



NOTICE OF MEETING

NOTICE is hereby given that an **Ordinary Meeting of Gwydir Shire Council** will be held in the **Roxy Complex Upstairs Meeting Room**, on **Thursday 28 May 2020** (commencing at **9:00 am**) to discuss the items listed in the Agenda.

Your attendance is respectfully requested.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Max Eastcott'.

Max Eastcott
General Manager

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GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL BUSINESS PAPER AGENDA

ORDINARY MEETING May 28, 2020 9:00 am

OFFICIAL OPENING AND WELCOME – MAYOR

APOLOGIES

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Thursday, April 23, 2020 as circulated be taken as read and CONFIRMED.

PRESENTATION

**CALL FOR THE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS, GIFTS RECEIVED AND
CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

1. Tender for the Supply and Delivery of Bulk Fuels

It is recommended that the Council resolve into Committee of the Whole with the press and public excluded to allow consideration of this item, as provided for under Section 10A(2) (c) of the Local Government Act, 1993, on the grounds that the report contains information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.

MAYORAL MINUTE (If any)

DEFERRED ITEMS – Nil

OFFICERS' REPORTS (As listed)

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – OPEN

Councillors' Reports

Item 1 Joint Organisations

FILE REFERENCE

DELIVERY PROGRAM

GOAL: 4. Proactive Regional and Local Leadership

OUTCOME: 4.2 WE WORK TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS

STRATEGY: 4.2.2 Work in partnership to plan for the future - GM - external

AUTHOR General Manager

STAFF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST Nil

IN BRIEF/ SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

This report recommends joining the New England Joint Organisation as an Associate Member and reviewing the Council's current membership of the Namoi Joint Organisation in October 2021.

TABLED ITEMS	Nil
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BACKGROUND

At the last Council Meeting it was resolved:

THAT the report regarding Associate Membership to the New England Joint Organisation be received.

FURTHER that the General Manager report on the positive aspects of continuing Gwydir's membership in Namoi Unlimited to the next meeting.

COMMENT

A formal proposal has now been received from the New England Joint Organisation and a copy is attached.

This report recommends that the Council becomes an Associate Member of the New England Joint Organisation (NEJO). There are many areas where the close co-operation with the NEJO is beneficial to this Council. Obviously that relationship already exists to a large extent but becoming an Associate Member will further cement this relationship.

With regard to the second part of the Council's resolution, documentation is attached to provide some background to the current operation of the Namoi Joint Organisation, Namoi Unlimited. Also included is the most recent Members' Value Report (Attachment 5).

During the recent budget discussions the members of the Namoi JO have agreed that next year's membership fee will be increased by only the 2.6% rate pegging allowance rather than the substantial increase being considered.

The potential for significant annual membership dues was an area of concern to this Council. The current annual contribution, objectively, is relatively minor when you measure it against the tangible outcomes already received and the current planning work underway which should result in additional savings greater than the annual fee.

Certainly, due to Gwydir's geographical location, some of the Namoi Unlimited member councils benefit more greatly than does Gwydir from the alliance. However Gwydir has benefitted from its association especially in the areas of water management, training and regional advocacy.

The attached Charter outlines the principal functions of Namoi Unlimited as:

- establish strategic regional priorities for the joint organisation area and develop strategies and plans for delivering these priorities
- provide regional leadership for the joint organisation area and to be an advocate for strategic regional priorities
- identify and take up opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation on matters relating to the joint organisation area.

I believe that Namoi Unlimited is achieving its Charter.

At the moment the General Managers' Namoi group called JOLT are developing several proposals that will result in savings and/or benefits to the member Councils and the communities they serve.

Two of these are in the final stages of planning and are the collective Internal Audit Function and the development of the local vendor panel. Hopefully these proposal will be finalised over the next year.

Other possible service sharing options are also being reviewed but, quite rightly, each Council is keen to maintain its existing employment numbers because of its importance to its local economies.

The down side of the Council's membership is the current over-reliance on the onerous meeting schedule for both JOLT and the Board with monthly meetings. In spite of Gwydir's efforts to minimise the meeting cycle there is resistance among some member Councils to rationalize the meeting cycle. We live in hope!

At a recent webinar conducted by the Minister for Local Government there was a strong indication that no Councils will be allowed to opt-out of any Joint Organisation for at least the next two years as these Organisations may have

a significant role to play as the local government sector recovers for the Covid 19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION

The outcome being recommended in this report is to take up the offer of Associate Membership and the New England Joint Organisation and maintain the Council's membership in the Namoi Joint Organisation with a review in October 2021.

Gwydir's position has consistently been that the Namoi and New England Joint Organisations should merge. Hopefully Gwydir can become an honest broker and move this dream forward although there would need to be some personality changes to occur for it to become a reality.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

THAT Gwydir Shire Council submit a formal request to the New England Joint Organisation for Associate Membership.

FURTHER that the Council's continuing membership in the Namoi Joint Organisation be reviewed in October 2021.

ATTACHMENTS

- AT-** New England Joint Organisation Correspondence
- AT-** Namoi Unlimited Charter
- AT-** Namoi Unlimited Strategic Plan
- AT-** Namoi Unlimited 2019-2020 Business Plan
- AT-** Members' Value Report (Draft)

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29 APR 2020
Gwydir Shire Council

www.nejo.nsw.gov.au

24 April 2020

Mr Max Eastcott
General Manager
Gwydir Shire Council
Locked Bag 5
Bingara NSW 2404

Dear Mr Eastcott

Following our recent telephone conversation regarding the Board being prepared to accept an application for associate membership of the New England Joint Organisation (NEJO), I wish to formally advise that NEJO would welcome an application from your Council for Associate Membership.

In order to finalise your associate membership, please forward a written request confirming your application for membership of NEJO to executiveofficer@nejo.nsw.gov.au

I look forward to working with you in the future.

Yours faithfully

David Aber
Interim Executive Officer

A regional alliance of Armidale, Glen Innes Severn, Inverell, Moree Plains, Narrabri, Tenterfield and Uralla Councils



NAMOI UNLIMITED

Premier agricultural region in Australia

NAMOI JOINT ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS
trading as Namoi Unlimited

CHARTER

Endorsed 8 June 2018

GUNNDAH SHIRE COUNCIL | GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL | LIVERPOOL PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL
TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL | WALCHA COUNCIL

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

The operation of and governance principles for the Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils is guided by this Charter, which has been adopted by resolution of the board.

1.2 Name and legal status

The name of the joint organisation is the **Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils** trading as **Namoi Unlimited**.

Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils is a body corporate proclaimed under the *NSW Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) with the legal capacity and powers of an individual.

