of Safe and Secure Water Program guidelines to ensure that they are aligned, to embed the new framework approach and encourage the further uptake and delivery of strategic planning by local water utilities.

Please refer to the Regional Water Report for details.

Further, as previously reported, in response to a request from the DPE Water, the CNSWJO has submitted an expression of interest to co-pilot the integration of local water utility strategic planning with the IP&R framework over the next cycle of IP&R taking a regional approach that incentivises participation by its 11-member Council's LWUs.

Where the JO has been in discussion with DPE Water Executives regarding this- next steps are yet to be confirmed by DPE.

To recap, the key arguments for integrating are:

- Using the IP&R framework can reduce duplication in local water utility strategic planning and reporting by making the development process simpler and eliminating the need to reproduce documents specifically for water when they already exist in the IP&R context.
- The IP&R framework provides a robust framework which all councils must comply with – this should be built upon not duplicated.
- The IP&R framework considers the whole context of each council's business – previous water strategic planning approaches have focussed on just water management and have not

encouraged a wholistic and integrated view, which can impact on the quality of decision making by council staff and elected councillors.

- Accountability is built into the IP&R framework – elected councillors hold their staff to account, and councillors are held accountable to the community through the IP&R and the electoral process.

There was broad industry agreement that some elements should remain outside of the IP&R framework, for example, drinking water quality management, and some data provision (e.g. secure yield data), it is suggested that if Councils must do IP&R then they ought just plan for water in that framework, supported by the DPE. However, as the project rolls out it will be interesting to challenge the above industry assumptions.

DPE Water have issued Guidance Notes to assist LWUs wanting to take this approach.

https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water/plans-and-programs/town-water-risk-reduction-program/framework/guidance-for-local-water-utility-strategic-planning

As previously reported, the CNSWJO undertook a pilot with the TWRRP to codesign a regional approach to strategic planning for LWUs that recommends integration of LWU strategic planning with the IP&R framework. The report from this pilot was endorsed by the Board at its October meeting and is available here:

https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/546134/a-potential-regional-approach-to-lwu-strategic-planning-report.pdf

The findings of the CNSWJO/TWRRP Pilot aligned with transitioning IWCM into IP&R are as follows:

- There is potential value in the integration of LWU strategic planning with the IP&R framework, through a regional lens.
- An incentivised model is recommended to deliver value to the State, member Councils and communities of a regional approach; an
- Test the approach through DPE's previously announced pilot to support councils to use the IP&R framework for LWU strategic planning.

Further to recommendations in the pilot report, other reasons for transitioning LWU strategic planning to IP&R are:

- IP&R is referred to as "optional" and is poorly articulated in the DPE Guidance Notes. This put LWUs at risk of a "no change" scenario with regard to what is currently IWCM;
- The Town Water Risk Reduction Program solutions to strategic planning by LWUs do not sufficiently recognise that Councils and County Councils ***must*** operate under the Local Government Act - 8C (and other references – it's the heart of the whole Act) – Integrated Planning and Reporting.
- 428A Audit Risk and Improvement gives Councils our own assurance framework – we don't need another; and
- The funding framework is encouraging Councils to continue with the historic, unworkable approach.

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Project to transition what was Integrated Water Cycle Management Planning into the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The intention is to leverage work undertaken during the TWRRP by Ben Lawson, Common Thread Consulting with the DPE on the potential to integrate Integrated Water Cycle Management for LWUs with the IP&R Framework as an alternate for strategic planning by LWUs in the new regulatory framework.

The aim of this project is for participating LWUs to have IP&R recognised by the DPE Water as the framework of choice for LWUs to develop strategy in water and sewer.

The objectives of this project are to:

- Support LWUs transition from IWCM to IP&R with its associated effectiveness and efficiencies including cost savings and reducing duplication.
- Have Councils progress at their own pace with an opt in cohort Community Strategic Plan (CSP) ready for the next term of Council.
- Enable embedment through the CWUA; and
- Build relationships and capacity with key stakeholders including DPE.

Risk Management

At first pass this project has the following red risks that will require management:

- Unwillingness of DPE Water to fund
- Unwillingness of DPE to participate
- Unwillingness of DPE to recognise the approach or the outputs
- Change of government with various potential negative outcomes
- Extreme weather events create slippage
- Timeframe for the project is tight
- Councils and LWUs are already stretched

A more detailed risk management plan is under development where these types of risks are inherent in many JO projects, especially in water. Indeed, tackling these projects is imperative because of these risks.

Financial implications

The CNSWJO continues to advocate for funding that incentivises JOs in a regional approach to LWU strategic planning where value to both the State Government and JO members can be leveraged. Funding will be sought from DPE.

Work to date

Following consultation with the WUA at their December meeting, the CNSWJO coordinated a workshop with Karen Legge Consulting on the IP&R framework in Orange on 3 February 2023.

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The Workshop was attended by representatives from 5 member Councils – Orange, Bathurst, Parkes, Forbes and Weddin as well as Central Tablelands Water, the CNSWJO and representatives from State agencies- the Department of Regional NSW and DPE Water.

The aim of the workshop was to:

- Provide a refresher about the legislative requirements and intent of the IP&R framework for councils and JOs.
- Identify the relationship between member councils' IP&R work and the JO's work.
- Introduce the CNSWJO Place Mats; and
- Consider how Local Water Utility strategic planning requirements can be met through the IP&R framework.

Next Steps

At the IP&R Workshop on 3 February it was agreed that:

1. The CNSWJO develop a brief for a consultant to deliver two face-to-face workshops to co-design a pathway and toolkit to map the 12 elements of DPE Water's LWU Strategic Planning into the IP&R framework. This will be funded by the CNSWJO. Funding support will also be sought from DPE Water. Advice will be provided in the contract that Councils may require individual support at their own cost.

2. A review will be taken at this point and any further support from the JO would be considered at that time.

3. A Project Steering Committee be formed to work with JO staff, a Subcommittee of General Managers and DPE Water representatives to be responsible for the Terms of Reference and to guide the co-design of the project approach as well as project planning, implementation and reporting. The PSC includes:

Name	Position	Organisation
Jenny Bennett	Executive Officer	CNSWJO

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Meredith Macpherson	Program Manager - WUA	CNSWJO
Russell Deans	Manager Water &Waste	Bathurst Regional Council
Melanie Slimming	Manager Water & Sewer	Forbes Shire Council
Simon Coates	Water Quality and Sustainability Specialist	Parkes Shire Council
Ian Burrows* Andrew Sloan*	Senior Urban Water Planner, Regulatory Assessments Team Regional Engineer (South) Water Utilities	DPE Water
Cathy Semmler	Circular Economy and Sustainability	Office of Energy & Climate Change
Ricky Puata	Deputy Director	Dept. RNSW

*DPE Water representatives to be confirmed subject to management restructure

3. Workshop attendees will:

i) consider who else in their Council with responsibility for IP&R should be included in the follow-up workshops.
ii) in preparation for the workshops, research and collate Council's IP&R plans and any other strategic planning documents with implications for LWU strategic planning to bring to a hands-on workshop. Note this could include land-use strategies (LEPs etc).

As a starting point a Terms of Reference and high-level project scoping document have been developed for consideration by the Project Steering Committee.

Please find following a Terms of Reference and project scoping document for consideration.

Draft Terms of Reference for the CNSWJO
Water Utilities' Alliance Regional Integrated Planning and Reporting Project

1. Purpose

These Terms of Reference set out the role for the working groups in the CNSWJO Water Utilities' Alliance Regional Integrated Planning and Reporting Project (IP&R).

2. Guiding Principles

The Central NSW Joint Organisation is embedded in its membership and their communities. It seeks to work in collaboration with other levels of government to optimise its ability to develop and share its deep knowledge of the region and detailed understanding of its communities, their assets and aspirations.

The region supports local decision making and decentralised, place based and collaborative implementation.

We know and recognise that the best outcomes occur when they are based on collaboration using researched advice.

Collaboration by the CNSWJO with the Department of Planning and the Environment- Water (DPE–Water) for the delivery of the CNSWJO Water Utilities' Alliance Regional Integrated Planning and Reporting Project will be guided by its Consultation Policy and Procedure co-designed with the

Regional Leadership Executive (RLE) for Orana and the Central West and approved by the CNSWJO Board and the RLE.

https://www.centraljo.nsw.gov.au/content/uploads/210217_Consultation-Policy_CNSWJO_RLE_Final-2.pdf

3. Role

For the purpose of carrying out its functions, the CNSWJO may by resolution of the Board establish:

a. standing committees or divisions within the Organisation;
b. ad hoc advisory committees; and
c. working groups,
d. and determine their membership and terms of reference.

At its meeting on 24 November 2022 the Board resolved to adopt the CNSWJO Water Utilities Alliance Strategic Plan with a key objective being: *To support the effective and efficient delivery of value to members and other stakeholders in quality and secure water and wastewater services through Integrating strategy (once IWCM) into IP&R.*

This resolve was made based on the following advice about the project:

a. There is potential value in the integration of LWU strategic planning with the IP&R framework, through a regional lens that enables groups of councils to undertake strategic water planning in a more cost effective and less resource intensive manner.
b. An incentivised model is recommended to deliver value to the State, member Councils and communities of a regional approach.
c. Through DPE's previously announced pilot to support councils to use the IP&R framework for LWU strategic planning the opportunity exists to test this approach.
d. A regional approach to strategic planning for LWUs presents the opportunity to enable the linkages between LWU strategic plans and the NSW Government's Regional Water Strategies to ensure better whole-of-government integration of strategic water planning and management for town water supplies.

The aim of this project is for participating LWUs to have IP&R recognised by the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) Water as the framework of choice for LWUs to develop strategy in water and sewer.

The objectives of this project are to:

- Support LWUs transition from IWCM to IP&R with its associated effectiveness and efficiencies including cost savings and reducing duplication.
- Have Councils progress at their own pace with an opt in cohort Community Strategic Plan (CSP) ready for the next term of Council.
- Enable embedment through the CWUA; and
- Build relationships and capacity with key stakeholders including DPE.

The structure for this project is at two levels as follows:

1. An Executive Subcommittee comprising representative CNSWJO Council/County Council General Managers and ideally a director level representative from DPE Water and the Office of Local Government.

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2. A Project Steering Committee including Council Asset Management, IP&R and LWU specialists and DPE Water operational knowledge experts.

The Executive Subcommittee will:

2. Provide oversight and direction to the Project Steering Committee
e. Approval of the Terms of Reference, governance structure and accountability framework as well as the Project Plan and associated plans

The Project Steering Committee will:

f. Be responsible for the Terms of Reference, governance structure and accountability framework as well as project delivery, budget management and communications.
g. Provide guidance to the dedicated CNSWJO resources and any contracted project resource responsible for project design, planning, implementation and reporting.
h. Ensure that the CNSWJO leverages networks and combines projects for efficiencies and cost savings.
i. Determine an equitable approach to reducing LWU co-funding costs, for LWUs with limited budget, when efficiencies are realised.
j. Guide the codesign of a CNSWJO Water Utilities' Alliance Regional Integrated Planning and Reporting Project approach.
k. Enable increased knowledge and understanding by project partners of the IP&R framework of the NSW Local Government Act 1993 as a vehicle for LWU strategic planning and its value as a standardised and well-understood approach that is widely recognised by the local government sector.

4. Membership

Executive Subcommittee

Membership of the Executive Subcommittee will include CNSWJO representative Council/County Council General Managers, senior DPE Water and Office of Local Government Executives and CNSWJO Executive Officer and staff.

Project Steering Committee

Membership of the Project Steering Committee will include CNSWJO staff, and DPE Water staff, CNSWJO Water Utilities Alliance Executive, CNSWJO Water Utilities Alliance/LWU Director /Managers, Council Directors with responsibility for IP&R and Asset Management functions within Council. Other representatives including the Executive Officer of the NSW Water Directorate and interested JOs (maximum of 3) as determined by the Committee.

DPE Water staff need to be those with the responsibility for:

1. Assurance - with a view to the transition meeting their needs; and
2. RWS implementation with a view to providing advice on:
   - likely data sets being delivered regionally and their timelines
   - timeframes and advice on key infrastructure that will impact water security e.g. water grids
   - timeframes and advice on policy/regulatory change to enable improved water security.

5. Chair of Project Steering Committee

A Chair and Deputy Chair of the Project Steering Committee are to be elected from the Committee. Their roles follow those determined in the CNSWJO Charter and Code of Meeting Practice.

Should the Chair or Deputy Chair be absent from a meeting, a Chair may be elected from the floor.

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6. Meetings of the CNSWJO Water Utilities' Alliance Regional Integrated Planning and Reporting Project Steering Committee

Executive Subcommittee

The Executive Subcommitee will meet at Project inception and then quarterly or as needed.

Project Steering Committee

Meetings will occur weekly in the initial stages of the project then fortnightly or as directed by the Project Steering Committee. They will be held online.

No quorum is required as those that turn up affect the outcome.

The PSC will be responsible for management of the project where the CNSWJO and Council staff will be responsible for progressing the decisions of the PSC.

Minutes for CNSWJO Water Utilities' Alliance Regional Integrated Planning and Reporting Project Steering Committee

Agendas will be provided a week in advance. Notes of meetings will be distributed to members within 7 days. Where meetings are held weekly agendas and meeting notes will be provided within 48 hours of the next meeting for review. This is aspirational however CNSWJO staff do aim to stick to these timeframes.

Agenda items for the Project Steering Committee to include:

- project risk
- project quality
- value adding to communication in DPE Water, Councils and with the community including industry engagement
- advice to DPE Water, the CNSWJO General Manager's Advisory Committee and Board in line with key reporting areas in terms of quality and timing
- shared learning and opportunities; and
- budgeting and procurement as required.

Monthly reports summarising high level project status will be provided to the PSC the second last Friday of each month and to the Executive Subcommittee quarterly or as needed.

7. Decisions

Through the PSC and in line with the CNSWJO Policy and Procedures Manual 2021, the CNSWJO Executive Officer has delegation to make decisions about matters relating to the CNSWJO Water Utilities' Alliance Regional Integrated Planning and Reporting Project expenditure, procurement, legal matters and media under the hand of the CNSWJO Chair where needed and in agreement with the delegated responsibility of the DPE Water, Manager (where required).

