



JOINT ORGANISATIONS

'Working together for regional communities'





The Hon John Barilaro MP

Deputy Premier
Minister for Regional NSW



The Hon Gabrielle Upton MP

Minister for Local Government

In an Australian first for regional communities, the Joint Organisations network will be established to help drive better planning, economic development and service delivery. Legislation will allow councils to voluntarily join new Joint Organisations to strengthen regional co-ordination and improve the delivery of important infrastructure and services for communities across regional NSW.

We, together with the Premier, have been working with councils to get the Joint Organisations model right. We have listened to their feedback of what is needed to address the unique challenges in regional NSW.

Joint Organisations will bring local governments together with the State Government to focus on the issues that matter most to regional communities such as growing local economies, creating more jobs, securing water supplies, and improving regional transport, community infrastructure and services.

Deputy Premier
Minister for Regional NSW

Councils choosing to take up this option will get a seat at the table in planning infrastructure and investment for their region, and access to better ways to get things done, with support and funding from the State Government.

The Office of Local Government will be providing hands on support to councils wishing to become a member of a Joint Organisation and will work closely with them once established.

To make sure no region is left behind the NSW Government will provide \$3.3 million to support the establishment of Joint Organisations with plans for further investment to boost regional economies and communities.

Following the passage of legislation through parliament, councils from regional NSW (excluding the Far West region) will be invited to resolve to join a Joint Organisation.

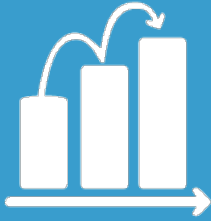
Minister for Local Government

Joint Organisations Pilot

The NSW Government piloted different Joint Organisation models during 2015 in five regions – Central NSW, Hunter, Illawarra, Namoi and Riverina – to test and reflect the different working relationships and priorities of each area.

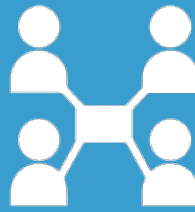
An independent evaluation of the JO pilot process encompassing 66 key stakeholders found the JO pilot was a success and that JOs deliver real benefits for regional councils and communities.

Key findings from the evaluation include:



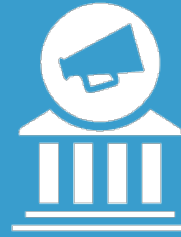
84%

Agreed the JO pilot improved shared regional planning and priority setting



82%

Agreed the JO pilot improved intergovernmental collaboration



76%

Agreed the JO pilot had improved council's ability to undertake effective regional leadership and advocacy

Joint Organisation success



How Joint Organisations will work

Joint Organisations will transform the way that the NSW Government and local councils collaborate, plan, set priorities and deliver important projects on a regional scale. These new partnerships will benefit local communities across regional NSW by working across council boundaries.



Legislation

The core requirements for JOs will be included in the Local Government Act and supporting regulations.

Having a legislative foundation will ensure that JOs are able to work effectively to advance regional priorities, while remaining accountable to their communities through their member councils.

As well as providing a robust foundation for JOs to build on, the legislative framework will also allow flexibility to take on additional agreed functions.



Charter

The legislative model provides that each JO is to adopt a Charter that may be tailored by them to suit the needs of each regional group.

Charters will set out the way that a JO intends to operate and govern itself.



Leadership

Each council will be represented by its Mayor and there is scope to add an additional elected representative, if member councils agree.

The JO Board will choose its own Chair but each member council will have equal voting rights to reflect that they are equal partners in strengthening their region.



Membership

The NSW Government will be represented on each JO Board as an Associate (non-voting) Member.

JOs will be able to invite neighbouring councils, county councils and other organisations to participate as non-voting members of the JO.



Day-to-day management

Each JO may appoint a suitably skilled and capable Executive Officer to oversee day-to-day operations.



Principal functions

The principal functions of each JO will be:

- Strategic planning and priority setting
- Intergovernmental collaboration
- Shared leadership and advocacy.

One of the first activities for each new JO will be to establish a Statement of Regional Priorities.

