

## Mid North Coast Joint Organisation

### Statement of Strategic Priorities 2021

#### 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. Established 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 125,000 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 councils to work strategically with the NSW Government.

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, supported by the General Managers of each member council. Senior Managers from Regional NSW, Destination NSW and Regional Development Australia (RDA) also attend and provide reports to the Board. The NSW OLG relationship manager also attends.

#### What is the timing for this plan?

This Statement of Regional Priorities (Statement) is an update to the Statement from September 2018 to September 2021. From September 2021, a new three year term of local government will come into effect, with the MNCJO Chair elected for a two year term.

#### What was the process for preparing this plan?

This 2021 Statement has been developed through a mix of research and stakeholder 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 on April 9 2021. During this workshop, performance against the 2018 Statement was assessed to understand progress to date and to determine appropriate actions and activities for the future to achieve the strategic goals.

The 2021 Statement has been reviewed and updated throughout this process and was approved by the MNCJO Board on June 4, 2021.

#### When will this plan be reviewed?

This Statement will be reviewed annually and at the commencement of new terms of office for the MNCJO 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 2021 Statement builds on the Strategic Plan (Plan) which was prepared in 2018. This 2021 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 highlighted to ensure strategic alignment. In addition to the regional documents noted, 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.



## 1. Social, health and wellness

Goal: an active, healthy, resilient and safe community

Key partners		Key regional documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet</li> <li>NSW Department of Education</li> <li>NSW Department of Communities and Justice</li> <li>NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment</li> <li>NSW Health and Mid North Coast Local Health District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSW Land and Housing Corporation</li> <li>NSW Department of Primary Industries</li> <li>Australian Government Department of Social Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Coast Regional Plan 2036 (being reviewed in 2021/22)</li> <li>North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation (Adapt NSW)</li> <li>*Ageing Well in NSW: Seniors Strategy 2021-2031??</li> <li>Community Strategic Plans prepared by Member Councils</li> <li>*Local Strategic Planning statements prepared by Member Councils</li> <li>Local Strategic Planning Statements prepared by member Councils</li> <li>NSW Housing Strategy 2041</li> </ul>

No.	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
1.1	Build capacity in the regional community to deal with severe weather events and natural disasters	<p>Strengthen the existing 'Resilience Partnership' with Charles Sturt University and the local community and ensure sustainable community projects are developed in the context of this partnership.</p> <p>Engage with Resilience NSW to embed 'Preparedness Recovery and Resilience Strategies' in the area covered by the MNCJO.</p> <p>Ensure local communities have access to information and technology relative to severe weather events in the region</p>	Leadership
1.2	Develop plan on regional housing supply, demand and housing affordability	MNCJO councils to collaborate around LSPs to influence zoning and unlock land supply	Planning, collaboration
		MNCJO to advocate to NSW government on regional housing issues	Collaboration
		Seek funding to investigate the feasibility of a community land trust in the region	Planning, collaboration
1.3	Collaborate with landholders (property, land and caravan parks) to understand crisis accommodation issues	Collaborate with RDA to finalise evidence base and bring back to the MNCJO	Collaboration

## 2. Environment

Goal: enhance natural and cultural heritage

Key partners		Key regional documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Aboriginal Land Councils</li> <li>NSW Department of Primary Industries</li> <li>NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment</li> <li>NSW Environmental Protection Authority</li> <li>NSW Environment, Energy and Science Group</li> <li>North Coast Local Land Services</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Coast Regional Plan 2036 (being reviewed in 2021/22)</li> <li>North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation (Adapt NSW)</li> <li>NSW State Environmental Planning Policy (Koala Habitat Protection) 2021</li> <li>North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation report 2019</li> <li>North Coast Regional Emergency Management Plan 2019</li> <li>NSW Natural Disaster Resilience Program (Community Resilience Innovation Program)</li> <li>NSW Floodplain Development Manual 2005</li> <li>Koala SEPP 2021</li> <li>Community Strategic Plans</li> <li>Local Strategic Planning Statements</li> </ul>