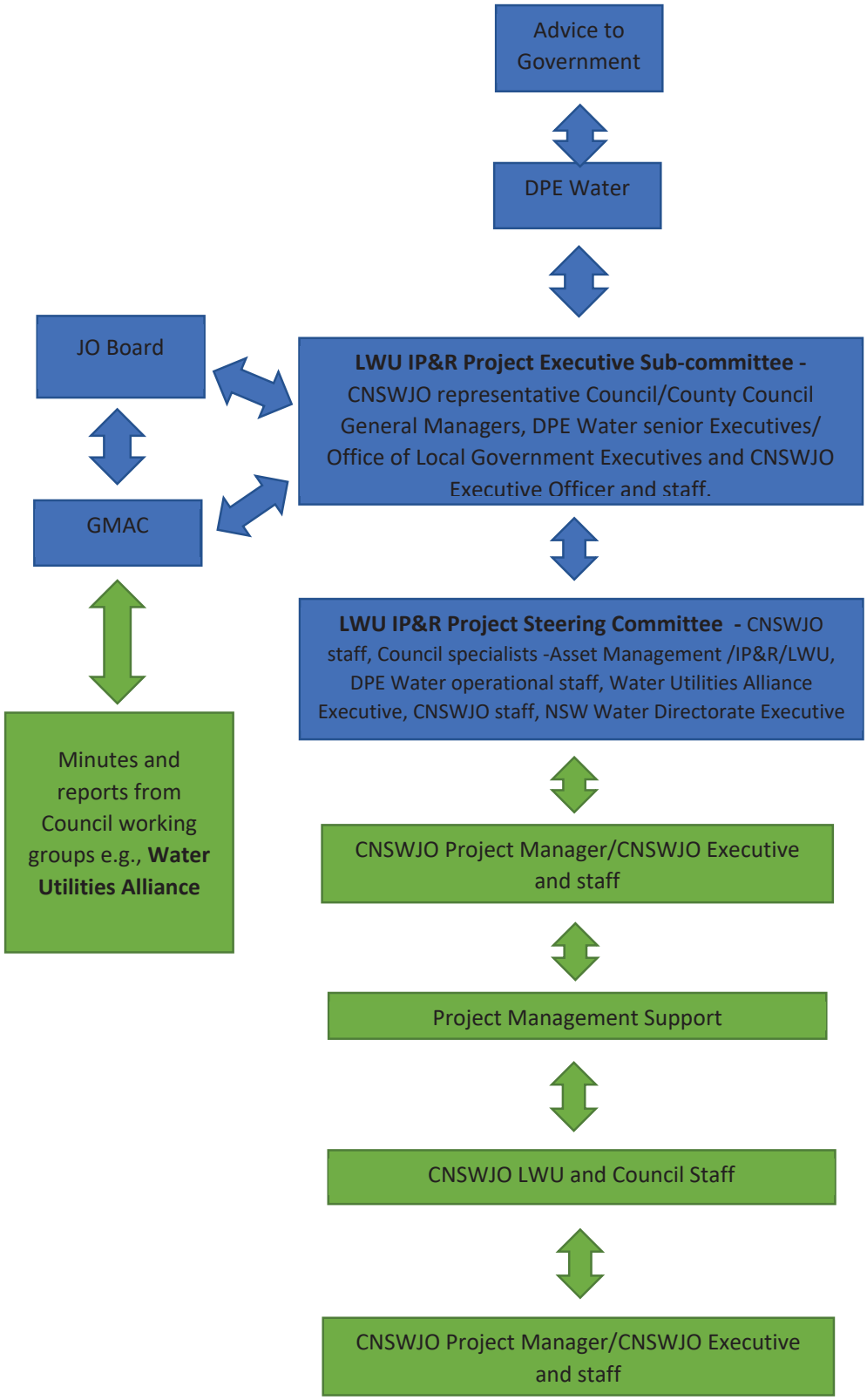
Related Documents:

- CNSWJO Delegations Policy
- CNSWJO Procurement Policy

8. Fit of the Project Steering Committee in the broader structure

This project operates at both the regional and state levels and the project structure reflects this. Sharing of information and capacity building will work between the two levels of the project and will

be enabled by the Terms of Reference, sound governance and reporting arrangements. The following structure shows the fit of the Project Steering Committee in the broader inter-governmental structure.



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CNSWJO Water Utilities' Alliance Local Water Utilities'

Integrated Planning and Reporting Project

Project Overview Statement:

The aim of this project is for participating LWUs to have IP&R recognised by the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) Water as the framework of choice for LWUs to develop strategy in water and sewer.

Project Name: Local Water Utilities' Integrated Planning & Reporting

Project Manager: Meredith Macpherson, CNSWJO Water Utilities Alliance Program Manager

Start Date: 1 March 2023

Background Data: Please go to https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/546134/a-potential-regional-approach-to-lwu-strategic-planning-report.pdf which provides detail on the background on the need for this project. The key arguments for integrating IWCM and IP&R are:

- Using the IP&R framework can reduce duplication in local water utility strategic planning and reporting by making the development process simpler and eliminating the need to reproduce documents specifically for water when they already exist in the IP&R context.
- The IP&R framework provides a robust framework which all councils must comply with – this should be built upon not duplicated.
- The IP&R framework considers the whole context of each council's business – previous water strategic planning approaches have focussed on just water management and have not encouraged a wholistic and integrated view, which can impact on the quality of decision making by council staff and elected councillors.
- Accountability is built into the IP&R framework – elected councillors hold their staff to account, and councillors are held accountable to the community through the IP&R and the electoral process.
- IP&R is referred to as "optional" and is poorly articulated in the DPE Guidance Notes.
- The Town Water Risk Reduction Program solutions to strategic planning by LWUs do not sufficiently recognise that Councils and County Councils ***must*** operate under the Local Government Act - 8C (and other references – it's the vibe of the whole Act) – Integrated Planning and Reporting.
- 428A Audit Risk and Improvement gives Councils our own assurance framework – we don't need another; and
- The funding framework is encouraging Councils to continue with the historic, unworkable approach.
- The Town Water Risk Reduction Program Phase 1 Evaluation Report has recommended as follows:

  Recommendation 3 *– The Department should ensure that it has done the necessary policy and preparation work ahead of the next local government elections in September 2024, to be able to encourage councils to integrate their local water utility strategic planning with the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework of the Local Government Act 1993 by the next cycle of IP&R (i.e., July 2025 to June 2029).*

  Recommendation 4 *-The Department should develop and test options to optimise the integration of RWS (and WaterNSW) modelling, options and risk analysis with local water*

utility/council strategic planning to further implement the strategic direction of the Auditor General's 2020 Performance Audit Report entitled 'Support for regional water infrastructure'.

Project Objectives:
The objectives of this project are to:

1. Support LWUs transition from IWCM to IP&R with its associated effectiveness and efficiencies including cost savings and reducing duplication.
2. Have Councils progress at their own pace with an opt in cohort Community Strategic Plan (CSP) ready for the next term of Council.
3. Enable embedment through the CWUA; and
4. Build relationships and capacity with key stakeholders including DPE.

Project Deliverables – the following heads of consideration will be progressed through codesign with key stakeholders:

- Define organisational objectives ('levels of service') in the Delivery Program and identify the technical and financial decisions, plans and activities required to achieve them;
- Methodology – including a description of the pathway to take Councils from "where they are at" to inclusion of water strategy in the next round of IP&R noting Councils are at varying stages of their water strategic work, some funded to develop IWCM plans and a vast majority engaging consulting support. This will reference DPE Guidelines – many of which are under development and the Regional Water Strategies;
- Identification of the value proposition to both the State and LWU members of a regional approach to inform incentivisation. This to include a case study of Orange City Council where further detail will be provided in the brief;
  - Timeframe with key milestones;
  - Outputs; and
  - Based on the above an order of costs, in stages, over an 18-month period.

Key Success Criteria:

- # of LWUs completing the transition into the next term of Council
- # of Councils on their way to transition
- Recognition by DPE Water of the value of IP&R to water and sewer strategy
- Feedback from the CWUA, members, GMAC and Board of value of the project

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Assumptions:

- Consultants are available
- Data is available and provided in a timely manner
- DPE is available
- Members have time
- Communication within Councils will be enabled by the Communication Plan where key stakeholders such as General Managers will be integral to assurance

Risks:

- Unwillingness of DPE Water to fund
- Unwillingness of DPE to participate
- Unwillingness of DPE to recognise the approach or the outputs
- Change of government with various potential negative outcomes
- Extreme weather events create slippage
- Timeframe for the project is tight
- Councils and LWUs are already stretched and will be unable to engage
- Perception of capability of OLG as the regulator of IP&R
- Perception by DPE that Councils do not do IP&R well and therefore strategic planning for LWU will be jeopardised.

Obstacles:

- Funding Framework transition from IWCM
- Silos within Councils
- Variability of maturity of Councils with IP&R
- water supply and sewerage functions aren't clearly visible in the *Delivery Program* (*DP*) of many councils.
- Short comings of OLG's 2021 IP&R Guidelines where the requirement (or implications of) Councils structuring their delivery programs based on the quadruple bottom line 'themes' in the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) are not clear.
- LWUs don't have robust levels of service and/or they aren't reporting their performance against them.
- confusion over *where* service levels should be defined in IP&R.
- the *Risk Management Framework* that all councils are required to implement by 2024 (under the draft *Risk Management and Internal Audit Guidelines* issued by OLG, expected to be finalised shortly) doesn't draw a clear connection with IP&R.

Value to Members

Work by the CNSWJO in the regional water portfolio supports member councils in the planning and management of quality, secure water and sewer services for central NSW communities.

Financial Implications

Nil at this time – funding is being sought. A variation of the OLG Capacity Building Stage 2 of $25k is been sought for this project.

Attachments: Nil

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l. Regional Water Security and Productive Water

Regional Strategic Priorities	6: Regional Water Security and Productive Water 6.2 Productive Water
Portfolio Chairman	TBC
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Gavin Rhodes, Kent Boyd and Dave Waddell

Report by Meredith Macpherson, dated 10 February 2023

Recommendation/s
That the Board note the report on Productive Water and approve that: **1. A bid be put up to the newly formed Charles Sturt University Policy Lab to bring together CNSWJO member Council representatives, academics, subject matter specialists and key regional stakeholders to participate in a forum to co-design a Roadmap for the region to progress work on Productive Water; and** **2. In the interim, the Board continue advocacy in line with the updated Advocacy Plan for Regional Water on:** **- the finalisation of the Regional Water Strategies and the co-design of the Governance and Implementation Plans for these.** **- Wyangala Dam wall raising and Belubula Water Security Project inclusive of the recognition of the value of urban water and the opportunities to manage water differently (the 'Dutch Model').**

Precis

In line with the Statement of Strategic Regional Plan 2022-2025 priority 6.2 Productive Water, this report seeks Board approval for a plan to progress work by the region on the development of a Productive Water Strategy through engagement with the Charles Sturt University Policy Lab while continuing to advocate for Regional Water in line with the Board endorsed Advocacy Plan for Water.

Reason for the Report

At the Board meeting in August 2020, the Board resolved that through the Regional Water Committee, it receive scoping advice on the development of a Productive Water Strategy and that this consider specific feedback from members on water security issues impacting on their towns.

Subsequently through the review of the Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities (SSRP) 2022-2025, the Board endorsed the addition of priority 6.2 Productive Water with activities to include:

- Advocacy plan to support the value of town water and alternative approaches to water use, for example the Dutch Model
- Resource the development of a productive water strategy leveraging the huge amount of strategic reform underway in water management at both the State and Federal level.

Since 2020 the focus of work in the strategic regional water space has been on working with the Department of Planning and the Environment, Water (DPE Water) to ensure the integration of town water security into its suite of strategic water planning and management plans – most notably the Regional Water Strategies for the Lachlan and Macquarie-Castlereagh catchment.

Critical to this has been work by the CNSWJO and member Councils to ensure recognition of the productive value of town water to the economy and the assumptions that are made in methodologies developed by the NSW Government's consultants Marsden Jacob used to inform the costs and benefits of options shortlisted in the Regional Water Strategies. [11] Concerns remain that the methodology under values the contribution that town water makes to the economy.

With these Strategies entering their final phase of development in 2023, advocacy is focussed on influencing the Governance and Implementation Plans to include a forum for ongoing communication and decision making enabled within the region that includes Local Government with a seat at the table.

The focus of the RWSs is very much about 'doing more with less' and achieving the balance that is needed for all stakeholders' water needs across the catchment. In this context work by the CNSWJO on Productive Water is timely.

Legislative Policy and Risk Considerations

Background

1. RAMJO Water Position Paper

Seeing first-hand how confused and frustrated people were by what had been happening – or not happening – to address water issues across the Murray Darling basin, in 2019-2020 RAMJO, a cooperation of 11 member Councils in southern NSW, convened a Water Security Sub-Committee of Mayors, General Managers and expert Council staff from across the region, to work together for a year to develop a series of solutions.

This culminated in the development of a *Water Position Paper* which attempts to bring the Riverina-Murray communities together with a single voice to put sensible options on the table and offer a way forward to balance environmental, social and agricultural needs.

The committee attempted to take a whole-of-basin approach to the environment, economy and community, rather than a parochial regional approach.

This was the first time some differing sides of the water debate had come together – to propose practical solutions. Individually, people and groups had their own concerns and have been fighting for years to be heard. They have now put aside differences and focussed on the similarities for the good of the region, and its river system.

The *Water Position Paper* seeks to take a collaborative approach to advocating for equity, affordability and sustainability in Australia's changing environment of water management in the Murray-Darling Basin.

The intent of developing this *Position Paper* was to establish regional leadership, collaboration and advocacy for their communities. The evidence-based positions and recommendations in this paper come with significant consideration and negotiation between all Member Councils to find common ground from which to advocate.

[11] Marsden Jacobs *Regional water value functions- Valuing different hydrological outcomes under Regional Water Strategies*

Where the focus for CNSWJO has been on town water security, interesting the RAMJO Water Position Paper makes no mention of town water but rather focusses on the following Issues:

1. Water Market
2. Impact of Water Prices on Agricultural Diversity and Security
3. Environmental Flows
4. Infrastructure – Now and for the Future
5. Conveyance Water and Losses
6. Drought
7. Climate Change
8. Agricultural Adaptation – Investment and Research

Options recommended in the Paper aim to lay a foundation for a future built on innovation and adaptation.

RAMJO continues to engage with Ministers, Government Departments, tertiary institutions, industry and community organisations to provide input into solutions and reviews of water management as it relates to the Murray-Darling Basin, particularly the unique factors that relate to our communities.

High level messages for RAMJO from the Water Position Paper**:**

- *We recognise and support those industries in our communities who are the backbone of our region, and we wish to see them thrive into the future. We also recognise that the changing environment necessitates adaptive and innovative approaches in agriculture to ensure that prosperity.*

- *We respect that national coordination of the Murray Darling Basin as a lifeline is not a simple task, and that the environmental health of the river and the surrounding ecosystems remain a priority.*

Ultimately, RAMJO is a non-research partner to the ONE Basin Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) bid, which brings together communities, industry and researchers to manage climate, water and environmental risks in the Murray-Darling Basin.

This partnership forms part of Recommendation 8 in RAMJO's Water Position Paper for collaboration on agricultural investment and research.

For more including to read the Position Paper:
https://www.ramjo.nsw.gov.au/water-security/

2. CNSWJO – Water Policy and Planning

Where we've got to with the Regional Water Strategies

Unlike RAMJO member Councils, regional leadership, collaboration and advocacy for our communities around water security and options to secure town water is not new to Central NSW Councils having collaborated on the national award winning Centroc Water Security Study (CWSS) in 2009.

The difference to the approach by RAMJO is the CWSS focussed on options for town water security. RAMJO's member Council's communities lie in the heart of the Murray-Darling Basin with heavy reliance on irrigated cropping. These communities are also under pressure due to obligations under

their Water Sharing Plan to get a certain amount of water across the border in line with NSW Government's Murray-Darling Basin commitments. As a result, they have taken a whole-of-basin approach to water management across differing sides of the water debate - the environment, economy and community- to focus on the similarities for the good of the region, and its river system.

Where the CWSS has provided the evidence base for recommendations around options to improve water security for central NSW communities – as an advocacy document the challenge has been that at the time it was developed it failed to secure the NSW Government "waratah" logo needed to secure the support of the Government for the recommendations and options.

Consequently, the CNSWJO Board endorsed policy over the past 3 years has been to advocate to the NSW Government for the integration of town water into the development by the NSW Government of its suite of water strategies specifically the Lachlan and Macquarie-Castlereagh Regional Water Strategies.

While these Strategies have not yet been finalised, arguably the region has had a strong influence over the direction of these which now include analysis of town water challenges and options to address these.

Where there has been good collaboration on the development of the Strategy, the momentum *must* be maintained through the co-design of an Implementation Plan that, similar to the work by RAMJO, seeks to draw together stakeholders from across differing sides of the water debate - the environment, economy and community- to focus on doing-more-with-less and negotiating the balance that will need to be struck for the good of the region and its river systems in a future with less water.

Governance and Implementation Plan

As the CNSWJO has advocated consistently, the success of these Strategies relies on their enablement through a Governance and Implementation Plan co-designed with Local Government to deliver on the options identified. Without this, these place-based Strategies risk not delivering on the outcomes needed and, at worst, becoming shelf ware.

