

Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

Statement of Strategic Priorities 2018

What is the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation?

The Mid North Coast Joint Organisation (**MNCJO**) represents a new way for its member councils to work together for the benefit of the region. Created in 2018, the MNCJO has three members:

- Bellingen Shire Council
- Kempsey Shire Council
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council

Together the councils cover an area of 8,658 square kilometres and a population of approximately 121,000 people.

Joint Organisations (**JOs**) were created in NSW following changes to the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) in late 2017 and represent a different approach for local councils to work strategically with the NSW Government. The MNCJO is one of the 11 JOs across the state. The NSW Government has allocated \$3.3 million to support the establishment of JOs, of which \$300,000 is being provided to MNCJO.

The MNCJO's primary role is to support a shared approach to the vision and long term development of the Mid North Coast region. It builds on previous work undertaken by the councils as members of the former Mid North Coast Regional Organisation of Councils.

The MNCJO is overseen by a Board comprising the Mayors from each member Council, the three General Managers and the Regional Director, Department of Premier & Cabinet, North Coast. The Mayor of Kempsey Shire Council, Liz Campbell, has been elected as the inaugural Chair of the MNCJO and the Mayor of Bellingen Shire Council, Dominic King, is the inaugural Deputy Chair. The term of Chair and Deputy Chair is two years.

What is the timing for this plan?

The development of this Statement of Regional Priorities (**Statement**) is one of the first tasks for the JO to complete. For the two years from September 2018 to September 2020 the MNCJO will operate under the current local government term of office. From September 2020, a new 4 year term of local government will come into effect, with the JO Chair elected for a two year term.

What was the process for preparing this plan?

This Statement has been developed through a mix of research and consultation. A wide range of relevant documents including regional plans and regional economic development strategies from member councils were reviewed and a workshop of the MNCJO Board was held in September 2018. The Statement has been reviewed and updated throughout these steps.

When will this plan be reviewed?

This Statement will be reviewed annually and more comprehensively at the commencement of new terms of office for the Board.

Vision for the Mid North Coast region

The MNCJO vision is to help create a vibrant, sustainable region underpinned by economic growth and a commitment to the social and environmental wellbeing of its communities.

Mission statement

To set priorities, lead and advocate for the Mid North Coast region and work collaboratively with the community, government and non-government organisations and business to achieve them.

Functions

The core functions of the MNCJO are:

- **Strategic planning and priority setting** – based on robust processes for identifying regional goals, with the flexibility to respond to changing priorities and needs of member councils as required
- **Intergovernmental collaboration** – building effective working relationships with other JOs, councils and the NSW and Australian Governments
- **Regional leadership and advocacy** – creating a shared purpose and strategic direction for the region; and a commitment to constructive and cooperative implementation by all member councils
- **Building efficient and effective councils** – by examining opportunities for shared services and capacity building across the region.

Guiding principles

- Decisions are made with a whole of region focus
- Flexibility to respond to changing priorities and community needs
- Accountability to members and their communities of interest
- Commitment to collaboration and good working relationships
- Clear communication between members and other stakeholders
- Commitment to make MNCJO work effectively and efficiently
- Evaluation and reporting to ensure targeted outputs and outcomes
- Strong governance, with robust processes, accountability and transparent decision-making

Strategic goals and actions

This Statement builds on the Strategic Plan (**Plan**) that was prepared in 2017, when the MNCJO Councils were members of the Mid North Coast Regional Organisation of Councils (**MIDROC**). This Statement contains six strategic goals (which relate to the social, environmental, economic, infrastructure, governance and advocacy goals for the region), linked to a number of high level actions and more specific individual activities under each strategic goal. The key partners and regional documents are also set out below. In addition to the regional documents noted below, there are also a large number of relevant documents prepared by each member council, including Community Strategic Plans, Local Environmental Plans and a wide range of strategies, plans and policies that complement those reports.

