



Joint Organisations

Towards a new model for regional collaboration

JUNE 2016

Delivering Joint Organisations for regional NSW



Joint Organisations (JOs) will provide a forum for local councils and the State to work together on issues of regional strategic priority and deliver the things that matter most to regional communities.

The NSW Government is committed to building stronger communities supported by stronger local councils.

Joint Organisations are a crucial part of the NSW Government's plan to revitalise and strengthen regional NSW.



The Hon
Paul Toole MP
Minister for
Local Government

Joint Organisations will change the way that councils and State Government work together on regional planning and help to provide better services and infrastructure for regional communities through sharing resources, lowering costs and reducing red tape.

They are already delivering real outcomes for regional NSW: improving freight transport, tackling youth unemployment and attracting investment in regional economies and infrastructure.

The NSW Government is investing \$5.3 million in seed funding for this important initiative. We are now ready to finalise the model and recognise through legislation the role that Joint Organisations will play in regional planning, collaboration, leadership and advocacy.

Pilot JOs are already:

- ✓ Improving freight transport in the Riverina
- ✓ Increasing youth employment in the Illawarra
- ✓ Attracting agricultural investment in the Namoi
- ✓ Prioritising infrastructure investment in Central NSW
- ✓ Growing the tourism industry in the Hunter.

What have we achieved so far?

The NSW Government has listened to regional communities and JOs are a direct response to their calls for stronger and more effective regional planning and collaboration.

Throughout 2015 we piloted different JO models in five regions—Central NSW, Hunter, Illawarra, Namoi and Riverina—to test and reflect the different working relationships and priorities of each area.

The JO pilot successfully brought policy development 'into the field', encouraging active participation from the local government sector and NSW Government agencies.

The independent evaluation has found the JO pilot was a success and that JOs can really work for regional communities.

How will Joint Organisations work?

JOs will be strong enough to drive consistent regional planning and collaboration, but flexible enough to recognise and support the unique differences of each region.

They will transform the way that the State and local government collaborate, plan, set priorities and deliver important projects—such as jobs, education, transport and secure water supplies—to strengthen regional communities across council boundaries.

A clear set of principles has guided the development of JOs so they:

- 1 Feature a consistent core with flexible elements
- 2 Are run, owned by and accountable to member councils
- 3 Create minimal red tape, cost and risk
- 4 Protect council staff entitlements
- 5 Enable significant projects and initiatives—and associated funding and assets—to be managed regionally
- 6 Serve the best interest of regions and their communities.

Overview of the proposed JO model

A summary of the proposed JO model is provided below. For a more detailed explanation, refer to the detailed [background paper](#)



LEGAL ENTITY

- JOs will be proclaimed as bodies corporate in the Local Government Act



FUNCTIONS

Core functions

- JO core functions will be embedded in legislation and include strategic planning and priority setting, intergovernmental collaboration, and regional leadership and advocacy
- All JOs will perform these core functions

Optional functions

- JO optional functions—such as service delivery and capacity building—will be enabled but not prescribed by legislation
- JOs can select which of these functions, if any, they will carry out



MEMBERSHIP

- Mayors of member councils will sit on the JO Board for their term of office
- The JO Board will appoint its own Chair
- There will be equal voting rights between members and no casting vote for the Chair
- Additional councillors may be appointed to the JO Board, provided representation remains equal among councils
- General Managers of member councils will advise and contribute to the JO Board
- The NSW Government representative will be an associate (non-voting) member
- Other organisations—such as county councils and cross-border partners—may be associate (non-voting) members



BOUNDARIES

- JO boundaries will be set by Proclamation. All councils in regional and rural NSW will be a voting member of one JO
- JO boundaries will be aligned with, or nest within, State Government Regional Plan boundaries
- JOs will demonstrate a strong community of interest between member councils
- JOs will be based around a regional centre, where possible, and big enough to form strong partnerships



RESOURCING

Funding

- JOs will each receive \$300,000 seed funding from the NSW Government
- JOs will be able to apply for grants and generate income to help fund their ongoing operations

Staffing

- JOs will employ an Executive Officer with appropriate skills under a flexible standard contract
- JOs will employ staff under the Local Government (State) Award



SERVICE SHARING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Once the core JO model is established, JOs will be able to carry out optional functions such as shared service delivery through JO-formed corporations or other entities. This will be enabled after the core JO model is established
- JOs may choose to carry out optional functions directly or through member councils

Making it happen

There are exciting possibilities ahead as the JO Pilot program has shown the proposed JO model to be both practical and effective.