See the proclamation forming this joint organisation at <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/regulations/2018-192.pdf> for further information about the membership and functions of Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils and other key matters.

While the principal functions of the joint organisation are provided for in the Act and through this Charter, powers are also conferred on the Joint Organisation as a statutory corporation under section 50 of the *Interpretation Act 1987*. Other functions may be conferred on a Joint Organisation by legislation and may be delegated to a Joint Organisation by one or more member councils.

1.3 Interpretation

This Charter is to be interpreted in accordance with the *NSW Local Government Act 1993* and *NSW Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* and the *NSW Interpretation Act 1987*.

1.4 Definitions

In this Charter, the following terms are used as below.

'Act' means the *NSW Local Government Act 1993*.

'Board' means the board of the Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils, consisting of the mayors of each member council. Any additional voting representatives of these member councils appointed under section 400T of the Act and any other non-voting representatives who may attend, but are not entitled to vote at, a meeting.

'Charter' means this document, outlining the operational and governance principles for the joint organisation and any other agreed matters, consistent with the Act and other laws.

'Chairperson' means the person, who is a mayor, elected to the office of chairperson by the voting representatives on the board from among the voting representatives who are mayors.

'Councillor' means a person elected or appointed to civic office and includes a mayor.

'Deputy Chairperson' means the person, who is a mayor, elected to the office of deputy chairperson by the voting representatives on the board from among the voting representatives who are mayors.

'Executive Officer' means the person employed by the joint organisation to conduct the day-to-day management of the joint organisation in accordance with strategic regional priorities and other plans, programs, strategies and policies of the joint organisation and to implement without delay the lawful decisions of the joint organisation.

'General Manager' means the person employed by a council to conduct the day-to-day management of the council in accordance with strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the council and to implement without delay the lawful decisions of the council.

'Joint organisation' means an organisation established under Part 7 Chapter 12 of the *NSW Local Government Act 1993*.

'Member Council' means those councils proclaimed under the Act to be part of the Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils.

'Mayor' means a person elected or appointed to civic office who is the leader of the council.

'Non-voting member' means those councils and other organisations or individuals that are members of the joint organisation but do not have the right to vote. This includes:

- an employee of the public service nominated by the Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet

'Non-voting representative' means the chosen representative of a non-voting member of the board (sometimes called an 'associate member'). This includes:

- any other individual or representative of a council or other organisation invited by the board to represent
- a non-voting member of the board any other person or a member of a class of persons prescribed by the Regulation.

'Regulation' means the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*.

'Voting representative' means a representative of a member council on the board.

1.5 Adopting the Charter

This Charter was formally adopted by the Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils on 8 June 2018.

This Charter will be made publicly available via the following website administered by the joint organisation within 30 days of adoption www.namoiunlimited.nsw.gov.au.

1.6 Amending the Charter

This Charter will be reviewed every two years at the time of the election of the Chairperson. Other amendments may be made from time to time by resolution of the board.

2. ESTABLISHMENT

2.1 Vision and principles

The vision of Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils for the Namoi region is:

A productive, smart and liveable Namoi Region that is recognised for its strong leadership, innovation and excellence in regional collaboration.

Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils will act in accordance with the following principles:

2.2 Principal functions

The principal functions of Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils will be to:

- establish strategic regional priorities for the joint organisation area and develop strategies and plans for delivering these priorities
- provide regional leadership for the joint organisation area and to be an advocate for strategic regional priorities
- identify and take up opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation on matters relating to the joint organisation area.

2.3 Other functions

The board may, from time to time, determine whether and how to undertake any other functions.

3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Voting Members

The following are 'member councils' of Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils:

- Gunnedah Shire Council
- Gwydir Shire Council
- Liverpool Plains Shire Council
- Tamworth Regional Council
- Walcha Council

3.2 Non-voting members

The following organisations are non-voting members of the joint organisation:

- the NSW Government, as represented by a nominee of the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet

3.3 Changes in membership

A proclamation is required for a joint organisation to change voting members.

Any voting member proposing to withdraw from the joint organisation must give 6 months written notice.

This Charter may be amended to change non-voting members of the board. In deciding whether to propose or support a change in membership, Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils will:

- at the request of a member, consider a draft resolution seeking membership change, and
- following a resolution in support, amend this Charter as set out section 1.6 to change membership as set out at section 3.2.

3.4 Financial contributions

Each member council is to contribute a monetary payment or equivalent contribution based on the following methodology:

- fixed administration and membership contribution or fee, and any
- variable project and service or delivery fees.

Member councils will be consulted about proposed contributions by:

- Conduct of annual planning, and
- An annual written proposal based on the activity determined in the business planning process.

A member will cease to be a member non-payment of fees.

3.5 Decision resolution

In the event of an equality of votes in relation to a critical matter to be determined by the board - the resolution is lost.

The mechanism for the board to move critical decisions forward is as follows:

Step 1a – internal resolution using one or more of the following:

- Take into account board member views and rework the proposal.
- Establish a specific sub-committee to review and rework the proposal.
- Set aside time for the board to discuss the proposal prior to the next board meeting.
- Obtain and present to the board advice from an expert or an independent report.

Alternative

Step 1b – refer decision to member councils to resolve in the following circumstances:

- Decisions in relation to member council membership fixed financial contributions.

Step 2 – independent mediation (may include using any of the processes outlined in Step 1):

- Board resolves to work with an independent mediator to support board to resolve the decision.
- Where a mediator cannot be agreed, the board could ask the NSW Office of Local Government to appoint a mediator (as for a general manager contract).

Step 3 – appoint an independent arbitrator

- Board resolves to appoint an independent arbitrator to support board to resolve the decision.
- Where the arbitrator cannot be agreed, the board could ask NSW Office of Local Government to appoint an arbitrator.

Critical matters to be determined by the board include:

- adoption of a Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities
- adoption of the Annual Performance Statement and Financial Statements

3.6 Dispute resolution

In the event of a dispute between Board members that arises from or relates to Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils, the following steps will be taken to resolve that dispute:

- relevant members will advise the joint organisation prior to taking legal action
- relevant members will give notice to board members specifying the nature of the dispute
- on receipt of notice, member councils must endeavour in good faith to resolve the dispute promptly using informal dispute resolution techniques such as mediation, expert evaluation or determination or similar techniques, as agreed by those members
- members that are parties to the dispute will pay the mediator's costs.

4. THE BOARD

4.1 Governing board and role

The Board of Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils consists of:

- the mayors of each member council
- a representative of the NSW Government, nominated by the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet,

- any other non-voting representatives as per Annexure 1

The role of the Board is to direct and control the affairs of the Joint Organisation. The Board is to consult with the Executive Officer in directing and controlling the affairs of the Joint Organisation.