This work will elevate shared priorities in councils' Community Strategic Plans, as well as draw on other regional plans.

The statements will form the basis for discussions with the State Government about key projects and programs in each region and how shared priorities may best be delivered.



Optional functions

JOs will be able to perform additional optional functions including delivering shared services or overseeing shared arrangements, such as procurement.

Although the focus for the first year will be on the core functions, JOs will have the tools they need to start working on their optional functions from commencement.



Resourcing

The NSW Government is providing \$3.3 million in seed funding to support the establishment of JOs. They will also be able to directly apply for grants and generate income to help fund their ongoing operations. It is up to each JO to decide how councils will contribute to the organisation.

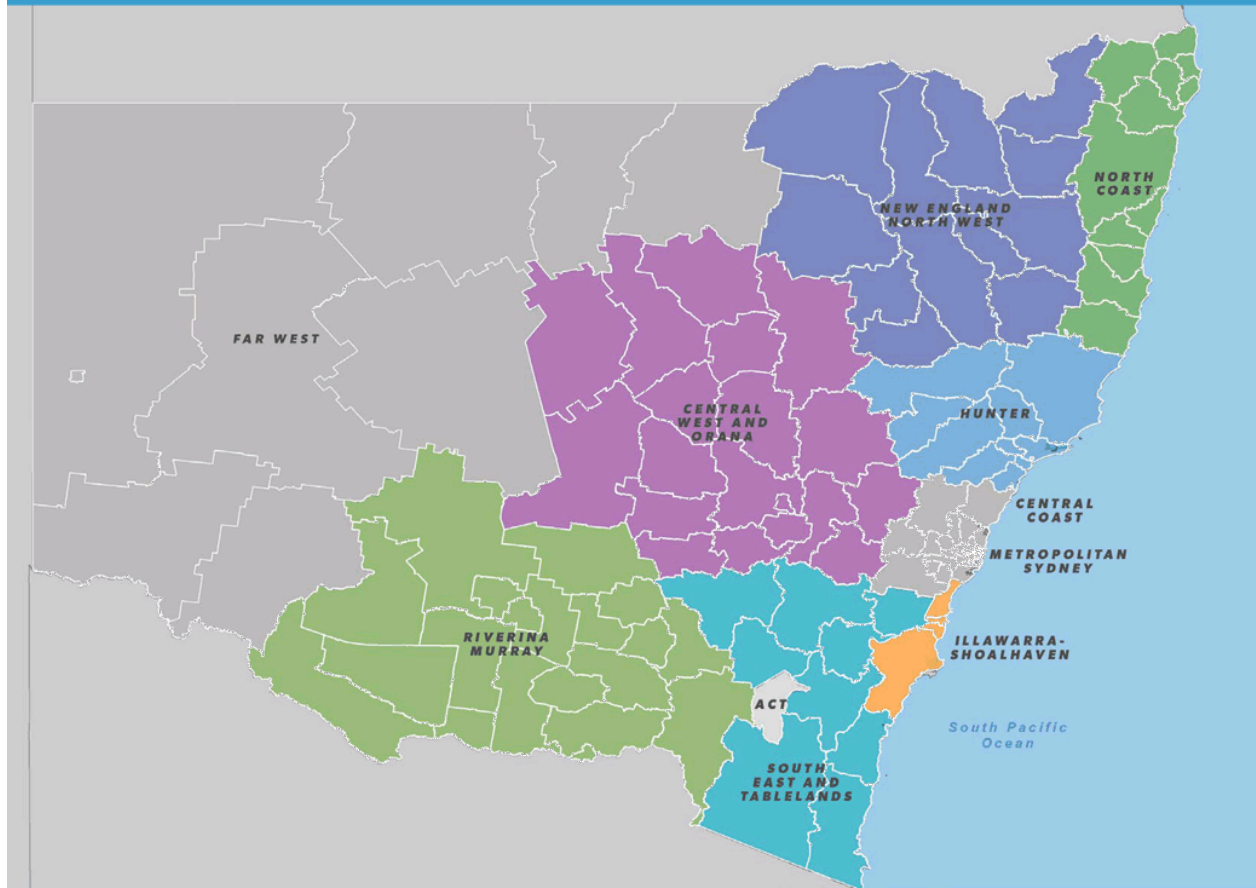
Supporting Joint Organisations

The NSW Government is committed to supporting the successful establishment of JOs and their ability to deliver early benefits to member councils and communities. The Office of Local Government (OLG) will provide a range of support that will be