We will be working hard over the next 12 months to get the model right, make any final adjustments required, agree boundaries and ensure these important changes are embedded in legislation and ready for roll-out from 2017.

The NSW Government is committed to the future of regional NSW and the pivotal role JOs will play in making our regions stronger and will:

- ✓ Provide seed funding of \$5.3 million to help establish JOs
- ✓ Support JOs through a central State Agency Advisory Group and Regional Leadership Groups to help connect JOs with relevant State agencies and planning and funding opportunities
- ✓ Work with JOs to support them on their journey, share lessons learned, and help develop useful tools and resources to support their operations and roll out
- ✓ Amend legislation to remove existing barriers and pave the way for more effective and efficient regional collaboration, service provision and procurement.

Get involved

Consultation with key stakeholders so far shows great support for JOs from a range of councils, pilot JOs, Regional Organisations of Councils, NSW Government agencies and others.

Now we would like your feedback on the proposed JO model. The timeline below shows where we are in the process, and next steps for recruiting early-starter JOs and implementing the required legislative changes.



We want your feedback!

- 1 Read the detailed background paper [here](#).
- 2 Complete the online questionnaire [here](#) or visit the NSW Government [Have Your Say](#) site.
- 3 Submissions close at 5pm on Friday 15 July 2016.

Program Stages

2015



Pilot Process

- Pilot in five regions
- Develop a working model
- Strengthen relationships between local and State agencies
- Build a regional focus and identify priorities
- Evaluate the JO Pilot program

2016



Consolidation

- Consult and decide on the final JO model
- Refine options for non-core activities
- Test the model in two early starter regions. Pilot groups can continue
- Finalise merger proposal process and boundaries
- Amend legislation

2017



Implementation

- Establish JOs in remaining regions
- Work with the new regional governance and planning framework
- Monitor roll-out and results
- Embed JOs within the State's regional governance, planning and delivery framework

Joint Organisation nomination



6. Please confirm that your nomination is based around a strong regional centre or centres.

Yes No

7. Please confirm that the proposed Joint Organisation will be an appropriate size and have capacity to partner with the NSW Government, the Commonwealth Government and other organisations.

Yes No

8. Please specify any non-financial support required to ensure your Joint Organisation proposal is implemented successfully.

Nominations should be submitted to jointorganisations@olg.nsw.gov.au and marked 'Nomination for Joint Organisation'. Councils are required to submit their nomination by **28 February 2018**.

The Joint Organisation Network will be finalised in March 2018. Joint Organisations will be proclaimed to enable commencement in July 2018.

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 (to be advised by the Office of Local Government).