The Joint Organisation Executive Officer and General Manager of each member council may also attend meetings of the board in an advisory capacity.

4.2 Chairperson and role

The chairperson is to be elected by the voting representatives of the Board from one of the mayoral representatives. In the absence of the Chairperson, a person elected by the voting representatives at the meeting of the Board is to preside at the meeting. The Chairperson does not have a casting vote.

The Chairperson is the joint organisation's spokesperson on strategic matters and will represent the Joint Organisation at regional forums where possible.

They are responsible for the conduct of meetings.

The term of the Chairperson is two years.

4.3 Deputy Chairperson and role

The Deputy Chairperson is to be elected by the voting representatives of the Board from one of the mayoral representatives.

In the absence of the Chairperson, the role of the Deputy Chairperson is to be the Joint Organisation's spokesperson on strategic matters and will represent the Joint Organisation at regional forums.

4.4 Alternates

At the commencement of each Term of the Board a member council that chooses to appoint an alternate representative and must notify the Joint Organisation of that person's name and position.

4.5 Joint Organisation Leadership Team

Recognising the role of General Managers in providing advice to the Mayor, the General Managers will form a reference group for the consideration and provision of strategic advice to the board.

4.6 Advisory committees and working groups

Committees and advisory groups may also be established from time to time by board resolution.

5. MEETINGS

5.1 Meeting frequency

Meetings will be conducted in accordance with the Code of Meeting Practice adopted by the board from time to time.

Where necessary, the chair may call further meetings.

5.2 Participation and quorum

The quorum for a meeting of the Board is a majority of voting representatives entitled to vote under this Charter being at the meeting.

No business is to be transacted at a general meeting without a quorum.

5.3 Voting and decision making

Decisions about principal and Other functions

A decision of the Board supported by a majority at which a quorum is present is a decision of Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils.

Each voting member of the board has one vote each in relation decisions taken about principal functions.

A motion at a meeting of the board is taken to be defeated in the event of an equality of votes.

The chairperson, or person presiding at a meeting of the board, does not have a casting vote.

5.4 Annual general meetings

Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils will hold an annual general meeting before the end of October each year to present the annual report, the Audited Financial Statements and review charter.

6. PLANNING AND REPORTING

6.1 Consultation and publication

Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils will consult with all members in preparing the following documents required under the Act and will publish the adopted versions on the joint organisation website www.namoiunlimited.nsw.gov.au:

- statement of Strategic Regional Priorities
- annual revenue statement
- audited financial reports.

Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils will also publish an annual performance statement on its website www.namoiunlimited.nsw.gov.au.

7. OTHER MATTERS

7.1 Records

The joint organisation will keep records and provide access to relevant information in accordance with the following legislation at www.namoiunlimited.nsw.gov.au.

The public officer of Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils is the Executive Officer who may be contacted at info@namoiunlimited.nsw.gov.au.

7.2 Insurance

Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils joint organisation has made the following insurance arrangements:

CLASS	Public Liability/Professional Indemnity
MEMBER COUNCIL	Namoi Joint Organisation
BUSINESS OF MEMBER	Local Government Authority, as defined in wording.
EXPIRY DATE	30 June 2019
GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE	Anywhere in the World, excluding the Dominion of Canada and the United States of America.
LIMITS OF PROTECTION	Public Liability \$600,000,000 any one occurrence Products Liability \$600,000,000 any one occurrence and in the aggregate any one Period of Protection Professional Indemnity \$600,000,000 any one claim and in the aggregate any one Period of Protection in respect of
STATEWIDE CERTIFICATE NUMBER 002215	
CLASS	Public Liability/Professional Indemnity
MEMBER COUNCIL	Namoi Joint Organisation
BUSINESS OF MEMBER	Local Government Authority, as defined in wording.
EXPIRY DATE	30 June 2019
GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE	Anywhere in the World, excluding the Dominion of Canada and the United States of America.
LIMITS OF PROTECTION	Public Liability \$20,000,000 any one occurrence Products Liability \$20,000,000 any one occurrence and in the aggregate any one Period of Protection Professional Indemnity \$20,000,000 any one claim and in the aggregate any one Period of Protection.
STATEWIDE CERTIFICATE NUMBER 002215	

7.3 Indemnity

Representatives of members of the board and staff of Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils are protected from liability for functions and duties carried out or omitted honestly, in good faith and with due care and diligence.

7.4 Policies

Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils has adopted the following policies:

- Expenses and facilities policy
- Code of Meeting Practice
- Code of Conduct

Further policies may be adopted by the board from time to time and will be published on Namoi Joint Organisation of Council's website at www.namoiunlimited.nsw.gov.au.

8. TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils has made no transitional arrangements.

APPENDICES

Prescribed elements of the Charter

Under the Local Government Act 1993 (the Act) and Local Government (General) Regulation 2008 the prescribed requirements for the Charter are as follows:

- the board is to prepare and adopt a Charter containing (but not limited to):
 - operational principles for the joint organisation
 - governance principles for the joint organisation
- the Charter is to contain the methodology for determining annual financial contributions to the joint organisation by member councils
- a Charter may adopt requirements that are additional or supplementary to, or more significant than, requirements made by or under the Act but cannot adopt requirements that:
 - are less stringent than requirements made by or under the Act
 - are inconsistent with or contravene regulations under the Act relating to Charters
- the Charter must be made publicly available on a website administered by the joint organisation within 30 days of adoption of the Charter.



NAMOI UNLIMITED

Premier agricultural region in Australia

Executive Officer

PO Box 555

TAMWORTH NSW 2340

T: 02 6767 5267

M: 0490 778 410

E: info@namoiunlimited.nsw.gov.au

GUNNDAH SHIRE COUNCIL | GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL | LIVERPOOL PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL
TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL | WALCHA COUNCIL



NAMOI UNLIMITED

Premier agricultural region in Australia



STRATEGIC REGIONAL PLAN

2018 - 2021

GUNNEDAH SHIRE COUNCIL | GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL | LIVERPOOL PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL
TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL | WALCHA COUNCIL

Message from the Chair

Namoi Unlimited is a Joint Organisation of Councils in NSW tasked with responsibility by the NSW Government to undertake strategic planning and priorities, inter-governmental collaboration and advocacy.

Our strategic future is formed on the 'Shaping the Future of the Namoi' report which suggested an additional \$900 million could be contributed to the economy by 2030.