tailored to meet the needs of each region. OLG will work closely with the Department of Premier and Cabinet and other Government agencies to ensure that opportunities for collaboration with the NSW Government are identified and acted on early.



Forming your Joint Organisation within State Government planning boundaries



Key Design Criteria

The NSW Government has consulted extensively with councils in regional NSW on the best design and governance model for Joint Organisations. An effective JO should:

- align with, or 'nest' within one of the State's planning regions (map above)
- demonstrate a clear community of interest between member councils and regions
- not adversely impact on other councils or JOs, e.g. leaving too few councils to form a JO
- be based around a strong regional centre or centres
- be of appropriate size and capacity to partner with NSW Government and Commonwealth Government agencies and other organisations.

Joint Organisations – Next steps for councils

Following the passage of legislation through parliament, councils will need to take the following steps:

Plan

- Identify your council's planning region (map on previous page)
- Consider the guidance material to be provided by the Office of Local Government (OLG)
- Review existing arrangements for regional collaboration in your area
- Consider the Key Design Criteria for JOs (see previous page)
- Consider the criteria for seed funding

Consult

- Consult with councils within your preferred regional grouping to reach agreement on JO membership
- Each JO must have a minimum of 3 member councils
- OLG is available to facilitate and support consultations in your region

Endorse

- Once the proposed JO membership is agreed, ensure each member endorses the proposal by a resolution of council

Nominate

- Submit your request to establish a JO to OLG by 28 February 2018
- More information on this process will be provided shortly

Establish

- The final JO network will be finalised in March 2018
- Funding allocations will also be announced in March 2018
- JOs will be proclaimed in April 2018
- OLG will support the establishment of JOs and work closely with them once operational to ensure they are successful
- JOs will be ready to start in July 2018

Commence

- Hold your first JO meeting and elect a chairperson
 - Recruit the Executive Officer
 - Work with member councils, DPC Regional Director and OLG support team to fully establish the JO
 - Work with member councils to draft the first JO Charter and Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities.
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Who to contact for further information?

Please contact the Office of Local Government on 02 4428 4100 or olg@olg.nsw.gov.au. Staff will be available to support councils in understanding the opportunities and processes to join a Joint Organisation.



For more information visit:
www.olg.nsw.gov.au

Joint Organisations - Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is a Joint Organisation?

A: A Joint Organisation is a new entity under the Local Government Act comprising member councils in regional NSW to provide a stronger voice for the communities they represent.

A Joint Organisation will provide a more structured, permanent way for local councils, State agencies and other interested groups to collaborate. Each region will decide its own priorities, working on short and long term projects such as attracting a new industry to the region or improving the health of a river system. By putting their resources together and focusing on the unique challenges and strengths of their whole region, Joint Organisation members can drive better outcomes for local residents.

Each Joint Organisation will comprise at least three member councils and align with one of the State's strategic growth planning regions. One of the member council's mayors will be elected chairperson and an Executive Officer may be appointed.

Q: How will Joint Organisations benefit councils and communities in regional NSW?

A: Joint Organisations will transform the way that the NSW Government and local councils collaborate, plan, set priorities and deliver important projects on a regional scale. These new partnerships will benefit local communities across regional NSW by working across traditional council boundaries.

Q: How do we know Joint Organisations will work?

A: The Joint Organisation model has been developed in close consultation with councils and the NSW Government has listened to regional councils to get the model right. This included a pilot program for five groups of councils to test a range of options, which involved the participation of 43 councils and delivered a range of initiatives and projects to those regions.

An independent evaluation of the pilot program found Joint Organisations bring benefits to regional communities in delivering on-the-ground projects and attracting more investment to regional communities.