In its latest submission to the public consultation on the Macquarie-Castlereagh Regional Water Strategy (November 2022) the CNSWJO advocates that:

> ***the governance framework and arrangements to coordinate actions needs to extend beyond just priority 1 (town water) to cover the delivery of the whole Strategy. It is only through this level of coordination that a fully integrated, whole of catchment approach to water management can be achieved. We need to move beyond the silos of the past and recognise that stakeholders need to work together to achieve the balance needed in water use in a new climate future.***

Further the CNSWJO advocates that:

> ***it is of the view that the governance framework should provide for a forum (Committee or Group?) to facilitate a 'whole of government' integrated strategic planning approach to ensure sustainable water management for the Macquarie catchment now and into the future inclusive of all areas of water use.***

The DNA of Local Government is Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) which considers all priorities for Councils including for industry, the environment, health and well-being of its community inclusive of its Aboriginal community. While the regulatory role of IP&R is not well recognised by state agencies, there is a real opportunity that has been identified through the Town Water Risk Reduction Program for better engagement with Councils to deliver on its community's priorities for all water uses.

Where water for critical human need *must* be the highest priority in times of shortages, as was the case in the work by RAMJO there needs to be discussion within the region about 'doing more with less' and achieving the balance that is needed for all stakeholders' areas of interest across the catchment. This includes the Aboriginal community, irrigators and industry and the environment. It is in our communities' interests to ensure that the right balance is struck in water management across all these areas with a new approach to the coordination and decision-making around the delivery of options in the Regional Water Strategies.

The CNSWJO has advocated for some time that a forum to facilitate a whole-of-government integrated approach to sustainable water management in each catchment should include representation from local/regional subject matter experts and local/regional/state water professionals to address the complex relationships for sustainable water management as a multi-disciplinary team that looks at building community resilience from many perspectives. The aim being to deliver the actions identified in the Strategy and water resource management during extreme events.

The CNSWJO has advocated that what is needed is a committee or the like with representatives at a suitable level (i.e. Regional Manager/Director). Representation could include from:

- DPE – Water (various divisions)
- CNSWJO – representing its members in the Upper Macquarie
- Water Infrastructure NSW
- Water NSW
- Natural Resources Access Regulator
- NSW Health
- NSW EPA
- Regional NSW
- Central Tablelands Water
- Local Water Utilities – (not necessarily all Councils but potentially subject matter experts)
- Industry
- Environmental Water Advisory Groups
- Aboriginal Water Groups

In Central NSW, a Strategic Regional Transport Group is chaired by Cr Ken Keith, Mayor of Parkes and includes representation from Transport for NSW, RDA Central West, DPIE Regional, NSW/ACT Roads, Infrastructure Investment Division and the Department of Infrastructure - Inland Rail Division. It provides a good model that could be used for strategic regional water management.

The vision is that this forum will oversee and coordinate the implementation of the Strategies and drive preparedness for future extreme events.

The forum could be supported by outcome specific groups that bring together appropriate personnel to provide advice on specific issues or projects such as reviews of the Water Sharing Plans, the DPE Water Efficiency Program and work on the Groundwater Strategy. This could include a sub-group working specifically on Productive Water.

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It could be that sub-groups for the Upper and Lower Macquarie catchments are formed that meet separately but come together annually to discuss whole of catchment issues.

There a numerous governance structures that can be put in place and existing groups to manage concerns regarding the size of this forum. Again, this is something that really needs to be discussed with the key stakeholders in the region through a co-design exercise.

See full submission at: https://www.centraljo.nsw.gov.au/submissions/

Why develop a Productive Water Strategy?

As the managers of town water supplies for the Central NSW region, our members obviously see *reducing water supply risks for regional cities, towns and villages* as the highest priority, followed closely by *supporting a growing regional economy in a future of potentially reduced water availability*.

Where the CNSWJO continues to advocate for a Governance and Implementation Plan for the RWS that takes a whole of catchment approach inclusive of all areas of water use, the opportunity is for the CNSWJO to follow in the footsteps of RAMJO to leverage the work that has been done through the development of the RWS and its relationships with key stakeholders to develop a Productive Water Strategy.

As has been evident through the collaboration with Local Government in the development of the Regional Water Strategies and through the Town Water Risk Reduction Program, much can be achieved by established forums of stakeholders represented at the appropriate level and supported by good governance. Relationships built through good and regular communication and mutual trust can support and enable decision making informed by local knowledge in times of crisis ensuring the right outcomes.

In the Lachlan catchment, the CNSWJO works closely with the Lachlan Valley Water Association through an established communique and regular meetings. While at times our views may differ, most of the time we agree and support each other's positions. Our interests are not conflicting, to the contrary Councils are committed to supporting and enabling their agricultural sector as the economic heart of our region while conversely our farmers don't want to see their towns run out of water. The relationship is mutually beneficial.

The same applies to industry, the health of the environment and our Aboriginal communities. Strong, resilient communities need water for all these uses and need to be able to negotiate how the balance is struck in times of critical shortage. Building these relationships with, for example, Environmental Water Advisory Groups and industry groups now will be beneficial to all stakeholders, particularly in times of critical shortage.

Strategic work by the JO and its member Councils since the millennium drought has highlighted that where water security has historically been a challenge and is limiting economic growth for the region, there are opportunities, notably in the Lachlan Valley, to do business differently to support the nation's growth aspirations.

Raising the dam wall at Wyangala is an important first step to deliver better flood immunity and water security to enable the agricultural sector.

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The following key messages have been endorsed In the CNSWJO Board Advocacy Plan for Regional Water:

- *The Lachlan and Macquarie Regional Water Strategies and the Wyangala Dam wall (and Belubula Water Security) projects present the opportunity to ensure policy and water management settings are right in a whole of catchment approach, not just for urban water, but for productive uses to drive growth and prosperity through increased reliability of supply.*

- *Additional storage is not about more water, it's about more reliable water which is a factor in having the confidence to plan ahead, invest and run a profitable business.*

- *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 Wyangala Dam augmentation project presents an opportunity for the Lachlan Valley region to take advantage of the additional stored water through relatively minor re-allocation of the water entitlements that will result from the upgrade, with no detriment to current water holders.*

Recent advocacy with State and Federal Government has floated the concept of what is being referred to as the 'Dutch Model' where the opportunity exists to take advantage of the potential raising of the Wyangala Dam wall to drive high value water use for protected agriculture.

Irrespective of the where the Regional Water Strategies land, the governance structure or how long they take to implement the options for water security improvements, its timely for the CNSWJO to consider its policy position regarding productive water use and a potential roadmap to support its regional economy in a future of potentially reduced water availability.

What is Productive Water?

Broadly speaking productive water refers to:

> *the amount or value of product over volume or value of water depleted or diverted. The value of the product might be expressed in different terms (biomass, grain, money). For example, the so-called 'crop per drop' approach focuses on the amount of product per unit of water.*[12]

The 2019 Australian Infrastructure Audit defines productive water as follows:

> *Productive water includes bulk water storage, delivery metering and control assets. Productive water markets also include the provision of licensing, allocation and trade of water from surface and groundwater sources, as well as entitlements for environmental and cultural purposes.*

Infrastructure Australia note that:

> *Meeting growing demand is a major challenge. The costs of augmenting water supply close to major cities present issues with managing water security efficiently. There is rising demand for Australia's agricultural products, increasing the call on water for production. While water markets*

[12] https://www.fao.org/3/y4525e/y4525e06.htm

can direct water to its most productive use, a further extended period of drought could put the viability of some of Australia's water-intensive agricultural products in doubt.

Further IA notes:

While we all value water as a vital part of our daily lives, few understand its true value. In part, this is due to a lack of exposure to the full costs of the water we consume – both directly through our taps, and indirectly through our food and other products. Similarly, the value of wastewater services and the role existing systems play in safeguarding the environment are not well appreciated by users.

2019_AIAudit_may2020_update.pdf (infrastructureaustralia.gov.au)

Key Messages regarding Productive Water from RAMJO's Water Position Plan

Following are some key high-level messages regarding productive water from the RAMJO Water Position Plan for the CNSWJO Board to consider:

A thriving region abundant in sustainable communities' is only possible with collaboration with likeminded organisations and industry stakeholders that are prepared to advocate for real and meaningful change to drive improved solutions for the major issues in our regions. Importantly, we recognise that the RAMJO footprint is only part of the Basin, and strategies that strengthen agriculture in our region must be developed in the context of the health of the entire Basin.

We wish to contribute to solutions that balance environmental, social and agricultural needs that will sustain future generations for decades to come. We want to see our communities thriving and with a future they can work towards and build upon.

- We recognise and support those industries in our communities who are the backbone of our region, and we wish to see them thrive into the future. We recognise that the changing environment necessitates adaptive and innovative approaches in agriculture to ensure that prosperity.
- The knowledge, experience and quality of those who engage in agricultural pursuits is an asset to the region and our nation as a whole.
- Different ways of thinking about water management that link water and its relationship to food production and environment, could benefit the region, state and Australia as a whole and become a national and international exemplar for best practice.
- Water scarcity will continue to be a problem for many countries worldwide and given our natural environment, combined with a century of irrigated agricultural knowledge, we are in an ideal position to take a leadership role in this space.
- We will continue to promote the needs and benefits of the agricultural industry (as it relates to water) and the jobs, security, knowledge and vitality these industries provide to our region.
- Better transparency and equity relating to water; including the markets which trade it and the policies which govern it; is required in order for those industries who underpin our region to plan for a future.

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- We respect that national coordination of the Murray Darling Basin as a lifeline is not a simple task, and that the environmental health of the river and the surrounding ecosystems remain a priority.
- We recognise that the extensive knowledge of First Nations, local environmental volunteers and those who know the river system best could contribute significantly to any improvements made to water management across the Murray Darling Basin.
- We are open and ready to engage with Ministers, government departments, tertiary institutions, industry and organisations to provide input into solutions and reviews of water management as it relates to the Murray Darling Basin.
- Ultimately, we seek equity, affordability and sustainability in Australia's harsh and changing environment as it relates to water management in the Murray Darling Basin.
- We must act now in a coordinated and respectful manner for the sake of current and future generations.

Next Steps

Where the Board has endorsed work on a Productive Water Strategy in the SSRP it is suggested that:

1. a bid be put up to the newly formed Charles Sturt University Policy Lab to bring together CNSWJO member Council representatives, academics, subject matter specialists and key regional stakeholders to participate in a forum to co-design a Roadmap for the region to progress work on Productive Water

2. in the interim, the Board continue advocacy in line with the updated Advocacy Plan for Regional Water on:
   - the finalisation of the Regional Water Strategies and the co-design of the Governance and Implementation Plans for these.
   - Wyangala Dam wall raising and Belubula Water Security Project inclusive of the recognition of the value of urban water and the opportunities to manage water differently (the 'Dutch Model').

Value to Members

Work by the CNSWJO in the regional water portfolio supports member councils in the planning and management of quality, secure water and sewer services for central NSW communities. Work on productive water supports the Board's priority to ensure the economic growth and prosperity of the region in a water constrained future.

Financial Implications: Nil.

Attachments: Nil

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Priority Seven: Transition to a sustainable, secure and affordable energy future

m. Energy Report

Regional Strategic Priorities	7: Transition to a sustainable, secure and affordable energy future 7.1 Energy Efficiency and Emissions Reduction 7.2 Circular Economy 7.3 Environment 7.4 Understanding our energy (fuel and electricity) security, capacity and scalability
Portfolio Chairman	TBC
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Mr B Byrnes, Mr P Devery, Mr G Tory, Mr D Waddell

Report by Kate Barker dated 13 February 2023

Recommendation/s
That the Board note the Energy Report and note there are no changes to the previously adopted Energy Advocacy Plan.

Precis

This report provides an update on the recently negotiated electricity contracts, including a list of all councils and their relevant renewable energy percentage, where from 1 January 2023 the CNSWJO councils are purchasing a total of 71% renewable energy across all facilities.

CNSWJO has also been successful in receiving $1.4M in funding from the NSW Office of Energy and Climate Change (OECC) and Regional NSW across 3 programs.

Reason for the Report

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

- Electricity contract
- Successful grant funding, including:
  - $202K from the NSW OECC for regional energy projects
  - $155K from the NSW OECC for the Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration (JONZA) program
  - $1.043M from Regional NSW for the Business Case and Strategy Development Fund

Members will also recall a presentation from Essential Energy at the November 2022 meeting. Please see the separate report for an update on the issues raised.

Legislative Policy and Risk Considerations

Related risks from the Strategic Plan are reviewed quarterly and include:
1- Failure of the JO Network – *this risk is now identified under the energy priority where JONZA funding relies on a Joint Organisation approach.*
7- Despite the efforts by the OLG subsequent to the JO Review, all Councils in the JO footprint do not engage

14 - Review recommendations to "bring the State to the table" do not deliver network sustainability – *this risk is also newly-identified for the energy priority in regard to JONZA funding where success will depend on the extent to which various State departments engage*
19 - Long term viability and financial sustainability.
20 - Turnover staff in councils who are working on JO projects – loss of corporate knowledge.

Discussion

Electricity Contracts

The new contracts for electricity commenced on 1 January 2023.

The large market sites contract commenced with Iberdrola Australia from 1 January 2023 after a robust procurement process in 2022. The contract is valid for 8 years, expiring on 31 December 2030.

The small sites contract with Shell Energy is under the NSW Government agreement which councils are able to utilise without the need to go to tender. All CNSWJO councils signed up prior to the contract commencing on 1 January 2023, with contracted prices known until 30 June 2025. The contract is valid for a total of 10 years; however, the pricing past June 2025 has not yet been agreed. Analysis of contract options past June 2025 will be undertaken in due course.

The following table shows the status of each Council in regard to renewable energy:

Council	Large sites renewable energy percentage (see note 1)	Small sites renewable energy percentage (see note 2)	Total renewable energy percentage in relation to load split
Bathurst	100%	100%	100%
Blayney	50%	50%	50%
Cabonne	100%	0%	39%
CTW	50%	50%	50%
Cowra	50%	0%	37%
Forbes	50%	50%	50%
Lachlan	50%	10%	33%
Oberon	50%	0%	36%
Orange	100%	100%	100%
Parkes	50%	0%	42%
Weddin	50%	0%	32%
Total regional percentage based on kWh load	**79%**	**43%**	**71%**

Notes:
1. The large sites load is based on the forecast annual load as determined by councils during the procurement process for electricity for large market sites.
2. The small sites load is based on actual 2021/2022 load. The detailed work undertaken to forecast load for large sites was not done for the small market sites where there are over 1,000 sites across the region.

OECC Regional Energy Projects

In late 2022, CNSWJO made a request to the OECC's Sustainable Councils program to support councils to develop emissions reduction plans, which has been successful. The total funding received for this project is $202K.

The following table details what activities will be completed for each Council under the engagement with 100% Renewables:

Council/s	Scope
Bathurst and Cabonne	• Scope 3 – short report or add into existing Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP) • Emissions reporting tool • Training
Blayney, CTW, Forbes, Lachlan, Oberon, Orange, Parkes and Weddin	• ERP with scopes 1 and 2 • Emissions reporting tool • Training
Cowra	• Emissions reporting tool • Training
Lithgow	• ERP with scopes 1 and 2 • Emissions reporting tool • Training • Renewable Energy Action Plan

The above-mentioned work will be completed by consultants 100% Renewables who have done work with most member councils in the past and are on the OECC's approved consultants list. A CNSWJO procurement process is not needed for this project as the OECC will pay the consultant directly.

Additionally, CNSWJO is in discussions with OECC about funding for zero emissions fleet transition plans. A quote has been sought from a supplier on the OECC's approved consultants list, and the request is with the Sustainable Councils team for consideration.

OECC JONZA Funding

In November 2022, CNSWJO submitted an application to the OECC's Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration (JONZA) program. The funding was only open for JOs and non-metro ROCs to apply for $155K for the engagement of a dedicated resource to progress net zero activities and initiatives for the JO's member councils.