The *Shaping the Future of the Namoi*¹ report also says, change for ourselves and our communities is inevitable - markets, local industry and population will continue to change over time.

It may seem that some of this change is beyond our control. Communities will hear and feel the impact of change regardless of the action we, as local leaders will undertake.

However, inaction is not an option. As a collective leadership group of one of the most productive regions of NSW and Australia, we need to work towards fulfilling our potential as identified in this Strategic Regional Plan.

Our capacity to influence the levers identified is based around:

- Our ability to access water for the economy and our communities;
- Our focus is to collectively enhance our networks of infrastructure ensuring products and commodities are efficiently delivered to consumers and markets; and

- Our people - by developing and attracting skills for the jobs of the future.

Local Government is the closest form of government to the populations of the New England North West region.

All levels of Government will need to be invested in our vision and our Strategy to assist us to achieve our goals.

We have accepted the challenge to facilitate and collaborate across the local communities of Walcha Council, Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Tamworth Regional Council, Gunnedah Shire Council and Gwydir Shire Council.

We need to shape Namoi Unlimited to be nimble, adaptable and able organisation. We want an organisational structure that facilitates information exchange and resource sharing, and builds capacity and capability to undertake activities.

We need to be bold and think 'big', and measure our success. This document charts this path for the next three years, and our strategy is ambitious.



**Councillor Jamie Chaffey,
Mayor Gunnedah Shire Council
Chairperson Namoi Unlimited**

¹ Regional Australia Institute "Shaping the Future of the Namoi" Report, September 2015

Executive Summary

In 2015 the members of the pilot Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils engaged the *Regional Australia Institute* to undertake a research project to identify those things that had, or would have, the most profound impact on our region into the future.

The subsequent report entitled *Shaping the Future of the Namoi* identified six Future Factors that if collectively harnessed in a positive way would yield an expansion of the Namoi regional economy of an estimated additional \$900million by 2030.

The six future factors identified in this report were:

- National and global cycles in commodity markets;
- Maximising innovation in agricultural production;
- Seeking international investment, on the right terms;
- Engaging the Namoi in major overseas markets;
- Urbanisation; and
- Leveraging regional brand marketing to attract people to live and work in the Namoi.

Members acknowledge that there is potentially little Local Government can do to influence cycles in commodity markets.

Urbanisation is a global phenomenon, reflecting a change in human values, opportunities and aspirations.

While communities can become more resilient to national and international commodity cycles, and urbanisation - the efforts of Local Government can only have an indirect influence on these two factors.

Members agree that; innovation in agriculture, securing investment, engaging in markets, and promotion with a trusted and energised regional brand are areas where Local Government can be proactive and have a positive and regional impact.

Our Strategic Regional Priorities

In developing this Strategic Regional Plan and summarising this into a Statement of Strategic Directions - members will have a clear focus for the next three years on their role, and the collaborate functions that Local Government will undertake.

Namoi Unlimited will focus on three Strategic Regional Priorities. These three priorities are interlinked.

The region needs to have the sustenance of water, the infrastructure, and the people to continue to grow and develop. The three strategic regional priorities are summarised below:

1. Water for the Future

Agriculture, agricultural products, commodities and services underpin the economies of the Namoi region.

The dynamics of global markets, climate change and changing consumer demand, mean our core industry must evolve and adapt.

The availability, security and access to water underpin every facet of agriculture.

Water is also critical to the other two priorities identified in this Strategic Regional Plan.

Water is the critical enabler for industry, business, communities, lifestyle, tourism and the environment. Our action will be targeted towards growth and development.

2. Enabled and Connected Infrastructure

The provision of goods and services, connecting people and business, and addressing the perception of remoteness and isolation in regional areas are all dependent on having fully functional and connected infrastructure.

Roads, rail, air infrastructure, energy and telecommunications infrastructure are

critical for the future growth and the development of the region.

The role of Namoi Unlimited is to understand the capacity and capability of existing infrastructure and networks, and then take a future focussed approach to prioritising, investing and advocating for critical and necessary infrastructure, necessary to enabling and supporting growth.

3. Engaged People seeking Skills for the Future

People and their skills are fundamental to the growth of our economies, our communities and lifestyle.

Local Government is one of the largest employers in the Namoi region and has an important role to play in the attraction of people to the region, and the development of skills to meet the future demands of the regions workforce.

The members of Namoi Unlimited will identify, promote and engage in opportunities to address skill shortages within both Councils and across communities.

Our Organisation

The Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils trading as Namoi Unlimited was established in mid 2015 as part of the NSW Government's pilot program to form new entities called Joint Organisations to facilitate collaboration among Councils.

Namoi Unlimited represents five Local Government Areas located in the New England North West of NSW:

- Gunnedah Shire Council
- Gwydir Shire Council
- Liverpool Plains Shire Council
- Tamworth Regional Council
- Walcha Council

The commitment and collaboration of members is framed in the *NSW Local Government Act*.

The principles of operating the organisation are published in *The Charter*.

This Strategic Plan 2018-2021 will inform the annual Business Plan and budget.

Our Purpose

The NSW Government established Joint Organisations of Councils in 2017 by amendment to the *NSW Local Government Act*.

The role of Namoi Unlimited is to engage and collaborate with the NSW Government, working together to build stronger councils and communities.

Our Vision

A productive, smart and liveable region.

A region recognised for its strong leadership, innovation, and excellence in regional collaboration.

Our Principal functions

The core function of Joint Organisations of Councils is collaboration - collaboration between Councils, the NSW Government and the Australian Government.

Joint Organisations are also enabled to establish collaborative arrangements with key agencies and organisations with similar functions, values and activities.

The principal functions of Namoi Unlimited will be to:

- A. Establish strategic regional priorities for the joint organisation area and develop strategies and plans for delivering these priorities.
- B. Provide regional leadership for the joint organisation area and to be an advocate for strategic regional priorities.

- C. Identify and take up opportunities for intergovernmental collaboration on matters relating to the joint organisation area.

Our Values and Guiding Principles

The values of Namoi Unlimited are:

- Member Councils will actively collaborate to lead and empower each other.
- Member Councils will engage actively, honestly and ethically.
- Member Councils will be transparent and accountable to the communities they represent.

Stakeholders and Partners

Engagement and collaboration with key stakeholders is critical to the task ahead of Namoi Unlimited.

Member Councils are; Walcha Council, Tamworth Regional Council, Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Gunnedah Shire Council and Gwydir Shire Council.

Acknowledging the partnership with the NSW Government on Joint Organisations of Councils, the NSW Government is legislated as a Member of the organisation. Representation is undertaken by the Regional Director of the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet or their delegate.