1. Social, health and wellness

Goal: an active, healthy, resilient and safe community

Key partners:

- NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet
- NSW Department of Education
- NSW Department of Family and Community Services
- NSW Department of Planning and Environment
- NSW Health and Mid North Coast Local Health District
- NSW Land and Housing Corporation
- NSW Department of Primary Industries
- Australian Department of Human Services
- Australian Department of Social Services

Key regional documents:

- NSW Ageing Strategy 2016-2020
- Community Strategic Plans
- North Coast Regional Plan

No	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
1.1	Provide regional facilities and services for recreation, sports, arts and culture within the context of a changing population	Develop a regional social infrastructure plan	Planning
1.2	Build capacity in the regional community to deal with severe weather events and natural disasters	Community Resilience project – Educate and prepare communities for disaster events and climate change. Possible funding sources Office of Emergency Management – Community Resilience Innovation Program.	Leadership
1.3	Plan for the regional impact of ageing populations on health services, accessible and affordable housing and employment	Accommodation and Ageing Population project – MNCJO to partner with universities, NSW Health, private providers to advocate for the development of innovative products and services to support an ageing population.	Collaboration

2. Environment

Goal: enhance natural and cultural heritage

Key partners:

- Local Aboriginal Land Councils
- NSW Department of Primary Industries
- NSW Department of Planning and Environment
- NSW Environmental Protection Authority
- NSW Office of Environment and

Heritage

- North Coast Local Land Services

Key regional documents:

- North Coast Regional Plan
- Community Strategic Plans
- State Environmental Planning Policy 44 – Koala Habitat Protection
- Department of Industry Renewable

Energy Action Plan 2013

- NSW Floodplain Development Manual: the management of flood liable land 2005

No	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
2.1	Plan for the regional impact of climate change on the community, environment, economy and council services	Renewable Energy Project – Investigate renewable sources of energy which could be supplied on a regional / local network. May require consultancy resources to identify projects and possible funding sources.	Planning / research
		Community Resilience Project – See above (Social goals).	Leadership
		Develop regional coastal management plan	Planning
2.2	Preserve strategic biodiversity and identify land with high environmental value and biodiversity corridors across the region	Develop a biodiversity and wildlife corridor plan	Planning
		Joint Organisation Bio-bank project – OLG to investigate possible approaches.	Collaboration
		Petroleum Underground Storage Sites – Source funding from EPA for resources to facilitate council remediation activities. Build on “Contaminated Lands” project.	Leadership / Service Delivery
		Koala Recovery Project – Approach OEH to expand the project proposed for Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and Kempsey Shire Council to include Bellingen Shire Council	Leadership / Collaboration
2.3	Identify and protect areas and sites of Indigenous cultural heritage	Map indigenous cultural heritage across the region	Leadership

3. Economy

Goal: a diverse and robust economy which strengthens existing and creates new industries and educational opportunities

Key partners:

- Regional Development Australia – Mid North Coast
- NSW Department of Planning and Environment
- NSW Department of Industry
- NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet
- NSW Office of Local Government
- Property Council
- Urban Development Institute of Australia

- North Coast Local Land Services
- TAFE NSW
- Schools and Early Education Centres
- Australian Department of Defence

Key regional documents:

- Community Strategic Plans
- Hastings Macleay Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022
- Bellingen Shire Council Economic

Development and Tourism Plan 2015-2020

- A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW
- MIDROC Strategic Plan 2017
- North Coast Regional Plan 2036
- Mid North Coast SMART Region Strategy
- NSW Regional Development Framework

No	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
3.1	Assess the availability of land across the region for different purposes and instigate cross-council planning where land is scarce/unavailable for a specific purpose	Develop a regional land use plan for housing, employment and infrastructure in a region of high value environmental and agricultural land	Planning
3.2	Assess the potential for non-competing (for industry and workforce) “centres of excellence” in different local government areas	Develop a Smart Region Strategy	Planning
3.3	Continue to support industries which deliver food security for the region and support a focus on agriculture and agriculture-related industries	Explore energy and water innovation in agriculture	Planning / research
3.4	Continue to support tourism as a main regional industry and explore options to ‘keep tourists in the region’ for longer	Intergovernmental coordination – decentralisation	Collaboration
		Ensure Destination Management Plans incorporate indigenous tourism, accessible & inclusive tourism and experience tourism.	Planning
3.5	Identify local and regional employment opportunities and train people (existing workers and people entering the workforce) for growth sectors and the jobs of the future	Advanced Manufacturing strategy – explore options to increase advanced manufacturing capabilities and capitalise on defence supply chains to open this up for innovation and employment in the region.	Planning / research
		Local Government Skills Strategy – Identify current and future resourcing options across the JO. Look particularly into the role of apprentices, boosting indigenous workforce participation and consider Skills Tasmania as an example of a local government skills strategy	Planning
		Develop regional workforce plans	Planning