Where the grant guidelines detailed the requirement for a JO to engage a dedicated resource, there was also the ability to engage a staff member already employed by the JO provided that the JO could demonstrate an overall additionality of outcomes through the funding. As such, CNSWJO's application detailed a back-filling approach for the Operational Program Manager so that 80% of the role could be dedicated to the program, along with 20% support from other JO staff. The engagement of Grace Quinton in late 2022 in the role of a Project Officer for procurement enables this approach where previously Ms Kate Barker was facilitating procurement and the energy program. The Operational Program Manager's title will now change to Net Zero and Operational Programs Manager while this funding is in place.

The CNSWJO net zero action plan for this program has 52 activities which directly align to strategic priority 7 - Transition to a sustainable, secure and affordable energy future. The 52 activities can be found as an attachment to this report, where some are funding dependent. Feedback was sought on the actions from the regional energy group and the sponsoring general managers prior to the application being submitted.

The embargo for this funding was lifted on 14 February.

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Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Funding

As agreed by GMAC at the July 2022 meeting, CNSWJO submitted an application to Regional NSW's Business Case and Strategy Development Fund in August 2022. A summary of the project is as follows:

This project's objective is to identify and provide the business case for priority infrastructure investment in the Central NSW region to fast-track emissions reduction in the context of energy security.

In order to meet NSW and the nation's emissions targets, optimal investment needs to be fast tracked. This region's collaborative work in emissions reduction is showing potential to build on success in renewable energy production and use, progress storage and the need to rapidly upscale collaboration on reducing emissions from waste.

There is potential in region to take a coordinated approach to investment by key stakeholders that optimizes energy security, maximises co-investment and minimizes overbuild and duplication. This can only happen through sound, well informed collaboration.

Building on decades of successful collaboration in Central NSW culminating recently in the renewable energy supply agreement with Iberdrola Australia delivering 78% renewable energy to member Councils, this business case will inform potential infrastructure investment including:

- *Optimally located renewable energy production and storage*
- *Green hydrogen, including from waste, as a fuel – solving our decades long problem of the cost of waste transportation in the circular economy*
- *Micro-grids*

Aligning with a broad range of state and federal strategies and reports, the business case will identify barriers and opportunities for this investment. Importantly, consideration will be given to the opportunities and challenges offered by:

- *the Parkes Special Activation Precinct and its incoming industries,*
- *proximity to the Renewable Energy Zone, and*
- *forward plans of major transmission and the Distribution Network Service Providers.*

CNSWJO received advice in late 2022 that the application was successful. The total funding is $1,043,327.79. CNSWJO is still awaiting the Deed from Regional NSW and continues to follow up, however the list of successful projects was announced on the Regional NSW website on 7 February and the Department has advised that the embargo has now been lifted.

A steering committee is currently being formed where it is anticipated that it will include the Sponsoring General Managers, Netwaste, Essential Energy, Regional Growth and Development Corporation, Invest Regional NSW, Office of Energy and Climate Change, Iberdrola and Simply Sustainable.

Advocacy Plan

At its meeting of November 2021, the Board adopted the Energy Advocacy Plan. While advocacy plans are currently under review, there has been no amendment to the Energy Advocacy Plan.

Attachment/s:
10. JONZA action plan – 52 activities

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n. Update from Essential Energy in Relation to Matters Raised by Members Report

Regional Strategic Priorities	7: Transition to a sustainable, secure and affordable energy future 7.4 Understanding our energy (fuel and electricity) security, capacity and scalability
Portfolio Chairman	TBC
Sponsoring General Manager/s	Mr Brad Byrnes, Mr P Devery, Mr G Tory, Mr D Waddell

Report by Kate Barker dated 14 February 2023

Recommendation/s
That the Board note the Update from Essential Energy in Relation to Matters Raised by Members Report and continue to direct matters as they arise through Essential Energy's Head of Strategic Council Partnerships.

Precis

Members will recall Essential Energy presented to the November 2022 Board meeting, where a number of issues were raised around levels of service and items that have been raised and were unresolved. The issues raised by members have been responded to individually by Essential Energy and this report provides an update on each.

It is recommended that members continue to advise CNSWJO of any matters that remain outstanding so a coordinated approach to resolving the issues can be taken, where many councils are experiencing the same issues.

Reason for the Report

This report is provided to members as an update on the issues raised at the November 2022 Board meeting, where Essential Energy has provided a response to each.

Legislative Policy and Risk Considerations

Related risks from the Strategic Plan are reviewed quarterly and include:
7 - Despite the efforts by the OLG subsequent to the JO Review, all Councils in the JO footprint do not engage
10 - Well intentioned State agencies design processes that waste JO and Councils' time.
12 – Confused messaging on what JO does.
14 – Miss opportunity to see how collaborations could work effectively.
19 – Long term viability and financial sustainability.
20 – Turnover staff in councils who are working on JO projects – loss of corporate knowledge.

Discussion

At its November 2022 meeting, the Board raised a number of issues with Essential Energy during its presentation from David Wilson, Geoff Burgess and other staff. Following the meeting, CNSWJO undertook to follow-up directly with Essential Energy in regard to the matters raised. The following table provides Essential Energy's response to each item raised by members.

Matters raised by members	Response from Essential Energy (via Geoff Burgess)
1. Lack of response from EE through the portal, particularly for pre-DA advice.	
Councils are reporting a number of things in this regard: • there are no designated contact people to speak to which slows down the process. • there are significant delays in approvals and information. There are examples of a request being lodged, no response for 6 months or so, and then another request has to be lodged. All of these delays are hindering development in our region. • EE is part-way through implementing a new system for connections. Has any consideration been given to consulting with councils and other users of such a system to ensure it is fit for purpose? Follow-up with the Council who raised this item provided more specific information: a) There is no pre development advice process to allow owners/consultants to discuss issues with EE prior to the lodgement of a DA. This would allow issues to be resolved prior to lodgement and reduce the overall referral process with EE. b) Long timeframes to receive referrals from EE. c) There is no relationship with EE officers and Council staff to resolve issues. It is suggested that an officer is dedicated to a Council as a point of contact and a relationship formed to resolve issues collaboratively. Please note that on various occasions Councils staff have contacted EE officers to discuss a matter in detail and has received no follow up.	1. *Essential Energy does offer this service. See our Essential Energy webpage Development Applications - https://www.essentialenergy.com.au/partners/development-applications. Essential Energy also has to be careful with the ring fencing rules, information given out by Essential Energy can be deemed by others as being non-competitive impacting the ASP's. It's a fine line, however, if we can we will.* 2. *Essential Energy's SLA is provide a response within 21 days in 95% of cases. This may have been an older issue that has been addressed. If Council have specific examples it will allow for a deeper dive to understand any delays being experienced.* 3. *I was appointed to my current role in 2019 (Head of Strategic Council Partnership) to give Councils a contact point to help support in these circumstances where they are unsure who to talk to or there is a lack of response.* *Essential Energy is also currently establishing dedicated Network Planning officers that will be another point of contact for Councils. It is not economically feasible for Essential Energy to have a dedicated officer for all 86 Councils.* 4. *There is no set distance, as it relates to the infrastructure type, construction method and voltage, as well as the proposed development type. Our Development Application Guide (available on the website - https://www.essentialenergy.com.au/partners/development-applications) provides details around this.* *You may consider the 30 metre rule being onerous, however it is there to protect the community.* 5. *There is no criteria in the State Environment Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007, there is in fact criteria in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and*

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d) There is confusion on what is required to be referred to EE as it is not clear in the SEPP, for example, is it 5m or 10m with a blow out? Furthermore, swimming pools require 30m, is this too onerous? What needs to be referred to as Essential Energy is anything that is within safe distances of the network. e) There is no criteria within the SEPP Code for CDC to be referred to EE? f) The requirement for an accredited person to undertake an assessment (when required) is an expense for owners and hard to source in the Central West. EE should be able to provide professional advice and this service to owners. g) It is suggested that EE undertake training with Central West Councils to educate/train staff to ensure we provide a collaborative and efficient process for owners/consultants etc.	*Complying Development Codes) 2008 i.e. complying development does need to be referred to Essential Energy.* *6. The Government introduced legislation that restricts Essential Energy from participating in this space, opening up competition to the market, as well as many other construction related activities that Essential Energy used to undertake, which are now restricted and open to the wider market introducing the competition.* *The Accredited Service Provider (designer) can be undertaken to calculate the blowout via a desktop study, no need for a site visit. Gosling Electrical for example has provided assessments for developments within NSW.* *It is acknowledged that many Councils in NSW do not have local ASP's which can add additional costs to any development. In these situations Essential Energy can act as 'Provider of Last Resort'. Details of this can be located on our Web site - https://www.essentialenergy.com.au/about-us/customer-and-regulatory-information/ring-fencing/provider-of-last-resort* *7. Essential Energy is than happy to work with Councils collaboratively and provide training if asked.*
2. Unaccounted for Energy	
A letter has been sent from CNSWJO to the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) in October 2022. Essential Energy was also sent this letter. See attached. As outlined in the letter, the JO and its member councils are working hard to reduce our costs and emissions however rules like these have the ability to reverse all that hard work. In response to the attachment received, further follow-up was as follows:	*Please find attached a briefing note that is hot off the press re the UFE charges.* *Of note, Essential Energy has reached out to AEMO to see if there is any accounting for why Essential Energy's UFE curve looks different than other networks (peaky between Jan – March) but have not heard any response.* *As you know, this is a complex issue compounded by a lack of data around Unaccounted for Energy (UFE). The low penetration of smart meters across our network contributes to this.*

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This will be useful background info for councils, however in our case it doesn't tell us anything we didn't already know as we have done a fair amount of reading/research on UFE. What we are really keen to explore with EE is, what is EE doing to reduce UFE? We believe things like smart controls on street lights for instance would help reduce UFE by automatically telling EE when the light is on/off when it shouldn't be. Our letter gives other examples. Our point is, while ever the end user is paying UFE, there is no incentive for those with the ability to make the changes. So, while I think the briefing note is useful for people to understand more about UFE, we are raising a much bigger issue. I don't think this one is closed off yet, and we are keen to keep discussing what is being done in this space. I note the briefing note says to discuss with the retailer (which we are/have done), and while we understand there is a role for the retailer to roll-out smart meters (and we are trying to do that too!), not everything UFE is with the retailer as we understand it.	*To facilitate smart meter roll-out, Essential Energy is consulting with the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) on possible changes to the metering competition rules that may allow networks to help install smart meters as providers of last resort.* *We also believe that metering data analysis required under AEMO reporting (intended to be annual, on 1 May) will help identify sources of UFE in the network and indicate those that have the greatest impact. This will help distributors better understand how they may assist UFE mitigation.* *The scope of AEMO reporting is proposed to include:* • *Trend reporting by networks on a 24-month rolling basis* • *UFE source analysis on identifying variables that modify metering data, including:* – *emergency unmetered generation use* – *review of unmetered load calculation methodologies (affecting streetlighting)* – *analysis of meter data quality used in UFE calculations* – *analysis of metering migrations – from 15/30 minute intervals to 5 minute intervals – accumulation to smart* – *areas to reduce UFE, including unmetered loads and DLF calculations. DLF calculations are within our remit.* *At this stage, mitigation of streetlighting UFE is dependent on AEMO allowing smart streetlight systems as a type 4 metering arrangement (remotely read metering) – also enabling reduction in power usage through smart light dimming/trimming.* *As you know, smart streetlighting for councils was initially proposed to run in conjunction with Essential Energy's Bulk LED Replacement (BLR) program, which kicked off in 2018. However, in line with Essential Energy's procurement due diligence requirements, a market tender process was not commenced until mid-2021 when a high percentage of streetlights had already been upgraded to LED under the BLR.* *While Schreder was identified as the successful tenderer, a smart streetlighting installation feasibility review completed at the start of 2022 determined that the model was not feasible and would increase financial impacts on Councils.*

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	Essential Energy has offered to assist councils that wish to pursue smart streetlighting on their own terms, but we have received no requests as yet. *The potential remains to follow up on an option to conduct a pilot of smart streetlighting, with Bathurst LGA selected as the trial locality.* *In addition & further to your email this morning:* *Under the new rule, AEMO determines the amount of loss-adjusted metered electricity that is consumed by a retailers customers in a distribution area. AEMO then allocates UFE to the retailers in the distribution areas, pro-rated based on the accounted for energy. Retailers then pass on charges to consumers based on their metered load. The charges may be embedded in their retail rate (likely for small customers) or as separated charges which may be identified on the bill as "UFE".* *Like CNSWJO, Essential Energy is also trying to have a better understanding of these newly introduced UFE charges on customers account, and are more than happy to continue to work with Councils & CNSWJO on this topic.*
3. Network capacity constraints in Cowra	
This request is in relation to assisting Cowra Council with suitable locations for EV chargers. There was a comment during the presentation today about locating chargers where there is sufficient capacity, however from a council and end user perspective the location of chargers is really important. We are looking to find locations that address both needs, not just locating them in an un-user-friendly location just because there is capacity – they won't get used if they aren't convenient for drivers. Also note that the funding round referred to in the email has since closed.	*As communicated previously, the capacity maps is a works in progress, once completed it will provide some basic guidance as to the best locations to place new connections. It is anticipated that the maps will be completed during 2023. (I don't have an exact date at this stage).* *In relation to EV charging locations, and from your comments 'council and end user perspective the location of chargers is really important ', in the interim until capacity maps are available and as per current processes, the best action to take is for Councils to advise of their proposed locations for connections for EV charging stations, that way they can be reviewed and confirmed.* *In relation to housing developments and other strategic developments, if Councils send their proposed strategic plans, Essential Energy can review and determine what capacity is available in these proposed locations. Essential Energy are trying to encourage Councils*

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I've just followed up with staff at Cowra who have confirmed they did not hear back from anyone at EE in relation to this. Their further concerns are around network capacity in general and in relation to housing and development.	*to send in the 5 & 10+ year strategic plans, this will further help Essential Energy plan and ensure that network capacity is available.*
4. Apprentices	
Another topic raised during last week's meeting was EE planning to put on 100 apprentices in 2023. The Board is keen to hear more about this, including how it will roll-out as there are opportunities to optimise this in the various communities in our footprint. This region welcomes an increase in resource in region however, concerns were raised around the resourcing of training them up in addition to their other workload.	• *Essential Energy is an enterprise based registered training organisation with three major training centres; Grafton, Goulburn and Parkes and several smaller training locations strategically placed to best meet the needs of our workforce.* • *For the delivery of recruitment, training/assessment and quality assurance activities related to our apprentice programs we engage extensively across our community, including; Indigenous employment providers, industry partners (Ausgrid, Endeavour and Energy Queensland) TAFE NSW and some other smaller RTOs.* • *Electrical apprentices within our Electricity Zone Substation group undertake the Certificate III Electrotechnology Electrician" with TAFE NSW, Orange Campus as the RTO. The business also has an ATSI specific program for trainees undertaking the Certificate II in Electrotechnology (Career Start)", this program enables the participants to develop and prepare for an apprenticeship.* • *TAFE Orange Campus supports the required domestic electrical wiring work experience through "Cadia Cottage". This program allows our apprentices to gain intensive simulated work exposure for the development of competency in an accelerated way.* • *We also have relationships with smaller RTOs across our footprint to provide training and assessment services in the High-Risk Licencing areas (Elevated Work Platforms and Dogging) and also NSW Rural Fires Services for training in fire control.*