*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.*

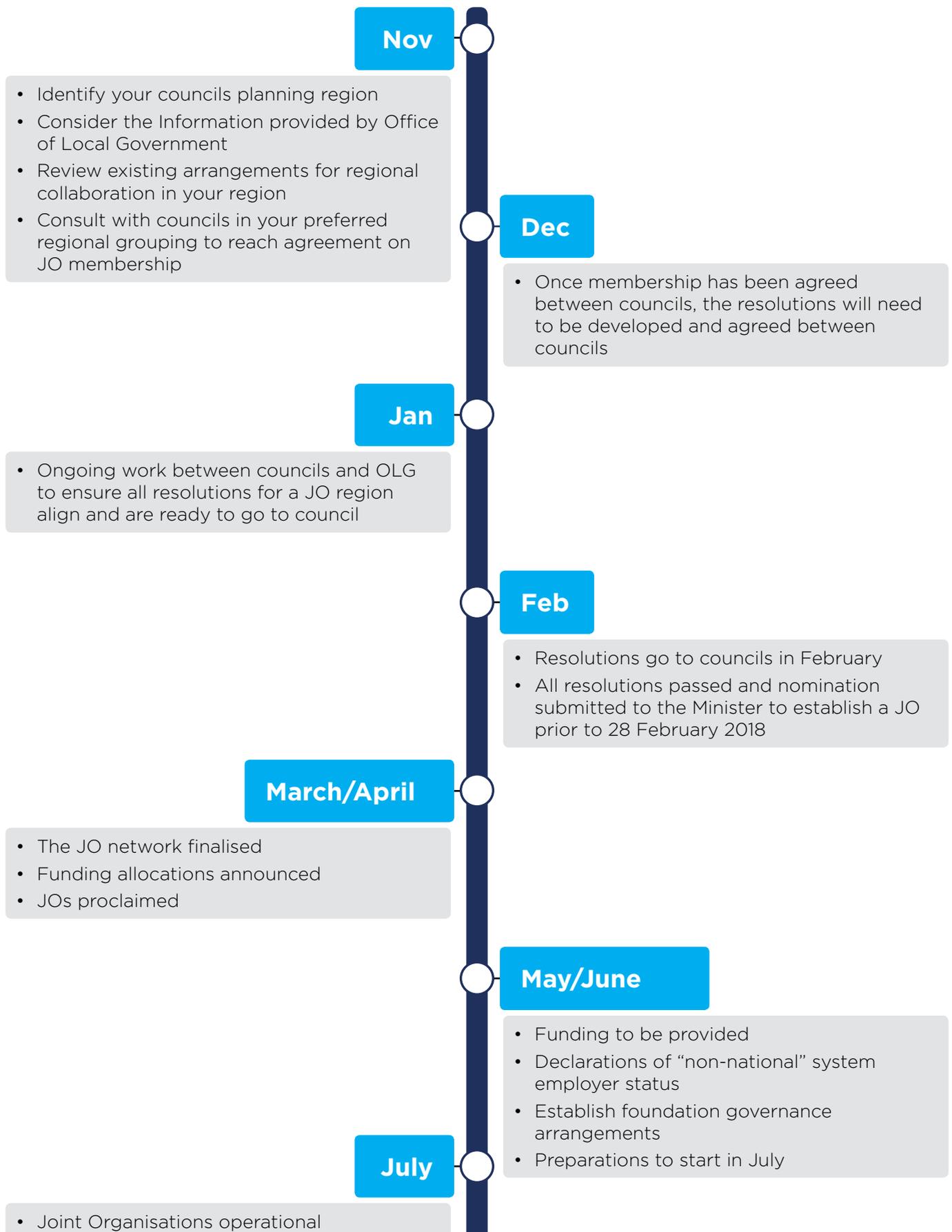
3. *That the Joint Organisation be established to cover the Council's area and any one or more of the following council areas:*