Member Councils make up the Board of directors; the Board includes the Mayors of each of the member Councils.

Partners and Relationships

Research and education are important components of the value-add and supply

chains in the economy. As required research and education partners from the region and experts will be consulted and engaged in activities.

Key collaborative groups for the Joint Organisation include; the Regional Leadership Executive and the various sub-committees and task groups initiated by the NSW Government. This reflects the inter-governmental and collaboration role of Joint Organisations of Councils.

The Board will maintain strong relationships with members of the NSW and Australian Parliaments.

As required the Joint Organisation will seek support and guidance from the NSW Government, the Australian Government and their representatives for specific tasks and activities associated with the strategic regional priorities.

How to use this plan

The Strategic Regional Plan provides the framework for the Statement of Strategic Priorities, and the annual business plan.

This plan provides the accountability framework through performance measures and aspirations for the community.

The annual business plan articulates the annual budgets and resourcing.

A copy of this plan and associated documents are available at www.namoiunlimited.nsw.gov.au.

Strategic Regional Priorities

1. Water for the Future		Performance Measures				
Agriculture, agricultural products, commodities and services underpin the economies of the Namoi region. The dynamics of global markets, climate change and changing consumer demand, mean our core industry must evolve and adapt. The availability, security and access to water underpin every facet of agriculture. Water is also critical to the other two priorities identified in this Strategic Regional Plan. Water is the critical enabler for industry, business, communities, lifestyle, tourism and the environment. Our action will be targeted towards growth and development.						
Enabling JO Functions	Statements of Priority	Support for the Approach				
Planning and Prioritisation	1.1 Audit, analyse, identify and prioritise the key constraints, opportunities and innovations to secure the supply of water for communities, businesses and Local Government.	✓ ⁹	✓ ¹⁶			
	1.2 Audit, analyse, identify and prioritise opportunities and partnerships for agriculture, agricultural products, commodities, supply and value chains, as well as services.	✓ ²	✓ ⁴	✓ ⁶	✓ ¹¹	✓ ¹⁷
	1.3 Identify the potential impacts of change on agriculture.		✓ ⁵	✓ ⁷	✓ ¹²	✓ ¹⁸
	1.4 Identify and facilitate opportunities to address change, by diversifying, opening and establishing and new markets for producers.			✓ ⁸	✓ ¹³	✓ ¹⁹
Inter-governmental Collaboration	1.5 Facilitate opportunities with government and partners for investment into the provision of water, infrastructure and skills.			✓ ¹⁴	✓ ¹⁵	✓ ²¹
	1.6 Communicate the value of water across the region.	✓ ²²	-	✓ ²³	✓ ²⁵	-
	1.7 Identify opportunities for collaboration and best practice across water operations.			✓ ²⁴		
Positions of Advocacy and Leadership	The investment in, security of, and access to water is an enabler (not a risk) for local and regional development and growth. Water needs to be a secure foundation and the enabler for business and communities to innovate and regional economies to thrive.	✓ ²⁶	-	-	✓ ²⁷	✓ ²⁸
		Regional water security. The agriculture sector is supported to adapt to new markets and climate change.				

- ² A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW Infrastructure – Reliable accessible water and energy
- ³ Regional Priority: Regional Development and Growth in Employment Key Initiative Planned: Develop a Regional Intensive Agribusiness Strategy for the New England North West...
- ⁴ NSW Premiers' Priorities: Creating jobs 150,000 new jobs by 2019
- ⁵ NSW Premiers' Priorities: Encouraging business investment. Be the leading Australian state in business confidence
- ⁶ New England North West Regional Plan: Direction 1 – Expand agribusiness and food processing sectors, 2017-2019 Actions 1.1, 1.2, 1.4
- ⁷ New England North West Regional Plan: Direction 2 – Build Agricultural Diversity, 2017-2019 Actions 2.2 and 2.3
- ⁸ New England North West Regional Plan: Deliver new industries of the future, 2017-2019 Action 6.2
- ⁹ DRAFT Lower North West REDS Strategy 2: Provide a positive, supportive environment to facilitate business growth and investment. Key initiatives in this Strategy include: identify and advocate for a review of and changes to, regulatory barriers that hinder industry development and business growth. Deliver information and services to actively support and nurture businesses.
- ¹⁰ DRAFT Lower North West REDS Strategy 3: Support and leverage key sectors. The key initiatives in this Strategy are to: Provide support to agriculture and agri-processing. Facilitate growth in the poultry and equine sectors. Leverage the mining sector. Facilitate growth in the transport and logistics sector, including aviation. Grow the tourism sector (visitor economy)
- ¹¹ DRAFT Southern New England High Country – Regional Economic Development Strategy – 2018-2022 Strategy 2: Secure the inputs for growth. Key initiatives are: Invest in infrastructure that will support and facilitate growth, including water, power and commercial and industrial land. Provide a positive, supportive environment for business to establish and grow.
- ¹² DRAFT Southern New England High Country – Regional Economic Development Strategy – 2018-2022 Strategy 3: Strengthen, consolidate and grow key sectors. Key initiatives under this theme are providing support to: Agriculture, including horticulture. Education and training. Micro-businesses and knowledge-based industries. Specialised industry and manufacturing. Emerging sectors that have potential to leverage the region's endowments
- ¹³ DRAFT Southern New England High Country – Regional Economic Development Strategy – 2018-2022 Strategy 5: Effective marketing and promotion. It includes: Marketing to attract new residents, businesses and investment
- ¹⁴ DRAFT Upper North West REDS 2018-2022 – Full Report Strategy B: Encourage investment, increased productivity and value adding. Key initiatives within this Strategy are: Provide a positive, supportive environment to facilitate industry and business growth and development, including providing a positive regulatory environment. Invest in the utility infrastructure needed to enable and support growth, including providing water security for all water users. Support the agricultural sector to improve productivity, build resilience and reduce risk. Leverage opportunities to value-add and to capitalise on major proposed construction projects. Position and promote the UNW region as a location of choice for investment and businesses.
- ¹⁵ DRAFT Upper North West REDS 2018-2022 – Full Report Strategy D: Diversify the economy through tourism and emerging industry sectors. Key initiatives under this Strategy are: Continue to strengthen and grow the Region's tourism industry through product and infrastructure development, building the events sector and marketing and promotion.
- ¹⁶ Support the growth of manufacturing and processing.
- ¹⁷ Communities: implement systems to gather and share data between Local Governments to build the case for investment.
- ¹⁸ Develop a Strong Regional Voice, supported by innovative governance to identify regional priorities, opportunities and investment.
- ¹⁹ Grazing: Support consumer education and market development matched to regional produce.
- ²⁰ Agricultural Production: Develop regional markets and distribution systems to support locally grown products.
- ²¹ Water: Establish processes for regional planning that drives investment to increase demand for top-end products, clean and green consumer demand
- ²² A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW Infrastructure – Reliable accessible water and energy
- ²³ New England North West Regional Plan: Direction 17 – Strengthen community resilience, 2017-2019 Action 17.1
- ²⁴ New England North West Regional Plan: Direction 17 – Strengthen community resilience, 2017-2019 Action 17.3
- ²⁵ DRAFT Lower North West REDS Strategy 2: Provide a positive, supportive environment to facilitate business growth and investment. Key initiatives in this Strategy include: Build strong partnerships and strategic alliances.
- ²⁶ A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW Infrastructure – Reliable accessible water and energy
- ²⁷ DRAFT Southern New England High Country – Regional Economic Development Strategy – 2018-2022 Strategy 2: Secure the inputs for growth. Key initiatives are: Invest in infrastructure that will support and facilitate growth, including water, power and commercial and industrial land. Provide a positive, supportive environment for business to establish and grow
- ²⁸ Develop a Strong Regional Voice, supported by innovative governance to identify regional priorities, opportunities and investment.