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	• *Essential Energy strategy of delivery for apprentices is based around a block release schedule that spans the first three years of the apprenticeship, delivering the core skills and knowledge required of the qualification. Our Training Centres are equipped with simulated electricity supply network for apprentices to develop the knowledge and skills away from the dangers that an operational electricity network holds. Apprentices return to their home depot and undertake "real tasks" in the workplace with exposure tracked by the utilisation of e-profiling, once the required exposure is documented, "Workplace Assessments" are undertaken with the apprentices for the determination of competency. Our learning/assessments resources are developed by a team of full-time developers in conjunction with input from the business SMEs (industry) making content truly reflective of current industry practices.* • *Winning the Australian Training Awards for Employer of Apprentices was an achievement for the organisation and to recognise our award winning program, trainers and resources was a real highlight* *Apprenticeship information is available via the Essential Energy web site - Apprenticeships (essentialenergy.com.au)* ***Feb 2022** - 40 new Apprentices, 10 Trainees and four Graduates are joining the Essential Energy team today. (The new apprentices will include - 37 Powerline Workers and three Electrical Technicians, bringing the total number of Apprentices within the business to 138)* *The new Apprentices and Trainees will be based in 35 locations across the State: Barham, Bathurst, Berrigan, Blayney, Bombala, Broken Hill, Bulahdelah, Buronga, Casino, Cobar, Cooma, Coonabarabran, Coonamble, Cowra, Dubbo, Gloucester, Griffith, Hillston, Inverell, Kempsey, Leeton, Lismore, Maclean, Molong, Moree, Moruya, Narrabri, Nyngan, Orange, Parkes, Tamworth, Taree, West Wyalong and Young.* ***June 2022 (for 2023)***

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	Recruitment is now underway for 58 Apprentice Powerline Workers, 6 Apprentice Zone Substation Electrical Technicians, 7 Apprentice Cable Jointers and 4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pre-Employment Trainees, and Fleet Apprenticeships (Mechanics), to join our business in 2023. *positions based in Albury, Armidale, Ballina, Balranald, Bega, Berrigan, Boorowa, Braidwood, Buronga, Casino, Cobar, Coffs Harbour, Condobolin, Coolamon, Coonamble, Cootamundra, Corowa, Crookwell, Culcairn, Deniliquin, Dubbo, Forbes, Goondiwindi, Goulburn, Grafton, Griffith, Inverell, Junee, Kempsey, Lake Cargelligo, Leeton, Lismore, Moree, Moruya, Nambucca Heads, Narrabri, Narromine, Nyngan, Oberon, Orange, Parkes, Port Macquarie, Queanbeyan, Quirindi, Tamworth, Taree, Tenterfield, Tooleybuc, Tumbarumba, Tweed Heads, Wagga Wagga, Walgett, Wellington, Wilcannia, Yass, Young.* *The programs has been widely promoted via print media, social media platforms (including Facebook, Instagram, You Tube, Tik Tok and LinkedIn), radio advertising, and school career advisors –plus attendance at community based events including NAIDOC Week celebrations and career expos.* *Hopefully this helps all understand the Apprenticeship process within Essential Energy.*
5. Defect notices	
As raised by a number of councils at the Board meeting last week, councils are being given very little notice to fix defects on assets that they in some cases weren't even aware they were responsible for. Lachlan is an example where they have been issued with defects notices for approx. $50k worth of work and were given around 3 months' notice. There are no local providers who can do the work, so there is additional cost to bring in contractors from outside of the area.	*Privately-owned network assets and responsibilities associated with maintaining them, this legislation was introduced within the Electricity Supply Act 1995 and Electricity Supply (Safety and Network Management) Regulation in 2014, which Essential Energy has to adhere to.* *It's worth noting that Essential Energy initially advised Local Government Mayors and General Managers in May 2018, and subsequently in September 2019, that to secure network, manage community and environmental safety, that Essential Energy needs to reinforce private network asset ownership and associated responsibilities regarding legislated timeframes for defect rectification.*

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Councils are requesting more advanced notice of the defects so that they can adequately budget. I understand that Council has a meeting with EE re this in a few weeks, however it is not just Lachlan that has raised concerns. Mayors are being approached by farmers who are getting defect notices and they are concerned around the communication and timing. The region would welcome codesigning enduring comms with EE.	*Currently, Essential Energy support private asset owners by undertaking patrols of their power poles and overhead powerlines free of charge every 4.5 years, and by sending notification of any issues we identify – both conditional problems that may need preventative maintenance and critical defects requiring immediate attention.* *In between the asset inspection cycles, there is an expectation that private asset owners engage appropriately qualified professionals to undertake inspections:* • *annually, before each bushfire season* • *after major storms, or* • *if they suspect any damage.* *This is to ensure that owners obtain prompt advice of any issues and can plan and budget for necessary maintenance or rectification procedures.* *We understand that rectification costs may be difficult for some of our customers to bear, particularly during the recent weather events. Flexible payment plans or other financial options may be available for those experiencing financial hardship, in accordance with Essential Energy's Customer Support Policy. Landowners can call 13 23 91 to discuss their individual circumstances and arrange an eligibility assessment.* *As previously advised, Essential Energy is responsible for maintaining and repairing the electricity network to the customer connection point located on private land, which is defined in the Service and Installation Rules of NSW and reflects provisions under the Electricity Supply Act 1995 (NSW). Landholders are responsible for network maintenance beyond this point (as, similarly, all owners of home and business premises are responsible for internal wiring maintenance).* *To delineate ownership, we are ensuring that all power poles on a customer's property are appropriately labelled, and we are now pro-actively advising landowners with private assets located on their properties about their ownership responsibilities. Our website (www.essentialenergy.com.au/privateassets) offers FAQs, examples of privately-owned network asset configurations, common overhead power pole and powerline defects and indicative rectification costs.*

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	In the past Essential Energy may have undertaken private asset defect rectification work at its own expense to manage potential safety risks. However, since the Australian Energy Regulator's Ring Fencing Guidelines were introduced in January 2018, we have been precluded from undertaking this type of rectification work at no cost to private network asset owners. Instead, owners are required to engage an appropriately qualified service provider (ASP) and are responsible for associated costs. It is acknowledged that many Councils in NSW do not have local ASP's which can add additional costs to any repair. In these situations Essential Energy can act as 'Provider of Last Resort' (in certain locations). Details of this can be located on our Web site - *https://www.essentialenergy.com.au/about-us/customer-and-regulatory-information/ring-fencing/provider-of-last-resort* *In bushfire rated areas, Section 53E of the NSW Electricity Supply Act 1995 states -* *The required work must be carried out within 60 days after our Direction is given to the customer. they must:* • *notify Essential Energy within 30 days after this Notice is issued that the work will be completed within 60 days, and* • *complete the work within 60 days and contact Essential Energy's representative (contact details are provided on our Notice).* • *If the customer does not provide notification of their intended actions within 30 days from receipt of the direction and the work is not completed within 60 days from the written receipt, the Act authorises Essential Energy to:* • *enter the property and undertake the work on your behalf in the interest of public safety, and* • *recover the reasonable cost of doing the work.* *In non bushfire rated areas, we work under a different piece of legislation. Section 39 (3) of the Electricity Supply (Safety and Network Management) Regulation 2014. For consistency in our process we provide the customer with the same timeframes as above. However, as indicated we are prohibited to undertake work and our only option is to disconnect the customer from our network with the exception of life support customers where we will*

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	undertake the work to ensure the customer has supply continuity for their medical apparatus. *While we appreciate that the legislated defect rectification timeframe is tight, speedy rectification of any network defects is critical in mitigating risks to the safety of owners and occupiers, the broader community and the environment. Extensions can be considered under certain circumstances and are on a case by case review using a risk based approach of bushfire and electrical hazards and defect severity in relation to asset failure particularly in public spaces like showgrounds where the general public may be. (eg areas used for travellers/caravans, local events).* *Essential Energy is more than happy to work with CNSWJO & Mayors to co design a comms.*
6. Delays in obtaining NMIs and incorrect information	
Another matter raised at the Board meeting was from Cr Miller, Mayor of Forbes. She has firsthand experience at the challenges of trying to navigate a very complicated and time consuming process of obtaining a NMI for a property. Added to this is an error in the data where a NMI couldn't be provided as there was already a NMI for the address – however the address in the records was incorrect. Cr Miller has been actively trying to navigate the process for over 2 months now and it is still unresolved, despite being told it would be resolved in 6 business days. There are a few concerns here – inadequate records/data, and the complexity of a process. It shouldn't be so difficult to get a new connection on a property. If there is some way you can assist with this issue it would be helpful.	*In relation to this one, Essential Energy received an allocate NMI service order request in September from Origin and the following NMI (40013475738) was created for this property at the same time. At that point it goes back to the customer/ASP to arrange metering & connection.* *It appears that there is no Metering installed by the ASP, so the connection may not have taken place yet.* *I know David Wilson spoke directly with Phyllis re this issue, however, if this is still of concern or is outstanding I can put Phyllis in contact with the Essential Energy Market Liaison Manager (Graeme Ferguson) to further discuss.*

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7. RACEfor2030 Central West Capacity Project	
We have been in discussions with EE and UTS (via Simon Wright) on a collaborative project for a capacity project through the RACE for 2030 program since May/June 2021. We had about 15 months of discussions on this project, and right at the last minute prior to the final green light of approval, EE advised that it was no longer interested in participating. Instead, there was discussion of a capacity map that was a few months away. We have not heard too much more on the progress of the map despite follow up from us. I have attached the RACE for 2030 application for your reference. Our Board and other partners expressed disappointment at EE's withdrawal from the project as it would have provided great outcomes and insights for EE's customers. The RACE for 2030 program is a research program that has matched funding. The costs for EE were just $25k. UTS, DPIE/OECC and CNSWJO had also agreed to commit funds to the project. We are keen to receive an update on the maps referred to by Josh, and to explore any other potential opportunities to support councils in understanding the local capacity in their areas. We understand this issue is having a significant issue on development and housing. A further email was sent to Essential Energy in response to their response, which remains unanswered:	*Please find below the response from Essential Energy re RACE2030 & an update on Essential Energy's capacity map development.* *Initially Essential Energy indicated that it would not be supportive of this process.* *Jenny then introduced Josh Harvey to Simon, where it was indicated that a commitment was made to the CNSWJO board that Essential Energy would be involved in the project. As a result, Essential Energy indicated their support of the project with the expectation that Essential Energy would only be providing the capacity map that was under development. Post this meeting it was indicated to Essential Energy that RACE2030 had decided not to move ahead with the project.* *An update on the Capacity Maps that Essential Energy are developing was supplied in October (by Josh to Kate).* *As a current update on the Capacity Maps Essential Energy are developing, drafts have been released internally for comment/testing, when Essential Energy has completed this testing and made any adjustments the Draft Capacity Maps will be further shared for comment, which will involve a selection of Councils.* *For reference I have attached a couple of email conversations Josh has had with Kate & Simon.* *If you required further details please let me know or you can reach out Josh Harvey.*

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This project actually commenced in June 2021 and there were 15 months' worth of emails, meetings etc. which involved UTS (Simon Wright), EE, CNSWJO, DPIE and RACE for 2023. I've attached one of the original emails I can find which shows when it first commenced. EE pulled the pin in late August 2022, right before the green light from RACE. The RACE project was to dove-tail into a project with SAPN, also run through RACE. There could have been some excellent shared learnings. CNSWJO has been very supportive of this project, and it all came about from requests from member councils with energy insecurity, as identified by AREMI mapping. There were countless hours of work put into the application, which had many iterations, all of which Gavin and Josh were involved in. The Board received regular updates on the application process and were keen to see the project progress. The Board is now understandably disappointed, particularly given that a new priority has been added to the CNSWJO's Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities – energy security. In relation to the capacity maps, Josh advised in about August that these were an alternate to the RACE project and that we would have access to them by the end of the year. As we haven't seen them yet, we are still unsure if they will even tell us what we were hoping to achieve from the RACE project. There was no consultation or co-design with the maps to ensure they met our needs.	

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Conclusion

CNSWJO and members continue to identify issues with the levels of service provided by Essential Energy. It is recommended that members continue to raise these matters directly with Essential Energy via the Head of Strategic Council Partnerships, Goeff Burgess, and also include CNSWJO so that further follow-up can occur when the matters affect more than one council.

Attachment/s:
11. Correspondence to AEMO re Unaccounted for Energy charges
12. Briefing Note from Essential Energy re Unaccounted for Energy

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9. Quarterly review of the Central NSW JO Strategic Plan and Statement of Regional Strategic Priority 2022 -2025

Regional Strategic Priorities	1. Leveraging our successful collaboration 2. Regional Prosperity through better infrastructure and services 3. Advocate for better infrastructure and services in health and ageing 4. Telecommunications 5. Regional Transport Planning and Infrastructure Prioritisation 6. Regional Water Security and Productive Water 7. Transition to a sustainable, secure and affordable energy future
Portfolio Chairman	TBC
Sponsoring General Manager/s	All

Recommendation/s
That the CNSWJO note the Quarterly review of the Central NSW JO Strategic Plan and Statement of Regional Strategic Priority 2022 -2025 and **1. Sign the MoU with Regional Development Australia Central West;** **2. Seek a variation for the OLG Capacity Building Funds of:** **i. $25,000 for the Water Training funding to be transferred to capacity building in water strategy aligned with Integrated Planning and Reporting; and** **ii. $23,132.86 remaining from the energy capacity building monies to augment the Regional NSW Business Case funding for the Nexus Between Net Zero and Energy Security;** **3. Note that CNSWJO is seeking to have an event sponsored by the Regional Australia Institute to build better alignment with the Regionalisation Ambition 2032- Rebalance the Nation;** **4. Continue membership of the Regional Australia Institute of $5K pa;** **5. Develop a response to the Environmental Impact Statement for the upgrade to the Great Western Highway between Blackheath to Little Hartley in line with current policy; and** **6. Endorse the support of the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia submission to the Australian Energy Market Commission on Minor Energy Flow Metering**

Precis

This report provides advice on progress on the priorities identified in the Statement of Strategic Regional Priority adopted November 2022.

Specific areas of more detailed discussion are:

1. Progress on management of the Joint Organisations red risks particularly the challenges for the broader network and optimisation of engagement with the State;
2. Progress on the Joint Organisation Review;
3. MoU with Regional Development Australia Central West;
4. Submissions;

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Precis Continued

5. Progress on Office of Local Government Capacity Building Funding Stages One and Two where Stage one is complete and a final report is attached. Stage two seeks a variation to provide support for the transition for Local Water Utility Strategy to the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework;
6. Central NSW Integrated Transport Group
7. Status of funding applications
8. Progress on Regional Economic Development Strategic (REDS)
9. Membership of the Regional Australia Institute
10. Cost savings and other value
11. An update on the CNSWJO Public Relations support for the visitor economy.

Reason for this Report

The Central NSW JO approved its Strategic Plan (the Plan) 24 November 2022. Seven 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.

Legislative Policy and Risk Considerations

Regarding risk, risks are reviewed each quarter, please request the Risk Register. There are six Very High Risks identified for the Joint Organisation of 39 risks overall.

#	Category	Risk	Consequence	Risk treatment	Rating
1	Political	Failure of the JO Network	State will not engage leading to failure of the broader aspiration of JOs.	CNSWJO leads collaboration of JOEO network with focus on JO sustainability. Chairs Forum focus on sustainability	Very High
9	Political	Review recommendations to “bring the State” to the table” do not deliver network sustainability	Potential funding implications and relationship damage. Possible advocacy failure.	Communications Plan in place. Board monitoring relationship strengths on quarterly basis – however this is not within the ambit of the Board’s control so the risk remains high.	Very High
10	Political	Well intentioned State agencies design processes that waste JO and Councils’ time.	JO and member Council resources are taken away from delivering member value in efforts to work with State agencies that “just don’t get it"	Communications Plan in place. Reporting to other tiers of government systematic. Measurement of impact of programs defined and tested for robustness. Formal agreements with major stakeholders that clearly defines roles and responsibilities and enables two way communication.	High

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12	Political	Confused messaging on what JO does.	Board approved Communication Plan that clearly defines who is delegated to speak on behalf of the JO	Communications Plan in place. Strategic Plan in place and reviewed annually. Council roadshows. Stakeholder engagement directly with key government agencies. Work with Councils to get messaging to communities out.	High
14	Political	Miss opportunity to see how collaborations could work effectively.	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.	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.	Very High
19	Economic	Long term viability and financial sustainability.	JO can't get sufficient funding to be able to meet liabilities.	Work with other JOs and relevant State agencies on a sustainable funding framework for the JO network and advocate as necessary.	Very High

The existential risk to the JO from network sustainability as outlined in the above Risks is now happening and will have greater impact despite the mitigations in place. 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.