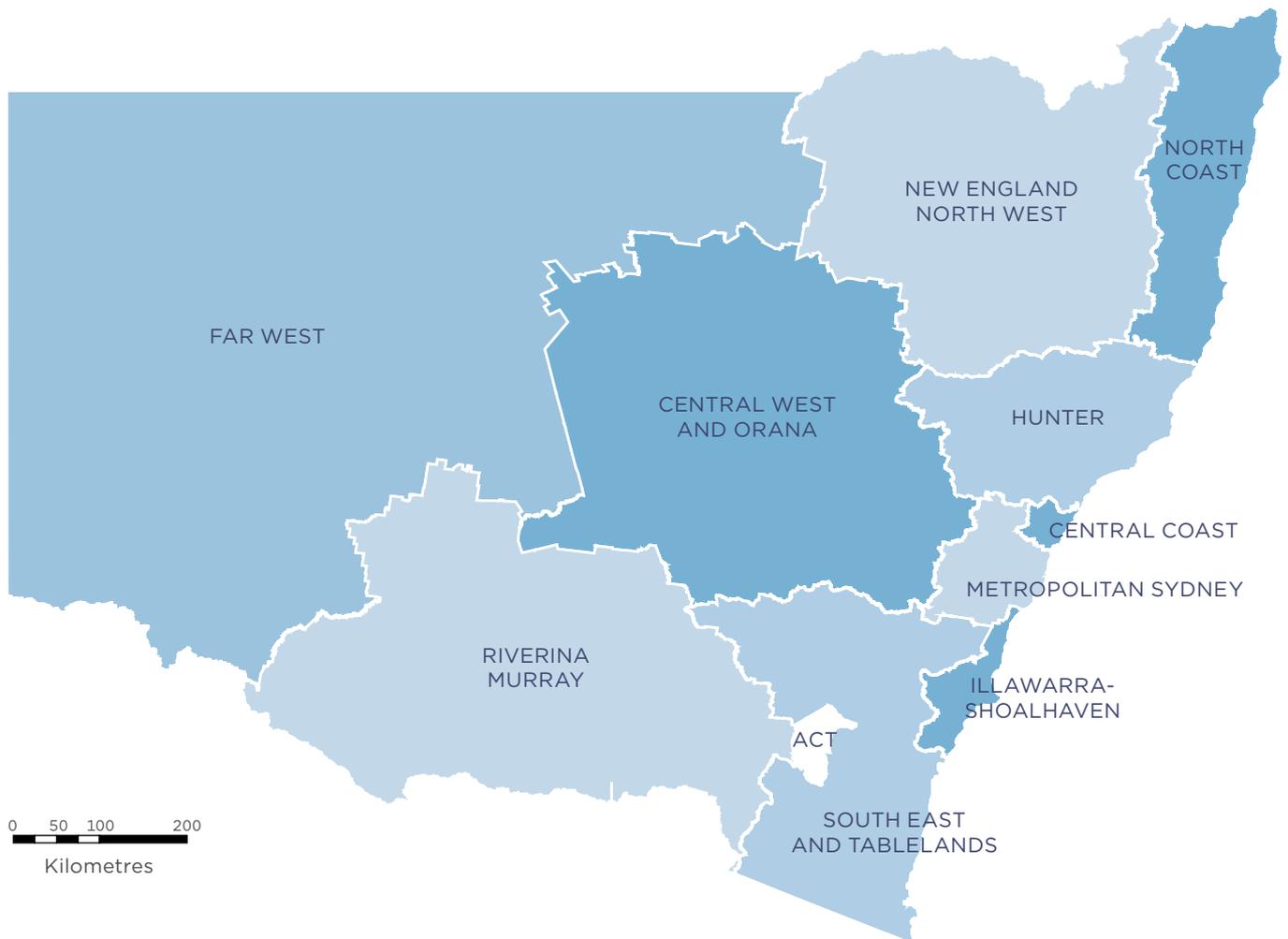
a) [INSERT A LIST OF ALL RELEVANT COUNCIL AREAS WITHIN THE RELEVANT STATE PLANNING REGIONS]

4. *That before 28 February 2018, the General Manager provide the Minister with a copy of this resolution including the date on which Council made this resolution.*

5. *That, on the expiry of a period of 28 days from the making of this resolution, the General Manager inform the Minister that this resolution has not been rescinded.*

Joint Organisation formation and implementation timeline for councils





Distribution of councils in NSW planning regions



Central West and Orana

Bogan Shire Council	Lachlan Shire Council	Warren Shire Council	Narromine Shire Council
Parkes Shire Council	Forbes Shire Council	Weddin Shire Council	Coonamble Shire Council
Gilgandra Shire Council	Dubbo Regional Council	Cabonne Shire Council	Cowra Shire Council
Orange Shire Council	Blayney Shire Council	Warrumbungle Shire Council	Mid-Western Regional Council
Bathurst Regional Council	Lithgow City Council	Oberon Council	

Hunter

Upper Hunter Shire Council	Muswellbrook Shire Council	Singleton Shire Council	Mid-Coast Council
Dungog Shire Council	Maitland City Council	Cessnock City Council	Port Stephens Council
Newcastle City Council	Lake Macquarie City Council		

New England North West

Moree Plains Shire Council	Narrabri Shire Council	Gunnedah Shire Council	Liverpool Plains Shire Council
Gwydir Shire Council	Tamworth Regional Council	Inverell Shire Council	Uralla Shire Council
Tenterfield Shire Council	Glen Innes Severn Shire Council	Armidale Regional Council	Walcha Council

North Coast

Tweed Shire Council	Kyogle Council	Lismore City Council	Byron Shire Council
Ballina Shire Council	Richmond Valley Council	Clarence Valley Council	Coffs Harbour City Council
Bellingen Shire Council	Nambucca Shire Council	Kempsey Shire Council	Port Macquarie-Hastings Council

Riverina Murray

Hay Shire Council	Edward River Council	Murray River Council	Carrathool Shire Council
Griffith City Council	Murrumbidgee Council	Berrigan Shire Council	Bland Shire Council
Leeton Shire Council	Narrandera Shire Council	Federation Council	Temora Shire Council
Coolamon Shire Council	Junee Shire Council	Wagga Wagga City Council	Lockhart Shire Council
Greater Hume Shire Council	Albury City Council	Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council	Snowy Valleys Council

South East and Tablelands

Hilltops Council	Yass Valley Council	Upper Lachlan Shire Council	Goulburn Mulwaree Council
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council	Snowy Monaro Regional Council	Wingecarribee Shire Council	Eurobodalla Shire Council
Bega Valley Shire Council			

Illawarra Shoalhaven

Shoalhaven City Council	Kiama Municipal Council	Shellharbour City Council	Wollongong City Council
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Q1: 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.