Q: How are Joint Organisations different to Regional Organisations of Councils?

A: The Joint Organisation model provides for greater certainty and continuity as well as recognising the unique differences in the many regions of NSW. While some ROCs have been effective, they have varied functions, membership, and governance structures which often makes collaboration more difficult.

Q: Why has the Government decided to make Joint Organisations voluntary?

A: The majority of regional councils support Joint Organisations but some asked for more time and flexibility to determine their own membership of a new regional body. The Government has listened to this feedback.

Q: Why should councils choose to form a Joint Organisation?

A: Joint Organisations will provide a forum for councils, agencies and others to come together and focus on their regional priorities – the things that matter for that region. Joint Organisations will help drive the delivery of important regional projects – the infrastructure and services that local communities need and deserve.

Joint Organisations will also provide councils with a more efficient way to deliver shared services for members and the region. Where member councils agree, they can choose to share a common approach to services such as information technology, water management services and community strategic planning. The NSW Government will provide \$3.3 million to support councils to establish Joint Organisations.

Q: Can councils determine their own regional boundaries?

A: While membership of Joint Organisations is voluntary, the NSW Government will only support the creation of Joint Organisations within existing State planning regions and in regional NSW. Councils have told us that effective collaboration will only be realised when State and local government boundaries are aligned.

To aid this process the NSW Government has consulted the sector on boundary criteria which they can take into account when determining the membership of their Joint Organisation.

Joint Organisation boundaries should:

10.5 Joint Organisations.DOC

- align with, or 'nest' within one of the State's strategic growth planning regions
- demonstrate a clear community of interest between member councils and regions
- not adversely impact on other councils or JOs, for example, leaving too few councils to form a JO
- be based around a strong regional centre or centres
- be of an appropriate size to partner with State, Commonwealth and other partners.

Consistent with previous Government decisions, Joint Organisations will not be considered for metropolitan Sydney and the Central Coast at this time.

Q: What funding is available to Joint Organisations?

A: The Government will provide up to \$3.3 million in seed funding to Joint Organisations to support their establishment. The Government will identify opportunities for additional investment through Joint Organisations in regional economies.

Funding for each Joint Organisation will be based on the number of councils that choose to form a Joint Organisations, with maximum funding provided to regions where all councils in a region choose to be members of the new regional body.

All Joint Organisations, whether they were pilot regions or not, will be provided with seed funding.

Further details on funding arrangements will be provided to councils.

Q: Will this funding be enough to help councils establish a JO?

A: The NSW Government is providing significant funding and support to help those councils that choose to establish a Joint Organisation. The pilot program demonstrated that groups of councils can achieve substantial benefits for their communities and significant cost savings by working together through a Joint Organisation.

Q: What are the next steps for interested councils?

A: Following the passage of legislation through Parliament, councils will be invited to nominate to form a Joint Organisation in their region. Councils are encouraged to open discussions with their neighbours as soon as possible.

The Office of Local Government is available to facilitate these discussions and provide support to councils through the nomination process. Specific requirements to form a Joint Organisation will be provided to councils shortly.

Each Joint Organisation will be created by a proclamation and the NSW Government will then ask the Commonwealth to endorse each Joint Organisation as a non-national system employer to ensure that any staff of a Joint Organisation, with the exception of the Executive Officer, are employed under the State local government award.

Q: What support will be provided to councils and Joint Organisations once established?

A: The Office of Local Government will work with Joint Organisations to support their establishment and ensure they have the necessary systems and governance in place for the Joint Organisations to deliver results for regional communities.

The Office of Local Government and the Department of Premier and Cabinet will foster collaboration between Joint Organisations and State agencies to identify and act on opportunities to benefit regional communities.

Q: Can councils choose not to participate?

A: Councils can choose not to become a member of a Joint Organisation. The Government strongly encourages all councils in regional NSW to consider the benefits and opportunities offered by Joint Organisations.

Councils that are members of Joint Organisations will be able to take advantage of investment opportunities that are delivered through the Joint Organisation.