Please request all associated minutes and agendas from the NSW JO Chairs Forum meetings.

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. This work is very slow and showing some positive responses. Please see advice further into this report on two successful funding programs across the regional NSW network.

Current status of JOs is as follows:

Joint Organisation	Staff support and status
Canberra	EO FT plus support staff
Hunter	EO FT plus support staff
Illawarra	EO FT plus support staff
Far North West	EO PT
Far South West	In hiatus
Namoi	EO resigned, awaiting election results to progress next steps
New England	In hiatus
Northern Rivers	EO PT
Mid North Coast	EO PT plus project manager PT
Orana	In hiatus
RAMJO	EO PT plus support staff (Currently no EO - recent resignation)
Riverina JO	Resolved to put JO in hiatus and progress as a ROC as of June 30 2023

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Central NSW JO Board Meeting 23 February 2023

Progress on the OLG Joint Organisation Review (the Review)

CNSWJO welcomed the opportunity to be engaged in the Review recommendations to be implemented within twelve months where we suggested that a codesigned approach will lead to better outcomes. It is close to twelve months and there has been little progress.

At a meeting 5 September 2022 with Executive Officers of JOs and State Agencies, the first Agency/JO Implementation Plan, three key pieces of work were identified. These were based on the four themes of the Implementation Plan circulated 27 July 2022 for "codesign." These are as follows where membership is being sorted and status is currently at:

1. Theme - Governance, promotion and communication
   - Project - Develop a JO coms strategy to promote JOs to member Councils and provide a
   - mechanism to engage JOs with agencies.
   - Project lead - OLG
   - Members: Steve Wilson (Hunter JO), Warwick Bennett (CRJO), Jenny Bennett (CNSWJO),
   - Anna Wyllie (DRNSW), Amanda Chadwick or delegate (DPE - Water Sector Reform), Simon
   - Wallace Pannell (DPE – Sustainable Councils)
   - First meeting held Monday 7 November. TOR under development.

2. Theme - Accountability and performance
   - Project - Develop a list of key performance indicators for JOs to report against
   - Project lead - Roger Stephan
   - Members - Joe James (Hunter JO), Louise McMeeking (DRNSW), Nicola Gleeson Coopes
   - (RAMJO)
   - Discussion paper near completion

3.Theme - Financial sustainability and boundaries
   - Project - Removing barriers to investment in JOs
   - Project lead: Transferred to CNSWJO 24 November 2022
   - Members - Warwick Bennett (CRJO), Roger Stephan (ISJO), Gary Hopkins (DPE - Planning), Gerry Collins (DRNSW), Joe James (Hunter JO) Jenny Bennett (CNSWJO), Simon Wallace Pannell (DPE – Sustainable Councils)
   - Discussion paper complete – sorting membership

On 11 October 2022 Ms Ally Dench advised Mayors and General Managers *We will come together again in 6 weeks to share progress and look at draft projects.*

CNSWJO has drafted TOR for the Theme 3 subcommittee and a background paper. A meeting was held Friday 10 February. Please find attached the updated TOR, background paper and notes. The next meeting is being coordinated for early March.

MOU with RDA Central West

The Memorandum of Understanding with RDA Central West calls for an annual review.

RDA Central West and Central NSW JO have enjoyed the benefits of a Memorandum of Understanding for over a decade. This is the only one of its kind in the nation and maximises the resource of both entities.

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Where communication between the two Executive Officers is constant please find attached the MOU that includes an update of the intended program of activities that will form the basis of the work to ensure a minimum of duplication.

Submissions

At the time of writing the CNSWJO will develop in line with Board policy a response to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Blackheath to Little Hartley.

Media has been written that encourages community to respond and the submission will be within existing policy. Please find attached.

Minor Energy Flow Metering

The Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) has called for submissions in relation to Minor Energy Flow Metering. The CNSWJO has provided a letter of support to the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) submission. Please see attached.

Street lighting is a significant cost and major greenhouse gas contributor for our councils. Having adopted LEDs, smart controls are the only effective tool to take energy savings further. Indeed, smart street lighting controls can deliver has material energy, GHG, light pollution, maintenance, administrative, transparency, service level, road safety and public security benefits for councils, for utilities and for our communities. The Minor Energy Flow Metering rule change submission seeks to support any reform efforts that helps facilitate adoption of this important technology.

It is recommended that the Board endorse the submission being a letter of support for the IPWEA submission.

OLG Stage 1 Funding

This project is now complete. Please find attached the final report to the OLG.

OLG Stage 2 funding Project Plan Milestone Report

The approved OLG Stage 2 funding Project Plan has milestone reporting based on GMAC and Board business papers.

The four projects being funded by the OLG are in energy, Community Strategic Planning (CSP), a tourism campaign and wastewater training. Please request past reports in this regard.

Progress is as follows:

- Please see previous Energy Reports for progress on the broader DPIE collaborative project. Funds are used to match DPIE funding or fill gaps as the project continues. Funding of $46,867 has been expended. Given the potential of the Regional NSW funded Business Case on the Nexus Between Net Zero and Energy Security, this funding has been sought for the balance of funds to leverage the business case. The variation of for the $23,132.86 remaining. Endorsement is sought from the Board.

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- The CSP project is completed with the final piece of work being a “Place Mat” per lga including up to 48 data sets benchmarked across the region. Please find elsewhere in this report. Funding of $20,000 has been fully expended.
- The $35,000 spend on a marketing campaign for the region has been designed under the messaging “The Long Long Weekend.” This has been fully expended. Please find outputs from the CNSWJO PR and social media campaign later in this report.
- Given the state of flux for water training and the priority for funding for transitioning LWU strategy to IP&R mentioned elsewhere in this business paper, a variation has been sought from OLG for the $25K to be transferred to supporting this initiative and seeks endorsement from the Board.

Central NSW Integrated Transport Group

This group is Chaired by the new reelected Cr Ken Keith, Portfolio Chair of Transport for the JO and is administered by TfNSW. Its last meeting was held 6 February 2023. Minutes are attached.

Status of funding applications

Members will be aware that there are a significant number of opportunities for Local Government, including JOs to participate in competitive grant rounds. Many members are seeking support letters from the JO, and these are provided upon request. The JO has or is making application under the following:

- Disaster Risk Reduction Fund Program
- The Regional NSW Regional Business Case Program - successful
- Fixing Country Roads Bridge and Route Load Assessment Stream
- Joint Organisations Net Zero Acceleration (JONZA) - successful
- Spare Capacity in Housing project with the Housing Taskforce - successful

Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS)

Members will be aware that the Regional Economic Development Strategies are being updated through a process initiated by Regional NSW. These will use the same Functional Economic Regions as are currently in place.

Concurrently Regional NSW have said they intend to undertake a root and branch review approach of the REDS. CNSWJO has provided correspondence in this regard seeking a codesigned approach to the review leveraging the JO network. Conversations with REDS representatives have been held to progress this at JO Executive Officers' meetings. A verbal update can be provided to the meeting.

At the time of writing members have received drafts for comment and advice that final versions will be provided by the end of February.

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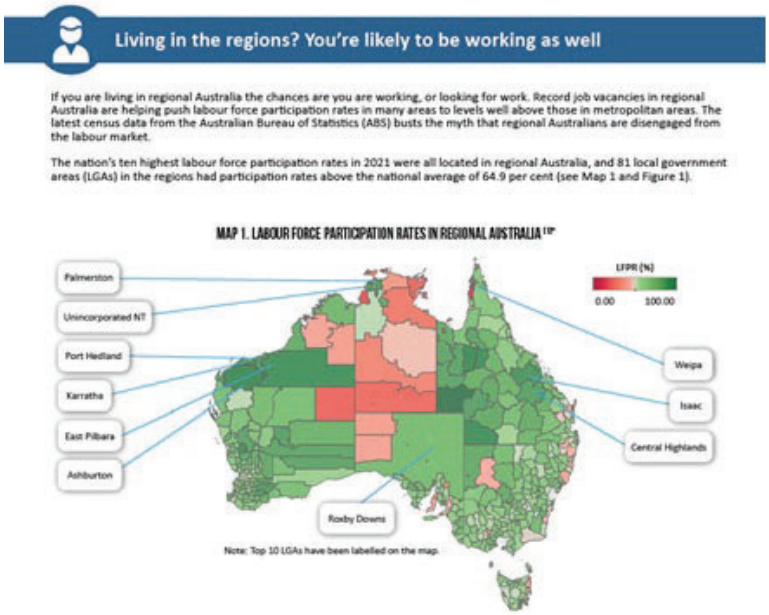
Membership of Regional Australia Institute

As member may recall, the Regional Australia Institute (RAI) has received substantial funding from the Federal Government to support its role as a thinktank for regional Australia. For more information on the RAI please go to: Regional Australia Institute | Home This site is a worthwhile resource to browse. For example quarterly advice is provided on regional labour market with associated commentary. Regional Labour Market Update - December Quarter 2022 (regionalaustralia.org.au)

As part of its role, the RAI consistently provide data, media, toolkits and policy documents in support of regional Australia, examples include Liveability in Australian Mid-Sized Towns and the Liveability Toolkit Smart Library Viewer (regionalaustralia.org.au)



A significant national campaign called Move to More has been funded through the RAI where all member Councils have been provided with the opportunity to optimise their location pages. Please go to Home - Move to More for more information.

To progress its regionalisation ambition, the RAI is progressing its Rebalancing the Nation Framework including substlial advocacy – for more information please go to Regionalisation Ambition 2032 (rebalancethenation.com.au)

It is recommended that CNSWJO seek to hold and event in region supported by RAI to better align the aspirations of the members of CNSWJO with the work of the RAI and that CNSWJO continue with its annual $5K membership.

Spend, Cost Savings and Funding

The following tables have been updated to reflect the spend, cost savings and grant funding through the Joint Organisation for the 2022/2023 financial year and a reported on a quarterly basis. Cumulative spend and cost savings for previous financial years are available on request.

Note that Lithgow will be included in the spend and cost savings from 1 July, which will be reported in the April GMAC report when the first quarter of 2023 has been received.

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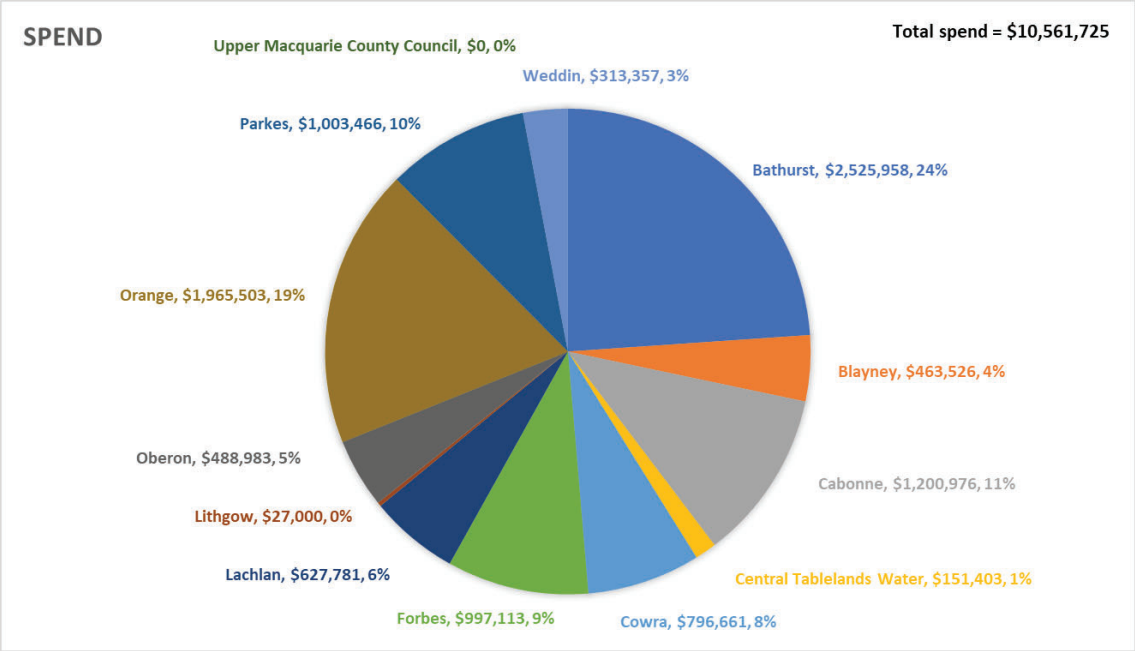
Central NSW JO Board Meeting 23 February 2023

Spend

The following table reflects the spend by each member Council under the various JO contracts for the 22/23 financial year to date, noting that there are still a number of providers yet to provide their spend data.

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	$7,900	$51,039	$1,416	$0	$974,296	$0	$1,455,453	$35,854	$0	$0	**$2,525,958**
Blayney	$6,700	$6,423	$0	$0	$352,361	$0	$94,666	$3,376	$0	$0	**$463,526**
Cabonne	$7,000	$20,229	$280	$0	#########	$0	$108,388	$0	$0	$0	**$1,200,976**
Central Tablelands Water	$6,700	$604	$0	$0	$0	$0	$139,099	$5,000	$0	$0	**$151,403**
Cowra	$14,323	$23,547	$10,353	$0	$433,876	$0	$308,462	$0	$0	$6,100	**$796,661**
Forbes	$7,000	$23,776	$0	$0	$611,562	$0	$331,421	$20,105	$0	$3,250	**$997,113**
Lachlan	$7,000	$18,981	$0	$0	$523,250	$0	$67,103	$0	$0	$11,448	**$627,781**
Lithgow	$7,000	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$20,000	$0	$0	**$27,000**
Oberon	$7,000	$9,434	$0	$0	$404,881	$0	$52,112	$13,991	$0	$1,565	**$488,983**
Orange	$7,900	$51,884	$4,520	$0	$508,084	$0	$1,358,900	$11,020	$0	$23,195	**$1,965,503**
Parkes	$7,000	$16,770	$0	$0	$633,326	$0	$316,507	$22,038	$0	$7,825	**$1,003,466**
Weddin	$17,416	$775	$0	$0	$186,479	$0	$106,643	$2,043	$0	$0	**$313,357**
Total	**$102,939**	**$223,463**	**$16,569**	**$0**	**#########**	**$0**	**$4,338,753**	**$133,426**	**$0**	**$53,383**	**$10,561,725**



Note the majority of Lithgow's contract spend will be reported from 1 January 2023, and therefore reported in the next Board report once spend data has been received.

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 22/23 financial year to date. 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.