2. Enabled and Connected Infrastructure

The provision of goods and services, connecting people and business, and addressing the perception of remoteness and isolation in regional areas are all dependent on having fully functional and connected infrastructure. Roads, rail, air infrastructure, energy and telecommunications infrastructure are critical for the future growth and the development of the region. The role of Namoi Unlimited is to understand the capacity and capability of existing infrastructure and networks, and then take a future focussed approach to prioritising, investing and advocating for critical and necessary infrastructure, necessary to enabling and supporting growth.

Enabling JO Functions	Statements of Priority	Support for the Approach						Performance Measures
Planning and Prioritisation	2.1	Audit, analyse, identify and prioritise the inhibitors to industry, growth, and or safety, to identify and address infrastructure connectivity on the network of roads to rail, air, energy and telecommunications.	✓ ²⁹	✓ ³⁰	✓ ³¹	✓ ³⁵	✓ ³⁶	
	2.2	Identify opportunities for infrastructure investment at points that enable access to new, emerging and significant markets.			✓ ³²	✓ ³⁷	✓ ⁴¹	
	2.3	Support Councils to develop applications and proposals for infrastructure investment.			✓ ³³	✓ ³⁸	✓ ⁴²	
					✓ ³⁴	✓ ³⁹	✓ ⁴³	
						✓ ⁴⁰	✓ ⁴⁴	
Inter-governmental Collaboration	2.4	Collaborate on the pursuit of regional infrastructure priorities.		✓ ⁴⁶	✓ ⁴⁹			Integrated transport planning and systems to facilitate the movement of people, freight and commodities.
	2.5	Support Councils to utilise collective and specialist skills and experience to generate inter-governmental approaches to the management and coordination of road, rail and air infrastructure, energy and telecommunications.	✓ ⁴⁵	✓ ⁴⁷	✓ ⁵⁰	✓ ⁵¹	✓ ⁵²	
Positions of Advocacy and Leadership		Improved access for freight and commodities into markets via roads, connections to rail, Inland Rail and international air freight capability for producers. Investment in energy infrastructure and support for public transport services. Communities, people and skills can be advanced by strong, high speed and accessible telecommunications to support business and lifestyle.	✓ ⁵³	-	✓ ⁵⁴	✓ ⁵⁵	✓ ⁵⁶	

²⁹ A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW. Infrastructure Freight Networks that will increase the competitiveness of key regional sectors

³⁰ NSW Premiers' Priorities: Reducing road fatalities - Reduce road fatalities by at least 30 per cent from 2011 levels by 2021

³¹ New England North West Regional Plan: Direction 3 - Grow NENW as the renewable energy hub of NSW - Action 5.2

³² New England North West Regional Plan: Direction 13 - Expand emerging industries through freight and logistics connectivity - 2017-2019 Action 13.4

³³ New England North West Regional Plan: Direction 14 - Enhance transport and infrastructure networks - 2017-2019 Action 14.3

³⁴ New England North West Regional Plan: Direction 14 - Enhance transport and infrastructure networks - 2017-2019 Action 14.4

³⁵ DEAFI Lower North West RED Strategy 1: Deliver key infrastructure as a foundation for growth. Key initiatives within this Strategy are: Improve telecommunications infrastructure and services to enhance connectivity; enable adoption of new technologies; improve business systems and provide access to information, services, markets, and education and training etc., Upgrade key roads to improve inter and intra-region connectivity and enable use of high productivity vehicles for freight transport; Improve and leverage rail and support assets - for both passengers and freight services; Upgrade and enhance utility services (power, water, sewerage) to meet current needs and provide the capacity for growth.

³⁶ DEAFI Lower North West REDS Strategy 3: Support and leverage key sectors. The key initiatives in this Strategy are to: Facilitate growth in the transport and logistics sector, including aviation

³⁷ DEAFI Southern New England High Country REDS - 2018-2022 Strategy 1: Strengthen the region's connectivity. The key initiatives within this strategy are: Investing in key road infrastructure to improve productivity and facilitate further growth in agriculture and tourism; Upgrading the telecommunication network, addressing the mobile black-spots, thereby enabling productivity enhancements in livestock and other agricultural industries; Improvements in the network will also improve liveability and facilitate the development of further value-added businesses throughout the region

³⁸ DEAFI Southern New England High Country REDS - 2018-2022 Strategy 2: Secure the inputs for growth. Key initiatives are: Invest in infrastructure that will support and facilitate growth, including water, power and commercial and industrial land

³⁹ DEAFI Upper North West REDS 2018-2022 - Full Report Strategy A: Improve freight efficiency. Key initiatives within this Strategy are: Upgrade key road to improve inter and intra-region connectivity; provide all-weather access and enable use of high mass limit/ high productivity vehicles (HML HPPV) for freight transport; Upgrade and extend the freight rail network. Ensure full and efficient connectivity to the proposed Inland Rail line.

⁴⁰ DEAFI Upper North West REDS 2018-2022 - Full Report Strategy B: Encourage investment, increased productivity and value adding. Key initiatives within this Strategy are: Significantly improve telecommunications infrastructure and services within the Region to enhance connectivity; enable the adoption of new technologies and systems and improve access to information, education, services and markets. Invest in the utility infrastructure needed to enable and support growth, including water, power and commercial and industrial land

⁴¹ Major Regional Centres: Build Local Government capacity to provide infrastructure and services to smaller communities.