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.

Q2: 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.

Q3: 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.

Q4: 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

Q5: Can councils determine their own regional boundaries?

A: While the choice to join, and composition of a Joint Organisation 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:

- align with, or 'nest' within one of the State's 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.

Q6: Are Far West Councils able to form a JO?

A: The Government will be writing to Far West councils to advise them of their opportunity to form or join a JO. This will include specific guidance applicable to Far West councils only.

Q7: What are the next steps for interested councils?

A: Councils are 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.

Q8: 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.

Q9: 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.

Q10: 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.

Q11: 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.

Q12: 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.

Website

www.olg.nsw.gov.au

OLG key contacts

Chris Presland, Director of Reform Implementation	0413 274 882
Melissa Gibbs, Director Policy and Sector Development	0491 225 904
Office of Local Government, Development Team	02 4428 4100

Secure Stronger Councils Portal

A secure portal is available for councils to access information and share resources on Joint Organisations. To access the portal go to <https://portal.strongercouncils.nsw.gov.au>

You will need to login and register with your council email address.

OLG will use the portal to provide up to date information and share best practice between councils and Joint Organisations during the formation and implementation phase.

Department of Premier and Cabinet Regional contacts

Hunter 0418406733 02 49212603	Aaron Spadaro, Senior Coordination Officer
Northern NSW (Tamworth) 0477316 189 0267602671	Alison McGaffin, Director, Northern NSW
Northern NSW (Coffs Harbour) 0481 919 697 02 66598651	Andrew Hegedus, Director North Coast
Southern NSW (Wollongong) 0477 320 822 0242536301	Anthony Body, Director Southern Region
Southern NSW (Queanbeyan) 0427 454 375 02 92283296	Heidi Stratford, Director South East and Tablelands
Western NSW (Dubbo) 0400 364 960 02 68267801	Ashley Albury, Director, Western NSW
Western NSW (Wagga) 0417947976	Trudi McDonald, Director Riverina Murray

Mr Graeme Faulkner
General Manager
City of Lithgow Council
PO Box 19
LITHGOW NSW 2790

1 December 2017

Dear Mr Faulkner

I am pleased to be writing to you following the recent passage by the NSW Parliament of the *Local Government Amendment (Regional Joint Organisations) Bill 2017*. This legislation allows for councils to voluntarily join new Joint Organisations (JOs) to strengthen regional coordination and improve the delivery of important infrastructure and services for communities through strategic planning, collaboration and shared leadership and advocacy.

Council has recently been invited to nominate to form a JO and I encourage you to commence negotiations with the councils in your planning region on how a JO may be established to best support your community.

To assist Council in considering to form a JO, enclosed is an information pack that includes the following resources:

- Guidance information on how to submit a nomination to form a JO
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Office of Local Government contacts for support.

The Office of Local Government welcomes this opportunity to work with you in establishing a JO and is available to discuss what assistance can be offered to your council and region as you consider the benefits of joining a JO.

Please contact Mr Chris Presland, Director Reform Implementation on (02) 4428 4100 or olg@olg.nsw.gov.au if you have any further enquiries.

Yours sincerely



Tim Hurst
Acting Chief Executive
Office of Local Government



5 O'Keefe Avenue NOWRA NSW 2541
Locked Bag 3015 NOWRA NSW 2541

Our Reference: A576353
Your Reference:
Contact: Chris Presland
Phone: 02 4428 4100

Mr Graeme Faulkner
General Manager
City of Lithgow Council
PO Box 19
LITHGOW NSW 2790



20 December 2017

Dear Mr Faulkner

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.



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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Penny Holloway', written in a cursive style.

Penny Holloway
Acting Chief Executive
Office of Local Government