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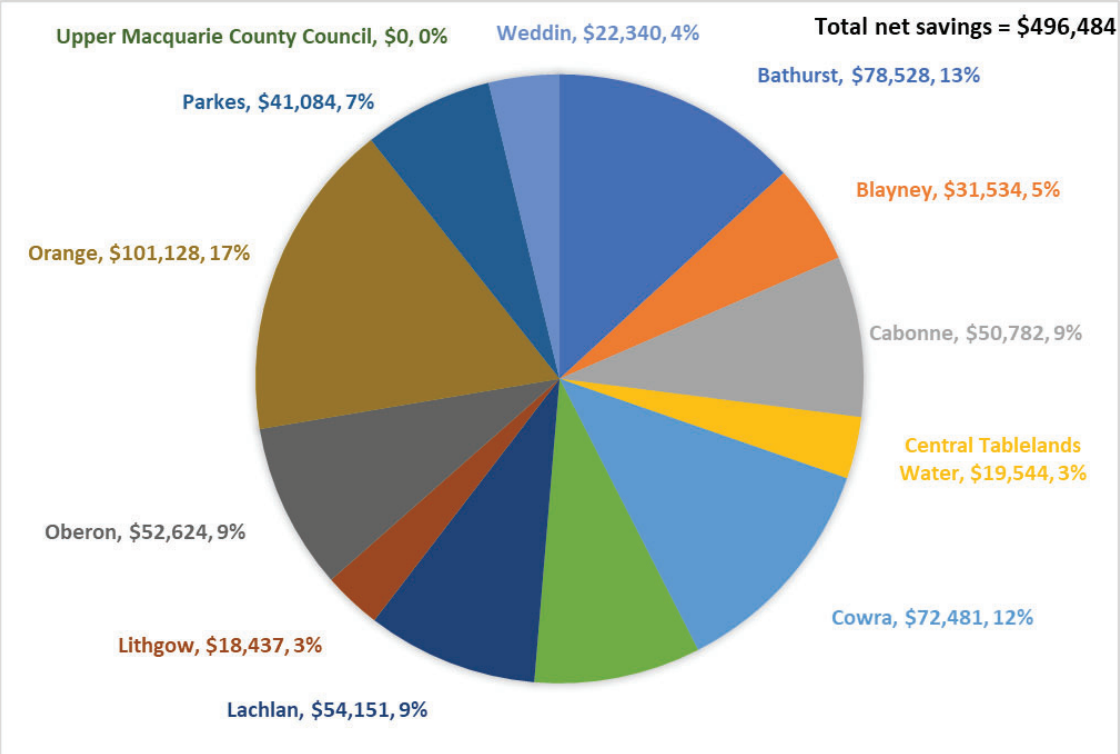
Central NSW JO Board Meeting 23 February 2023

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	$1,500	$45,891	$1,416	$0	$13,516	$0	$0	$9,268	$0	$0	$4,937	$2,000	**$78,528**
Blayney	$1,500	$10,445	$0	$0	$5,057	$0	$0	$596	$0	$0	$4,937	$9,000	**$31,534**
Cabonne	$1,500	$10,815	$280	$0	$24,249	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$4,937	$9,000	**$50,782**
Central Tablelands Water	$1,500	$107	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$2,000	$0	$0	$4,937	$11,000	**$19,544**
Cowra	$1,500	$22,829	$10,353	$0	$20,336	$0	$0	$0	$0	$3,525	$4,937	$9,000	**$72,481**
Forbes	$1,500	$11,879	$0	$0	$18,550	$0	$0	$5,548	$0	$4,338	$4,937	$6,000	**$52,752**
Lachlan	$1,500	$20,613	$0	$0	$19,730	$0	$0	$0	$0	$2,371	$4,937	$5,000	**$54,151**
Lithgow	$1,500	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$6,000	$0	$0	$4,937	$6,000	**$18,437**
Oberon	$1,500	$18,934	$0	$0	$14,549	$0	$0	$2,704	$0	$0	$4,937	$10,000	**$52,624**
Orange	$1,500	$66,062	$4,520	$0	$16,021	$0	$0	$1,945	$0	$1,144	$4,937	$5,000	**$101,128**
Parkes	$1,500	$2,730	$0	$0	$16,470	$0	$0	$3,771	$0	$5,675	$4,937	$6,000	**$41,084**
Upper Macquarie County Council	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	**$0**
Weddin	$1,500	$137	$0	$0	$5,231	$0	$0	$360	$0	$1,175	$4,937	$9,000	**$22,340**
Sub Total	**$18,000**	**$210,442**	**$16,569**	**$0**	**$153,708**	**$0**	**$0**	**$32,193**	**$0**	**$18,228**	**$59,244**	**$87,000**	**$595,384**
												Cost to men	**$98,900**
												Total	**$496,484**



Grant Funding

GRANT FUNDING - 22/23 FY	Water	Training/HR/ WHS	IT	Supply	Roads/ Transport	Energy	RDOCS	Tourism	Other	Total
Bathurst	$18,750	$0	$0	$0	$0	$21,917	$0	$0	$53,999	**$94,666**
Blayney	$18,750	$0	$0	$0	$0	$29,917	$0	$0	$53,999	**$102,666**
Cabonne	$18,750	$0	$0	$0	$0	$20,917	$0	$0	$53,999	**$93,666**
Central Tablelands Water	$18,750	$0	$0	$0	$0	$29,917	$0	$0	$53,999	**$102,666**
Cowra	$18,750	$0	$0	$0	$0	$15,917	$0	$0	$53,999	**$88,666**
Forbes	$18,750	$0	$0	$0	$0	$30,917	$0	$0	$53,999	**$103,666**
Lachlan	$18,750	$0	$0	$0	$0	$31,917	$0	$0	$53,999	**$104,666**
Lithgow	$18,750	$0	$0	$0	$0	$54,817	$0	$0	$53,999	**$127,566**
Oberon	$18,750	$0	$0	$0	$0	$28,917	$0	$0	$53,999	**$101,666**
Orange	$18,750	$0	$0	$0	$0	$37,917	$0	$0	$53,999	**$110,666**
Parkes	$18,750	$0	$0	$0	$0	$31,917	$0	$0	$53,999	**$104,666**
Weddin	$18,750	$0	$0	$0	$0	$28,917	$0	$0	$53,999	**$101,666**
Total	**$225,000**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$363,900**	**$0**	**$0**	**$647,989**	**$1,236,889**

Reports

Value for members

Please see below the value to members for this financial year to date and a summary of the previous years.

VALUE FOR MEMBERS	FY 2019/ 2020	FY 2020 /2021	FY 2021/ 2022	**FYTD** 2022/ 2023	ACTIVITY THIS QUARTER 25/11/2022 – 23/2/2023
SUBMISSIONS	**20**	**23**	**16**	8	AEMC – Minor Energy Flow Metering
PLANS, STRATEGIES AND COLLATERAL	**26**	**12**	**3**	8	Nil this quarter
GRANTS SEEKING	**3**	**3**	**1**	$560k	Bridge capacity assessments.
GRANT FUNDING RECEIVED	**$430k**	**$713k**	**$1.14m**	**$2.45m**	$225K Water Loss Management Plan $155k Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration (JONZA) program $202k from OECC for development of ERPs $7K from OECC for tariff review for Lithgow $1,043,328 – Regional NSW Business Case and Strategy Development Fund $43k – project management training Balance of funding advice is embargoed. See confidential report.
COMPLIANCE	**13**	**9**	**11**	13	241122-IPART workshop with member Councils 030223- IP &R Training
DATA	**6**	**3**	**1**	14	Nil this quarter
COST SAVINGS	**$1.92m**	**$2.22m**	**$2.18m**	**$496k**	See previous pages for more detail
REPRESENTATION AND OPPORTUNITIES COUNCILS HAVE BEEN AFFORDED	**147**	**159**	**210**	68	241122 – CNSWJO Board – Online 241122 – Essential Energy presentation – Online 241122 - IPART workshop – Online 301122 – Rose Jackson Minister for Water, Housing and Homelessness – OCC 301122 – CNSWJO Tourism Managers Meeting – Online 081222 - Bi-annual Regional Planning Forum for the Central West and Orana Region 151222 – Water Utilities' Alliance Meeting From 010123 Access to the Come Out We're Open campaign 020223- February GMAC - OCC 030223 – IP&R Training 060223 – CNSW ITG led by TFNSW 07-100223 - Water loss management training 080223 – Regional Energy Group 140223- Diploma in Project Management by TAFE 150223 – IT Managers Group 160223 – Meeting with Iberdrola re energy opportunities 160223 – Water Utilities Alliance Meeting
MEDIA INCLUDING SOCIAL MEDIA	**13**	**18**	**25**	15	031122 – First Central NSW Free Touring Map launched

Reports

					111122- "What's yours is yours" Central NSW Councils push back on NSW Government on accounting for RFS assets. 251122 - Good roads are good business 301122 -Wyangala Wall raising Business case 011222 – Come Out, We're Open campaign for Central NSW 090123 – Extend the Summer in Country NSW 060223 – Election NSW - Regionalisation 130223- Chair of Central NSW JO encourages community members to respond to the for the EIS for Blackheath to Little Hartley Social Media followers as at 9 January 2023: Facebook – 620 Twitter – 927 Instagram (CNSWT) – 6,006 CNSWT Facebook – 16,143
PR VALUE OF TOURISM	**$1.5m**	**$2.4m**	**$1.9m**	tbc	During 2021/2022 the PR generated articles produced tourism editorial content to the value of $640k+ and $1.9m in advertising value. These figures from Gabrielle Brewer Public Relations are provided annually at the end of each financial year.
MEDIA PR VALUE	**35**	**102**	**101**	37	Visit Central NSW Website Update: The www.visitcentralnsw.com.au website has been updated with supporting content on what to see and do – particularly regarding the "Come Out We're Open" campaign. PR Opportunities: • **Explore ad featured in 14 newspapers across Australian Community Media group** - our half page advertisement in *Explore* for the '*Come out, We're Open'* campaign was published last Sat 21 January • **Australian Financial Review** – *'The top 25 New Travel Hotspots in 2023'* including '*New York in the Bush'* featuring Bathurst's **Wilga Station**, and the new natural swimming hole https://www.afr.com/life-and-luxury/travel/the-top-25-new-travel-hotspots-in-australia-for-2023-20221207-p5c4fr • **Australian Country Magazine** have published **two amazing features** on two tourism businesses in Central NSW: ○ ***'A fork in the road'* - over 9 pages - Millthorpe's The Old Bakery** accommodation and a profile on

					owner Kate and how and why she moved to the region • ***'Raising the bar'*- over 7 pages - Rockley Pub's** Simon and Kelly Leplaw and how and they moved to the region • **The Senior** – '*Camp with a little glam in NSW'* includes Orange's **Nashdale Lane Wines** glamping - https://www.thesenior.com.au/story/8057234/camp-with-a-little-glam-in-nsw/ • **Explore** – 7 Jan - the half page ad 'Come out, We're Open' features nature and walking adventures on page 5 with a half page editorial *'Fine wine, luxe digs and G-days Galore'* • **Explore** – 14 Jan - the half page ad 'Come out, We're Open' features a picnic river setting • **Holidays with Kids** – a feature on luxe experiences for kids includes '*Five-star luxury NSW farm stay'* at Bathurst's Wilga Station - https://holidayswithkids.com.au/101-places/ • **E Global Travel Media** - '*Extend the Summer in Country NSW'* https://eglobaltravelmedia.com.au/2023/01/10/extend-the-summer-in-country-nsw/ • A half-page ad will feature in **Explore** across the Australian Community Media Group including local and key regional papers. This creative will be adapted with new imagery for further publication on 14 and 21 January. • **Nine.com.au** – '*The Wool Store offers New York luxe in the middle of Bathurst'* a travel feature and review of the new Wool Store in Bathurst along with suggested things to see and do in town and an inclusion of the recent 'Come out, We're Open' campaign https://travel.nine.com.au/destinations/bathurst-hotel-the-wool-store-accommodation-central-nsw/6c577250-183e-4f42-bcd8-c067bd5cf21e • **The Weekend Australian, Travel & Indulgence** – news bite on the '*Come out, We're Open'* campaign for Central NSW • **Explore Travel** - '*Visit Central NSW has launched its first touring map'*-

Reports

					https://www.exploretravel.com.au/story/8004878/your-map-to-the-top-regional-spots-in-nsw-has-just-been-released/ • **The Canberra Times -** '*Mapping the top regional spots'* a feature story on Central NSW's first touring map • **Illawarra Mercury -** '*Mapping the top regional spots'* a feature story on Central NSW's first touring map • **The Newcastle Herald-** '*Mapping the top regional spots'* a feature story on Central NSW's first touring map • **Central NSW** - https://centralnsw.com/regional-touring-map-now-available/ • The '*Come out, We're Open'* story was issued to support the social digital campaign and received great support from TV and Radio with Bill West and Vicki Seccombe supporting with various interviews: ○ **Win TV News** ran a lead story – you can view the 1.22 clip here - https://www.leadstory.com/v/new-campaign-encourages-shopping-local-202212249 ○ **Sky TV News National** – news story with Bill West. Guests can purchase the clips, here is link to purchase –- https://shop.skynews.com.au/shop/category/sky-news-content-sales ○ **ABC Central West Radio** interview with Bill West ○ **ABC Central West Radio** news piece live ○ **Triple M Orange Radio** interview with Bill West ○ **2BS Bathurst Radio interview** 3. **NRMA's 'Open Road' Magazine, Nov/Dec issue** – '*Country Sized Portions. We spend some time visiting the small towns surrounding Bathurst and find there's nothing diminutive about what they offer tourists'.* A **6-page feature by Kris Ashton and own photography** takes in Oberon's Mayfield Garden, Millthorpe for antiques, museums, coffee shops and its cellar door tastings, the Old Bakery

Reports

					accommodation, a Field of Gold Canola Tour of Cowra, Carcoar's history and museums, and the village of Rockley and Matt Moran's Rockley Pub. • The new Touring Map of Central NSW: **Canowindra Phoenix** – Central NSW launches new look free touring map - https://www.canowindraphoenix.com.au/central-nsw-launch-new-look-free-touring-map/

Public Relation Campaign for the Visitor Economy – Report by Carolyn Griffin & Gabrielle Brewer

½ page ad January 14, 2023 edition of Explore – www.exploretravel.com.au

Central NSW Joint Organisation launched the "Come Out, We're Open" campaign to encourage people to wrap their arms around local businesses needing the support of visitors over December and January. The aim was to encourage locals to get out and holiday makers to return and enjoy the region at its greenest and the campaign includes digital, social media and public relations.

The campaign acknowledged that some parts of Central NSW have been impacted by flooding, many were not, and most accommodation and businesses across the region are open and ready to welcome people.

Reports

Up to $25,000 has been approved under the hand of the Chair to fund the campaign.

The campaign encourages people to not cancel or hesitate. Come to Central NSW to enjoy the lush scenery, food and wine, boutique stores, cooling rivers and pick your own from orchards. Across social media people are being encouraged to share stories positive stories of support at #unearthcentralnsw.

Visitors were reminded if they were travelling to plan ahead and only drive to the conditions as extensive repairs are being carried out to bring some roads back up to standard.

½ page ad January 21, 2023 edition of Explore – www.exploretravel.com.au

Reporting to the Strategic Business Plan

Please find following an update on progress on the Strategic Business Plan adopted 24 November 2022.