4. Infrastructure

Goal: vibrant, connected cities and centres

Key partners:

- Regional Development Australia – Mid North Coast NSW
- NSW Department of Planning and Environment
- NSW Department of Industry
- Transport for NSW
- Property Council
- Urban Development Institute of Australia
- North Coast Local Land Services

- Infrastructure NSW
 - Roads & Maritime Services
- Key regional documents:**
- Community Strategic Plans
 - Hastings Macleay Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022
 - Bellingen Shire Council Economic Development and Tourism Plan 2015-2020

- A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW
- Strategic Plan for Joint Organisation Mid North Coast Councils 2017
- North Coast Regional Plan 2036
- NSW Regional Development Framework
- Mid North Coast SMART Region Strategy

No	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
4.1	Support the roll-out of reliable telecommunications and internet access across the region	Future-focused internet project – explore options for establishing a self-sufficient internet network in the Mid North Coast to remove reliance on the NBN – look at Kangaroo Valley Broadband Network crowdfunding internet campaign for an example of options.	Planning
4.2	Restore and renew regional roads and bridges	Joint Organisation Bridges project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) List priority bridges for a \$20m project -\$10m grant matched by member councils. JO councils to finalise the list with Bellingen Shire Council b) Present how these will contextually make a difference c) Present an immediate start program 	Leadership / Service Delivery
		Develop a regional road and bridges hierarchy and support funding applications	Planning
4.3	Design and create safe public places and preserve the unique regional/local character of cities, towns and villages	Conduct review of existing tourism infrastructure to ascertain possible improvements to increase time spent in the region	Planning
4.4	Develop good regional and inter-regional transport connections by road and rail	Explore alternative transport options to improve connectivity in the region – eg: motorised pushbikes, scooters, increased bus services, driverless buses	Planning / research
		Ensure funding for the regions' airport developments	Service Delivery
4.5	Improve marine infrastructure to boost local economy	Investigate appropriate marine infrastructure across the area.	Research

5. Regional leadership

Goal: effective and efficient governance and regional leadership

Key partners:

- NSW Office of Local Government
- NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Other Joint Organisations
- Local Government NSW & Local

- Government Procurement NSW
 - Local Government Professionals NSW
- Key regional documents:**
- Community Strategic Plans

- MNCJO Charter
- North Coast Regional Plan
- Funding agreements
- Policy documents

No	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
5.1	Drive local government sustainability	Establish MNCJO as an entity	Planning
		Develop Strategic Plan	Planning
		Investigate opportunities for regional shared services and projects	Planning
		Develop a communications plan to effectively engage stakeholders, including the regional community	Planning
		Develop a stakeholder engagement plan to ensure all key stakeholders are identified and activated to achieve priority actions	Planning
5.2	Represent the needs of the regional community to other levels of government and to non-government organisations	Prioritise relationship-building with State and local government	Collaboration

6. Advocacy

Goal: effective relationships with NSW and federal governments to ensure the long term sustainability of local government in the region

Key partners:

- NSW Office of Local Government
- NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Other Joint Organisations
- Local Government NSW & Local Government Procurement NSW
- Local Government Professionals NSW

- Australian Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
- Australian Department of the Environment and Energy
- Australian Department of Social Services
- Australian Department of Human Services

Key regional documents:

- MNCJO Charter
- Community Strategic Plans
- North Coast Regional Plan
- Funding agreements
- Policy documents

No	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
6.1	Effectively work with state and federal governments to ensure resources are available for the Mid North Coast	Advocate for FAG Grants redistribution to regional and rural councils	Resourcing
		Establish equitable handover arrangements for old Pacific Highway and bridges	Resourcing
		Smart towns – fund equitable NBN roll-out to MNC communities	Resourcing
		Advocate for resources for Natural Disaster Recovery Arrangements	Resourcing
		Advocate for indexation of stormwater levy charges	Resourcing
		Advocate for Rural Fire Service – Service Level Agreements	Resourcing