⁴² Communities: Implement systems to gather and share data between Local Governments to build the case for investment.

⁴³ Communities: Invest in appropriate infrastructure to improve regional services; telecommunications, water, renewable energy, health and transport.

⁴⁴ Agricultural Production: Develop regional markets and distribution systems to support locally grown products.

⁴⁵ A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW. Infrastructure 1: Improved travel between regional centres and from cities and international gateway; 2: Freight Networks that will increase the competitiveness of key regional sectors; 3: Affordable, reliable and fast internet to support people and business 4: Reliable accessible water and energy

⁴⁶ Regional Priority: Regional Development and Growth in Employment Key Initiative Planned: Deliver key business enabling and community amenity infrastructure for the region under the Regional Development Framework and associated Regional Growth Funds by providing whole of government support (including data, expertise and time) to enable organisations to submit sound expressions of interest and prepare robust business cases.

⁴⁷ Regional Priority: Regional Development and Growth in Employment Key Initiative Planned: Develop a suite of resources to guide councils/industry on how to initiate renewable energy projects in their local area including potential financing models, feasibility assessment tools, community education resources, and case studies.

⁴⁸ Delivering Infrastructure: Key metropolitan, regional and local infrastructure projects to be delivered on time and on budget

⁴⁹ New England North West Regional Plan: Direction 3 Grow NENW as the renewable energy hub of NSW - 2017-2019 Action 5.2

⁵⁰ New England North West Regional Plan: Direction 3 Grow NENW as the renewable energy hub of NSW - 2017-2019 Action 16.3

⁵¹ DEAFI Lower North West REDS Strategy 2: Provide a positive, supportive environment to facilitate business growth and investment. Key initiatives in this Strategy include: Build strong partnerships and strategic alliances.

⁵² Major Regional Centres: Build Local Government capacity to provide infrastructure and services to smaller communities.

⁵³ A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW. Infrastructure 1: Improved travel between regional centres and from cities and international gateway; 2: Freight Networks that will increase the competitiveness of key regional sectors; 3: Affordable, reliable and fast internet to support people and business 4: Reliable accessible water and energy

⁵⁴ New England North West Regional Plan: Direction 13 - Facilitate air and public transport infrastructure. 2017-2019 Action 13.3

⁵⁵ DEAFI Upper North West REDS 2018-2022 - Full Report Strategy A: Improve freight efficiency. Key initiatives within this Strategy are: Ensure full and efficient connectivity to the proposed Inland Rail line.

⁵⁶ Invest in appropriate infrastructure to improve regional services; telecommunications, water, renewable energy, health and transport.

3. Engaged People seeking Skills for the Future	People and their skills are fundamental to the growth of our economies, our communities and lifestyle. Local Government is one of the largest employers in the Namoi region and has an important role to play in the attraction of people to the region, and the development of skills to meet the future demands of the regions workforce. The members of Namoi Unlimited will identify, promote and engage in opportunities to address skill shortages within both Councils and across communities.					Performance Measures				
	Enabling JO Functions		Statements of Priority			Support for the Approach				
						NSW Government A 20-year Economic Vision for Regional NSW				
						NSW Premiers Priorities or Regional Priorities by the RLE				
Planning and Prioritisation	3.1	Identify and address, operational and service opportunities to build scale and capacity of Councils and Namoi Unlimited.	✓ ⁵⁷	✓ ⁵⁸	-	✓ ⁵⁹	✓ ⁶⁰	✓ ⁶³	Enhanced service provision for communities from Councils.	
	3.2	Collaborate to address skill shortages, support talent and specialist skills sharing across Councils.				✓ ⁶¹	✓ ⁶²	✓ ⁶⁴		
Inter-governmental Collaboration	3.3	Identify opportunities to grow education, research and business development programs and institutions.	✓ ⁶⁶	✓ ⁶⁷	✓ ⁶⁸	✓ ⁶⁹		✓ ⁷¹	Creation of employment and training opportunities with Local Government.	
	3.4	Collaborate to address local and regional skill shortages, support talent and specialist skills sharing in the region.				✓ ⁷⁰				
Positions of Advocacy and Leadership	Local Government is a substantial regional employer, committed to building skills and expertise across the region. Communities, people and skills can be advanced by strong, high speed and accessible telecommunications to support business and lifestyle. Communities in the region support the provision of police, emergency services, doctors, health specialists and other health professionals to address the needs of communities.		✓ ⁷²	✓ ⁷³	-	✓ ⁷⁴	✓ ⁷⁵	✓ ⁷⁷	Local Government recognised as an Employer of Choice.	
						✓ ⁷⁶				

⁵⁷ A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW Skills 5. A skilled labour force for current and future needs of the region

⁵⁸ NSW Premiers' Priorities: Boosting apprenticeships - Increase the proportion of people completing apprenticeships and traineeships to 65% by 2019

⁵⁹ Lower North West REDS Strategy 2. Provide a positive, supportive environment to facilitate business growth and investment. Key initiatives in this Strategy include: Grow and develop the Region's workforce to address labour and skill shortages.

⁶⁰ Southern New England High Country - Regional Economic Development Strategy - 2018-2022 Strategy 2. Secure the inputs for growth. Key initiatives are: Build the size and capacity of the local workforce, through training and skills development and the attraction of skilled workers

⁶¹ Southern New England High Country - Regional Economic Development Strategy - 2018-2022 Strategy 5. Effective marketing and promotion. It includes: Marketing to attract new residents, businesses and investment

⁶² Upper North West REDS 2018-2022 - Full Report Strategy, Strategy C: Invest in people, skills, community and lifestyle. Key initiatives within this Strategy are: Focus on building the size and capacity of the regional workforce. Enhance the appeal and liveability of the Region through ongoing improvements to the presentation of the towns and villages and improving and expand the Region's sporting, recreational and cultural facilities. Position and promote the Region as an attractive location to live, work and visit.

⁶³ Communities: implement systems to gather and share data between Local Governments to build the case for investment

⁶⁴ Human Services: Link employment programs to training qualifications to increase employment opportunities.

⁶⁵ Youth: Develop integrated learning programs through partnerships and synergy among educational institutions.

⁶⁶ A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW Skills 5. A skilled labour force for current and future needs of the region

⁶⁷ Regional Priority: Harnessing the region's leadership capacity. Key Initiative Planned: Expand the HNEH Talent Management program across RLE partner organisations, starting with a trial with FACS and Namoi JO.