Attachment/s:

13. OLG Capacity Building Round 1 Final Report
14. Theme 3 subcommittee of the Joint Organisation Review Background paper and Terms of Reference
15. Notes from the first meeting Theme 3 subcommittee of the Joint Organisation Review
16. MOU RDACW
17. CNSW ITG Minutes 6 February 2023
18. Submission to AEMC on Minor Energy Flow Metering 16 February 2023

Reports

Strategic Plan action updates to first quarter 2023					
Priority One: Leveraging our successful collaboration					
1.1 Driving efficiencies and effectiveness saving Councils money and effectiveness saving Councils money					
#	**Activity**	**By**	**Timeframe**	**Key performance indicators**	**Update**
a)	Determine the regional procurement activities of the JO	Executive Officer	January 2023	Board approved 5-year procurement plan.	Restocking of First Aid Kits - RFQ: CNSWJO has begun the procurement process with the aim of a new contract commencing on 1 July 2023. Employee Assistance Program - RFQ: CNSWJO has begun the procurement process with the aim of a new contract commencing on 1 August 2023. Learning Management System – EOI: CNSWJO has begun the EOI process with the aim of exploring new options and systems for councils and their online learning needs. Asset Management Audits – RFQ: please see the Procurement and Contracts report where approval to conduct the procurement process on behalf of members is sought.
b)	Implement the outcomes from the Best Practice in Aggregated Procurement Program	Executive Officer	January 2023 and Ongoing	GMAC and Board implements Best Practice in Procurement	Underway - new staff being onboarded. See the Procurement and Contracts report where approval is sought to commence a modern slavery risk assessment project for interested member councils.
1.2 Building capacity across our Councils					
#	**Activity**	**By**	**Timeframe**	**Key performance indicators**	**Update**
a)	The region supports the operational teams and short-term projects by collaborations of Council staff that provide an opportunity for: • information sharing • networking • capacity building • procurement • formal and informal training	Executive Officer	Ongoing - as the relationship between the JO and State matures, operational teams are receiving support from State agencies	Reports to Board demonstrate value from these collaborations #, $ and quality of State agency engagement	Current teams are: • General Managers' Advisory Committee • Water Utilities' Alliance • Transport Technical Committee • Tourism Managers Group • Planners Group • Human Resources Managers Group • WHS/Risk Management Group • Training, Learning and Development Group • Energy Group • Regional IT Group • Building Surveyors Skills Shortages Working Group All have terms of reference and/or forward strategies

Reports

	• good governance • cost savings and other value to Councils All teams and projects work to Terms of Reference adopted by the Board. There are typically 10-15 collaborations of member Councils supported by CNSWJO resource.				approved by the Board –please request. More detail on individual teams is provided in reports to GMAC and the Board.
1.3 Working well with other peak organisations					
#	**Activity**	**By**	**Timeframe**	**Key performance indicators**	**Update**
a)	Engage with LGNSW Country Mayors, JO Forum and ALGA on priorities for local government	Executive Officer	January 2023 Ongoing	Board adopts Advocacy Plan. Board receives regular reports on activities in the Advocacy Plan	The JO collaboration on DRRF (8 JOs) and JONZAG 9 JOs (see more detail in report to this table) goes into implementation from a meeting in January 19/20
b)	Progress actions in the MoU with RDA.	Executive Officer	January 2023 ongoing	MoU and associated progress reports reviewed annually	The Chair of RDACW has been approached to progress.
c)	Foster collaboration with a focus on the region's opportunities and endowments between CSU, Arts Out West, RDA Central West, Essential Energy, Business NSW and the RLE.	Executive Officer	January 2023 Ongoing	Board reports provide advice on emerging opportunities from collaboration	Business NSW and RLE have been working closely with CNSWJO on funding from DNSW for post flood business support through destination marketing. The "Policy Lab" collaboration with CSW has been approved and advice is provided in Matters in Progress.
Priority Two: Regional Prosperity through better infrastructure and services					
2.1 Initiatives to grow the visitor economy in the context of locational preference factors					
#	**Activity**	**By**	**Timeframe**	**Key performance indicators**	
a)	Review CNSW Tourism service provided by JO with consideration of future services in light of the offerings from Destination Network Central West while	Tourism Group	January 2024	Tourism Group review report recommendations adopted by the Board. ROI on destination marketing.	A meeting will be arranged with the new General Manager of DNCW as soon as the get their feet under their desk. An online meeting will be scheduled in the coming week to continue to progress the Come Out We're Open campaign.

Reports

	continuing with destination marketing.				The Tourism Group met on 30 November 2022 and will meet bi-annually in 2023. The next meeting is scheduled for 7 June 2023 and online meetings will take place between meetings if needed.
2.2 Regional industry and population growth planning					
#	**Activity**	**By**	**Timeframe**	**Key performance indicators**	
a)	Review and progress the implementation of the Central West and Orana Regional Plan	Planners Group	From January 2023	Planners Group reports to GMAC/Board	A meeting was held 8 December 2022 where the plan was tabled and priority actions to be implemented from it discussed. There was good representation from planners across the region. The Plan can be downloaded at Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041 (nsw.gov.au)
b)	Continue advocacy regarding Treasury Common Planning Assumptions including the population projections for this region.	Board	Ongoing	Quarterly reports to the Board	Included in the Regional Prosperity Advocacy Plan for adoption at this meeting and has been front and centre in advocacy at the State level leading into the election.
c)	Identification and reporting on regional planning matters.	Planners Group	As issues arise	Quarterly reports to the Board	Please see the Regional Prosperity Advocacy Lan identifying current areas of concern including the Planning Portal, Flying Squad and implementation/accountability of the recently published Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041 (nsw.gov.au)
d)	Community Strategic Planning Project with the Regional Leadership Executive and advocacy for better engagement between Councils and State agencies on CSP.	Executive Office and RLE with support from Council team	From June 2023	Quarterly reports to the Board	Preliminary discussions have been held with RLE.
2.3 Advocacy and initiatives on skills and housing shortages					
#	**Activity**	**By**	**Timeframe**	**Key performance indicators**	**Update**
a)	Develop and	Board	From February 2023	Board adopts Advocacy Plan. Board receives regular reports on activities in the Advocacy Plan	A Skills Shortages Advocacy Plan has been drafted and will be distributed for comment in due course.

Reports

	implement advocacy plan in support of skills shortages				
b)	Supporting Councils with skills shortages with a focus on the Health and Building staff	Executive Officer Leveraging Council working party and pilot REROC project	Ongoing	Quarterly reports to the Board	See update earlier on in this business paper.
c)	Provides regional representation to the Local Jobs Taskforce and the Parkes Special Activation Precinct Skills Subcommittee of the Regional Leadership Executive.	Executive Officer	Ongoing	Quarterly reports to the Board	A meeting was held 18 January please request agenda.
d)	Undertake through funding from NSW Housing Taskforce a spare capacity in housing project in the region.	Executive Officer	June 2024	Quarterly reports to the Board	Deed yet to be executed.
2.4 Leveraging the region's endowments and opportunities					
#	**Activity**	**By**	**Timeframe**	**Key performance indicators**	
a)	**Critical minerals and mining** This priority will be negotiated with the Department of Regional NSW and the Regional	Executive Officer	Ongoing	Report Quarterly to the Board	An email has been sent to RNSW in this regard. Follow-up is being undertaken.

Reports

	Leadership Executive in the context of the Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) to seek cross agency support for programming in region. Policy will be developed and reviewed to inform advocacy plans.				
b)	**Circular economy and net zero.** Resource collaboration with peak agencies in this regard in line with Board direction from the CNSWJO Emissions Reduction Plan. Leverage the Parkes SAP and potential other projects in region. Support collaborations with DPE on Net Zero.	Executive Officer	January 2023 & Ongoing	Report Quarterly to the Board	The region was successful in being granted business case funding from the NSW Government being administered through Regional NSW. Please see more detailed advice in this regard elsewhere. Please see advice else where on the NSW Government funded JONZAP which is dedicated JO funding to support the State's Net Zero aspirations.
c)	Support the development of existing and potential activation precincts including Parkes SAP	Executive Officer	Ongoing	Report Quarterly to the Board	Advocacy plans have been updated reflecting this priority.
d)	**Inland Rail.** Progress advice from Inland Rail Productivity enhance Program with a	Executive Officer	March 2023	Reports to Board	Central NSW was not successful in getting to Gateway 3. Advice is being sought from DTIRIS on next steps.

Reports

	view to entering the next Gateway				
e)	**Pattern of settlement; liveability, proximity to capital cities and ports** Seek to work through the RLE where childcare has been identified as of particular concern	Executive Officer RLE and Board	September 2023	Reports to Board	Advocacy plans have been updated reflecting this priority. RLE is doing some work in this area – further advice will be provided when detail comes to hand.
f)	**Agriculture** Produce a productive water strategy for Board consideration including considering the "Dutch Model"	Executive Officer CWUA Program Manager	From January 2023 and ongoing	Board receives report on the sustainability issues impacting on the Agriculture sector. Productive Water report delivered to the Board's satisfaction.	A policy document crystallising the opportunity till be provided to the Board 2023 meeting.
Priority Three: Advocate for better infrastructure and services in health and ageing					
#	**Activity**	**By**	**Timeframe**	**Key performance indicators**	**Update**
a)	Provide advocacy support and programming at the direction of the Board where advocacy for better infrastructure and services in health and ageing will be reworked to align with the 44 recommendations as listed in the Health Outcomes and Access to Services report.	Board	February 2023	Board adopts Advocacy Plan. Board receives regular reports on activities in the Advocacy Plan	The advocacy plan key messages are provided in this business paper.

Reports

b)	Seek to work with Charles Sturt University on a policy paper on enabling growing our own health workforce	Executive Officer	August 2023	Advocacy advice adopted by the Board	This is included in the "Policy Lab" Terms of Reference and will be progressed in due course.
c)	As part of its commitment to growing our own health workforce, CNSWJO provides $15Kpa for three medical students a year.	Board	For review in 2023	Review advice adopted by the Board	A review will be conducted in due course.
Priority Four: Telecommunications					
#	**Activity**	**By**	**Timeframe**	**Key performance indicators**	**Update**
a)	Advocacy and opportunities For improved outcomes for Telecommunications: delivered in collaboration with RDACW	Board	Annual review of advocacy plans and policy in November/ February. Annual review of the MoU with RDACW	Board adopts Advocacy Plan. Board receives regular reports on activities in the Advocacy Plan	Advocacy Plan underway – will need some further collaborative input from peak agency stakeholders before being finalised by the Board.

Priority Five: Regional Transport Planning and Infrastructure Prioritisation					
5.1 Transport connectivity planning					
#	**Activity**	**By**	**Timeframe**	**Key performance indicators**	**Update**
a)	Review and implement transport advocacy plan	Board	February 2023 and then annually	Report to the Board	Review underway – anticipated for the Board –drafts will be provided t sponsoring GMs or please request.
b)	Monitor and actively engage in the TfNSW Central West and Orana Regional Transport Plan and other strategic opportunities	Board	February 2023 and then annually	Review of TOR Annually Number of regional priorities recognised in the TfNSW Central West and Orana Regional Transport Plan.	Awaiting Plan. Nearly 5 years in the making.

Reports

c)	Provide regional transport planning analysis with a focus on freight	Transport and Infrastructure Working Party	Feb 2020	Report to the Transport and Infrastructure Committee.	The focus will be on alternative routes for disasters.
d)	Identify opportunities for regional program funding and report on emergent transport issues	Transport and Infrastructure Working Party	Ongoing	Reports to the Board	Ongoing
e)	Implement the Reviewed Roads and Transport Technical Committee Plan	Transport and Infrastructure Working Party	January 2023	Roads and Transport Technical Committee Plan adopted by the Board. Reports from the Transport and Infrastructure Committee.	Draft with the Chair of the technical Cttee.

5.2 Infrastructure prioritisation including using the CNSWJO Matrix on including using the CNSWJO Matrix

#	Activity	By	Timeframe	Key performance indicators	Update
a)	Using a multi criteria analysis prioritisation matrix Informed by the State and Federal funding framework. Outputs from the Matrix are used to support member grant applications. Members keep the inputs current typically through workshops of the transport and water teams. CNSWJO staff develop outputs and	Executive Officer CNSWJO Roads and Transport Group CWUA	Ongoing	Report to the Board	To be progressed through the various teams.

Reports

	letters of support on an as needs basis.				
5.3 Natural disaster road funding					
#	Activity	By	Timeframe	Key performance indicators	Update
a)	A report will be provided to the February 2023 Board meeting outlining the program.	Executive Officer CNSWJO Roads and Transport Group	Ongoing	Report to the Board	Underway
Priority Six: Regional Water Security and Productive Water					
6.1 Regional Water network planning and best practice skills development					
#	Activity	By	Timeframe	Key performance indicators	Update
a)	Advocacy plan	Board	Ongoing	Advocacy Plan approved #submissions Board reports monitor alignment with policy position	Advocacy Plan review underway.
b)	Regional Water Strategies in the Lachlan and Macquarie - implementation	Implementation Committee as developed by the State	Ongoing	Board reports	Advice from DPE Water (December 2022) is that stakeholder engagement for the finalisation of the Macquarie and Lachlan RWS has been delayed due to flooding. Their intention is to work closely with the JO and LWUs on the development of the RWS Implementation Plan in early 2023.
c)	Resource the Regional Water Loss Management Centre of Excellence for Central NSW codesigned with the NSW Government	Executive Officer/CWUA DPE Water	Phase 1: June 2023	Board reports include value to members and the State	See Regional Water Report. Milestone reports 1 and 2 have been submitted to DPE and advice provided to GMAC and the Board.

Reports

d)	Resource Stage 2 implementation of the new Regulatory and Assurance Framework for LWUs including a potential pilot of regional work on the integration of strategic water planning with the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. This to align with the Regional Asset Management Working Party is also being resourced to support members in the management of assets.	Executive Officer/CWUA	December 2024	Board reports on Council progress with water strategy into IP&R	Training in IP&R was provided to JO and Council staff & State Agencies on 3 February. See Report to this meeting. As endorsed by the Board, procurement is underway for a third party to complete asset management audits as part of a Regional Asset Management Improvement Program. See Procurement and Contracts report.
e)	Balance of program identified in the CWUA Strategy supporting leading practice, measured and benchmarked in the delivery of quality secure water and sewer services	Executive Officer	Ongoing	Strategy approved by the Board. #Staff Trained #Contracts $ Saved $ Grant funding # Submissions	Work underway on strategies and actions.
6.2 Productive Water					
#	**Activity**	**By**	**Timeframe**	**Key performance indicators**	**Update**
a)	Advocacy plan to support the value of town water and alternative approaches to water use,	Board	February 2023	Board approved advocacy plan	Advocacy Plan review underway to include productive water policy. See report on Productive Water to this meeting.

Reports

	for example the Dutch Model				
b)	Resource the development of a productive water strategy leveraging the huge amount of strategic reform underway in water management at both the State and Federal level.	Executive Officer	"Plan for the Plan" January 2023 Productive Water Strategy finalised January 2024	Reports to the Board	See report on Productive Water to this meeting that recommends a bid be made to the CSU Policy Lab to progress.
Priority Seven: Transition to a sustainable, secure and affordable energy future					
7.1 Energy Efficiency and Emissions Reduction					
#	**Activity**	**By**	**Timeframe**	**Key performance indicators**	**Update**
a)	Review advocacy plan for an orderly transition to a secure renewable energy future with an emphasis on Social License issues	Board	February 2023	Advocacy Plan adopted by the Board	A review of the advocacy plan is underway.
b)	Collaborate with State agencies in delivering programming in reducing member Council emissions Resource collaboration with peak agencies in this regard in line with Board direction from the CNSWJO Emissions	Executive Officer	Ongoing	Board reports include value of collaboration to Councils and the State	See Energy Report, particularly around funding received to facilitate the progress of such programming.

Reports

	Reduction Plan.				
c)	Support Council collaboration under the 5 pillars of: • Streetlighting • Electric Vehicles • Renewable energy production and storage, including Distributed Energy Resources (DER) • Energy efficiency and demand management • The nexus between water and energy	Executive Officer	Ongoing	Board reports include value to Councils	See Energy Report, particularly around funding received to facilitate the progress of such programming.
d)	Leverage the contractual relationship with electricity retailers to enable emissions reduction	Executive Officer	Ongoing	Board reports include value to Councils	General Managers were invited to a meeting with Iberdrola Australia's Head of Global Customers & Decarbonisation on 16 February to discuss current and planned activities in the region, as well as provide information about activities occurring elsewhere around the globe.
7.2 Circular Economy					
#	**Activity**	**By**	**Timeframe**	**Key performance indicators**	**Update**
a)	Support regional collaboration on circular economy as directed by the Board from the CNSWJO Emissions Reduction Plan	Executive Officer	Ongoing	Report to Board implementing the CNSWJO Emissions Reduction Plan	Underway
7.3 Environment					
#	**Activity**	**By**	**Timeframe**	**Key performance indicators**	**Update**

Reports

a)	Review policy approach to the anticipated rapid transition to a renewable energy future on the Social Licensing issues and raise awareness for renewable energy infrastructure	Executive Officer	June 2023	Report to Board	On track
b)	Develop policy with regard to: • Biodiversity • Urban environments during climate • change including tree canopy • Waste and landfill emissions.	Executive Officer	June 2023	Report to Board	On track
c)	Provide advocacy support to members in regard to weed management issues	Executive Officer	June 2023	Report to Board	On track
7.4 Understanding our energy (fuel and electricity) security, capacity and scalability					
#	**Activity**	**By**	**Timeframe**	**Key performance indicators**	**Update**
a)	Undertake strategy and scoping for Board review	Executive Officer	December 2023	Report to Board	On track

Reports