No.	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
2.1	Preserve strategic biodiversity and identify land with high environmental value and biodiversity corridors across the region	Deliver Regional Biodiversity Offsetting and Carbon Project (funded by OLG Financial Sustainability Project) with appointed external consultants	Planning, collaboration
		Build on the success of the Koala Recovery Partnership to improve koala conservation across the MNCJO Region	Leadership, collaboration
2.2	Maintain focus on koala protection and habitat conservation and build on the Koala Recovery Project	Build koala priorities into council plans	Planning, research, collaboration
		Create shared priorities for koala protection with MNCJO, RDA and Local Land Services (LLS)	Collaboration
		Use evidence base established through Great Koala National Park and biodiversity work to advocate to other councils and NSW government	Collaboration, research
		Actively engage the timber industry in a conversation about the future of the region and develop an evidence base with the timber industry to get the best value out of this resource	Collaboration, research

2.3	Develop improved solutions for waste and water at a regional level	MNCJO to form working group with regional waste providers and all councils to develop a strategic waste plan	Leadership, collaboration, planning
		MNCJO build on discussion paper on water and work with other JOs to investigate opportunities for water authorities to link to JOs to collaborate in strategic water planning	Leadership, collaboration, planning
2.4	Develop a plan aligned to <i>Adapt North Coast</i> to facilitate actions for climate change adaptation at a regional level	MNCJO to align with priorities in the regional adaptation plan and source funding to implement initiatives on a regional basis, including microgrids and other adaptation strategies	Planning, collaboration

### 3. Economy

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

Key partners		Key regional documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Development Australia – Mid North Coast</li> <li>NSW Department of Regional NSW</li> <li>NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment</li> <li>NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet</li> <li>NSW Office of Local Government</li> <li>Property Council Australia</li> <li>Urban Development Institute of Australia</li> <li>North Coast Local Land Services</li> <li>TAFE NSW</li> <li>Schools and Early Education Centres</li> <li>Australian Government Department of Defence</li> </ul>	Destination NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Coast Regional Plan 2036 (being reviewed in 2021/22)</li> <li>North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation (Adapt NSW)</li> <li>A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW 2021</li> <li>Hastings Macleay Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022</li> <li>Coffs Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022</li> <li>Bellingen Shire Council Economic Development and Tourism Plan 2015-2020</li> <li>Mid North Coast SMART Region Strategy 2018</li> <li>RDA Mid North Coast Regional Plan</li> <li>North Coast Employment Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2025</li> <li>Local Land Services North Coast Local Strategic Plan 2016-2021</li> <li>Coffs Harbour Regional City Action Plan 2036</li> <li>Port Macquarie Draft Regional City Action Plan 2036</li> </ul>

No.	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
3.1	Actively position the Mid North Coast as a great place to live, work, invest and play.	MNCJO in association with Destination NSW to lead Mid North Coast regional brand strategy across all councils	Planning, collaboration
		Identify opportunities for nature-based and indigenous tourism	Research, planning, collaboration
3.2	Support research to better understand responses to regional skills shortage	MNCJO to support the RDA work and its advocacy in this area	Research, collaboration
3.3	Support research for development and manufacture of assistive technologies, especially for aged care	MNCJO to support the RDA work and its advocacy in this area	Research, collaboration

### 4. Infrastructure

**Goal: vibrant, connected cities and centres**

Key partners		Key regional documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Development Australia – Mid North Coast</li> <li>NSW Department of Regional NSW</li> <li>NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment</li> <li>Infrastructure NSW</li> <li>Transport for NSW</li> <li>Property Council Australia</li> <li>Urban Development Institute of Australia</li> <li>North Coast Local Land Services</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Coast Regional Plan 2036 (being reviewed in 2021/22)</li> <li>North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation (Adapt NSW)</li> <li>A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW 2021</li> <li>Hastings Macleay Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022</li> <li>Coffs Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022</li> <li>Bellingen Shire Council Economic Development and Tourism Plan 2015-2020</li> <li>Mid North Coast SMART Region Strategy 2018</li> <li>Local Land Services North Coast Local Strategic Plan 2016-2021</li> <li>Coffs Harbour Regional City Action Plan 2036</li> <li>Port Macquarie Draft Regional City Action Plan 2036</li> <li>Community Strategic Plans</li> <li>Local Strategic Planning Statements</li> </ul>