Q: Is there a role for Parliamentary Secretaries in Joint Organisations?

A: Parliamentary Secretaries will play a key role in championing a new, shared regional collaboration which will bring together Regional Leadership Groups of State agencies and Joint Organisations.

10.5 Joint Organisations.DOC

Q: How has the Government's approach changed?

A: The Joint Organisation model that will be enabled through the proposed legislation is consistent with the consultation and engagement with the sector. The Government has been listening to councils and has decided to implement Joint Organisations in a more flexible way.



Office of Local Government

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Your Reference:
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Mr Paul Hickey
General Manager
Ballina Shire Council
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BALLINA NSW 2478

Email: phickey@ballina.nsw.gov.au

20 December 2017

Dear Mr Hickey

Following on from recent correspondence regarding the establishment of a Joint Organisation (JO), I am writing to acknowledge the time and effort that councils and regional organisations of councils have taken over the past month to discuss the opportunities available.

I understand that there have been many conversations and regional meetings between councils and the Office of Local Government (OLG) to discuss the best way forward for councils in your region. This is a critical time when each council must consider the decision to join a JO.

I would like to reiterate that JOs are a key part of the Government's commitment to build stronger councils and improve service delivery and infrastructure across rural and regional NSW. The State Government will work closely with JOs to strengthen communities across the State.

I would like to advise that the *Local Government Amendment (Regional Joint Organisation) Act 2017* commenced on 15 December 2017. To ensure that your council is a part of the JO network, a council resolution is a critical part of the process of getting JO areas recommended to the Governor to enable proclamation.

It is important that these resolutions align for groups of councils that wish to form a JO and that councils provide the Minister for Local Government with a copy of this resolution by **28 February 2018**, a copy of which is again provided for ease of reference. This allows time to undertake the required processes in order to have JOs in operation by July 2018. This includes allocation of seed funding to help establish each JO under the NSW Government's \$3.3 million commitment.

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Should you have any further enquiries, please contact Chris Presland, Director Reform Implementation or Melissa Gibbs, Director Policy and Sector Development on 02 4428 4100 or onestopshop@olg.nsw.gov.au. Once again, I would like to thank you for your time and engagement during this process to date. The NSW Government looks forward to working with your council to find the best solutions for meeting the needs of your council and region into the future.

Yours sincerely



Penny Holloway
Acting Chief Executive
Office of Local Government

Proposed JO resolution for councils



The council resolutions are a critical input in the process of getting Joint Organisation areas recommended to the Governor by the Minister. It is important these resolutions align for groups of councils that wish to form a Joint Organisation.

Once the resolutions have been made by councils the Minister must wait at least 28 days before recommending the Joint Organisation to the Governor.

The resolutions must be worded in a way that will allow for any changes in proposed membership that could potentially occur within the 28 days (e.g. a council rescinds the decision to join the Joint Organisation) without compromising the ability of the remaining councils to still form the Joint Organisation.

Below is a suggested Joint Organisation Resolution for councils. It is advisable any resolution is made following commencement of the legislation.

In accordance with Part 7 of Chapter 12 of the Local Government Act 1993 (Act), the [NAME OF COUNCIL] (Council) resolves:

- 1.** *That the council inform the Minister for Local Government (**Minister**) of the Council's endorsement of the Minister recommending to the Governor the establishment of a Joint Organisation (**Joint Organisation**) in accordance with this resolution.*

- 2.** *To approve the inclusion of the Council's area in the Joint Organisation's area.*

- 3.** *That the Joint Organisation be established to cover the Council's area and any one or more of the following council areas:*
 - a) [INSERT A LIST OF ALL RELEVANT COUNCIL AREAS WITHIN THE RELEVANT STATE PLANNING REGIONS]*

- 4.** *That, on the expiry of a period of 28 days from the making of this resolution, the General Manager provide the Minister:*
 - a) with a copy of this resolution including the date on which Council made this resolution, and*
 - b) inform the Minister that this resolution has not been rescinded,*

for the purpose of the Minister issuing a certificate under section 400P of the Act.