No.	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
4.1	Restore and renew regional roads and bridges	Continue to support member councils with roll out of MNCJO bridges project	Planning, collaboration
		Continue joint discussions regarding a regional approach other transport infrastructure.	Planning, collaboration
4.2	Design and create safe public places and preserve the unique regional/local character of cities, towns and villages	MNCJO councils to continue to actively seek grant funding to upgrade tourism infrastructure through funds such as Stronger Country Communities, BLERF, Regional Tourism Fund etc.	Planning, collaboration

## 5. Regional leadership

**Goal: effective and efficient governance and regional leadership**

Key partners	Key regional documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Leadership Executive</li> <li>Regional Development Australia – Mid North Coast</li> <li>NSW Department of Regional NSW</li> <li>NSW Office of Local Government</li> <li>NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet</li> <li>Other Joint Organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Government NSW &amp; Local Government Procurement NSW</li> <li>Local Government Professionals NSW</li> <li>Resilience NSW</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Coast Regional Plan 2036 (being reviewed in 2021/22)</li> <li>North Coast Enabling Regional Adaptation (Adapt NSW)</li> <li>Community Strategic Plans prepared by Member Councils</li> <li>Local Strategic Planning Statements</li> <li>RDA Mid North Coast Regional Plan</li> </ul>

No.	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
5.1	Develop consistency across the region with all councils having preparedness/recovery/resilience officers to enable LGA and regional response to disaster and embed the function into the core business of councils.	MNCJO to identify needs for each council and engage directly with Resilience NSW to obtain funding for these resources	Planning, collaboration
5.2	Improve financial sustainability of local governments in the MNCJO	MNCJO to undertake research to develop an evidence base to evaluate how much % increase in FAGs would lead to increased skills/jobs etc.	Leadership, research, collaboration
		MNCJO to advocate to LG NSW and federal government on FAGs	Leadership, collaboration
		Identify opportunities for shared procurement to improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery	Planning, collaboration
5.3		Continue to engage with neighbouring Local Government Areas about possible membership/associate membership of the MNCJO	

## 6. Advocacy

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

Key partners	Key regional documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Leadership Executive</li> <li>NSW Department of Regional NSW</li> <li>NSW Office of Local Government</li> <li>NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet</li> <li>Other Joint Organisations</li> <li>Local Government NSW &amp; Local Government Procurement NSW</li> <li>Local Government Professionals NSW</li> <li>NSW Department of Housing</li> <li>Transport for NSW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Australian Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications</li> <li>Department of Agriculture, Water and Australian Department of Environment and Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources</li> <li>Australian Government Department of Social Services</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Coast Regional Plan 2036 (being reviewed in 2021/22)</li> <li>Community Strategic Plans prepared by Member Councils</li> <li>Local Strategic Planning Statements prepared by Member Councils</li> <li>RDA Mid North Coast Regional Plan</li> <li>Funding agreements</li> <li>MNCJO Communications Plan</li> </ul>

No.	High level actions	Activities	Functional Area
6.1	Improve coverage, speed and connectivity issues in the region	MNCJO to advocate to NBN and phone companies to improve bandwidth, availability and consistency, generally and during natural disasters	Leadership, collaboration



6.2	Develop consistency across the region with all councils having recovery officer to lead planning and implementation of recovery	MNCJO to identify needs for each council and engage directly with Resilience NSW to obtain funding for these resources	Planning, collaboration
6.3	Improve coordination and understanding of which body/agencies/department is doing to ensure efficiency of solution development and delivery	MNCJO to engage (potentially via Regional Leadership Executive) to understand existing and future initiatives in the region	Leadership, collaboration
		Schedule regular catch ups with Chairs of MNCJO and Chairs of RDA to plan each quarter	Planning, collaboration
		Develop communications plan around joint mayoral statements following meetings or initiative funding or implementation	Planning, collaboration