⁶⁸ New England and North West Regional Plan: Direction Building strong economic centres, 2017-2019 Action 7.6

⁶⁹ Lower North West REDS Strategy 2. Provide a positive, supportive environment to facilitate business growth and investment. Key initiatives in this Strategy include: Build strong partnerships and strategic alliances.

⁷⁰ Upper North West REDS 2018-2022 - Full Report Strategy, Strategy C: Invest in people, skills, community and lifestyle. Key initiatives within this Strategy are: Focus on building the size and capacity of the regional workforce. Position and promote the Region as an attractive location to live, work and visit.

⁷¹ Human Services: Link employment programs to training qualifications to increase employment opportunities.

⁷² A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW Skills 5. A skilled labour force for current and future needs of the region

⁷³ NSW Premiers' Priorities: Creating jobs 150,000 new jobs by 2019

⁷⁴ Upper North West REDS 2018-2022 - Full Report Strategy B: Encourage investment, increased productivity and value adding. Key initiatives within this Strategy are: Significantly improve telecommunications infrastructure and services within the Region to enhance connectivity, enable the adoption of new technologies and systems and improve access to information, education, services and markets.

⁷⁵ Southern New England High Country - Regional Economic Development Strategy - 2018-2022 Strategy 2. Secure the inputs for growth. Key initiatives are: Build the size and capacity of the local workforce, through training and skills development and the attraction of skilled workers

⁷⁶ Upper North West REDS 2018-2022 - Full Report Strategy, Strategy C: Invest in people, skills, community and lifestyle. Key initiatives within this Strategy are: Focus on building the size and capacity of the regional workforce. Enhance the appeal and liveability of the Region through ongoing improvements to the presentation of the towns and villages and improving and expand the Region's sporting, recreational and cultural facilities. Position and promote the Region as an attractive location to live, work and visit.

⁷⁷ Develop a Strong Regional Voice, supported by innovative governance to identify regional priorities, opportunities and investment.

Appendix

A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW

<https://static.nsw.gov.au/nsw-gov-au/nsw-gov-au/Regional-vision/1532654855/20-Year-Vision-for-RNSW-accessible.pdf>

NSW Premiers' Priorities

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/premiers-priorities/>

NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet – Regional Coordination

New England and North West Statement of Intent

New England North West Regional Plan 2036 (NSW Government)

<http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Regional-Plans/New-England-North-West/Plan>

Future Transport 2056

NSW Draft Freight and Ports Plan

<https://future.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/media/documents/2018/Draft-NSW-Freight-and-Ports-Plan.pdf>

Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure

https://future.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/media/documents/2018/Regional_NSW_Services_and_Infrastructure_Plan_1.pdf

NSW Roads Safety Plan

<http://www.towardszero.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/road-safety-plan.pdf>

Regional Economic Development Strategies (NSW Government and Local Government)

The NSW Government with the Centre for Economic and Regional Development worked with Local Councils across Regional NSW to develop *Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS)*.

These DRAFT REDS documents were collated from Council Community Strategic Plans.

- **Lower North West Regional Economic Development Strategy – 2018 to 2021** (Tamworth Regional Council, Gunnedah Shire Council and Liverpool Plains Shire Council)
- **Southern New England High Country Regional Economic Development Strategy – 2018 to 2021** (Walcha Council)
- **Upper North West Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018–2022** (Gwydir Shire Council)

New England North West Enabling Regional Adaptation

<http://climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/Adapting-to-climate-change/Regional-vulnerability-and-assessment/New-England-North-West>

Community Strategic Plans (Local Government)

A Community Strategic Plan represents the highest level of strategic planning undertaken by a local council in NSW. The Community Strategic Plan should identify the main priorities and aspirations of the community, providing a clear set of strategies to achieve this vision of the future.



NAMOI UNLIMITED

Premier agricultural region in Australia

Namoi Unlimited is a Joint Organisation of Councils in NSW.

ABN: 35 540 425 772

Executive Officer

PO Box 555

TAMWORTH NSW 2340

T: 02 6767 5267

E: info@namoiunlimited.nsw.gov.au

GUNNEDAH SHIRE COUNCIL | GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL | LIVERPOOL PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL
TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL | WALCHA COUNCIL



NAMOI UNLIMITED

Premier agricultural region in Australia

BUSINESS PLAN

2019 - 2020

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GUNNEDAH SHIRE COUNCIL | GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL | LIVERPOOL PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL
TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL | WALCHA COUNCIL

Executive Summary

In 2015 the members of the pilot Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils engaged the *Regional Australia Institute* to undertake a research project to identify those things that had, or would have, the most profound impact on our region into the future.

The subsequent report entitled *Shaping the Future of the Namoi* identified six Future Factors that if collectively harnessed in a positive way would yield an expansion of the Namoi regional economy of an estimated additional \$900million by 2030.

The six future factors identified in this report were:

- National and global cycles in commodity markets;
- Maximising innovation in agricultural production;
- Seeking international investment, on the right terms;
- Engaging the Namoi in major overseas markets;
- Urbanisation; and
- Leveraging regional brand marketing to attract people to live and work in the Namoi.

Members acknowledge that there is potentially little Local Government can do to influence cycles in commodity markets.

Urbanisation is a global phenomenon, reflecting a change in human values, opportunities and aspirations.

While communities can become more resilient to national and international commodity cycles, and urbanisation - the efforts of Local Government can only have an indirect influence on these two factors.

Members agree that; innovation in agriculture, securing investment, engaging in markets, and promotion with a trusted and energised regional brand are areas where Local Government can be proactive and have a positive and regional impact.

Our Strategic Regional Priorities

In developing this Strategic Regional Plan and summarising this into a Statement of Strategic Directions - members will have a clear focus for the next three years on their role, and the collaborate functions that Local Government will undertake.

Namoi Unlimited will focus on three Strategic Regional Priorities. These three priorities are interlinked.

The region needs to have the sustenance of water, the infrastructure, and the people to continue to grow and develop. The three strategic regional priorities are summarised below:

1. Water for the Future

Agriculture, agricultural products, commodities and services underpin the economies of the Namoi region.

The dynamics of global markets, climate change and changing consumer demand, mean our core industry must evolve and adapt.

The availability, security and access to water underpin every facet of agriculture.

Water is also critical to the other two priorities identified in this Strategic Regional Plan.

Water is the critical enabler for industry, business, communities, lifestyle, tourism and the environment. Our action will be targeted towards growth and development.

2. Enabled and Connected Infrastructure

The provision of goods and services, connecting people and business, and addressing the perception of remoteness and isolation in regional areas are all dependent on having fully functional and connected infrastructure.

Roads, rail, air infrastructure, energy and telecommunications infrastructure are

critical for the future growth and the development of the region.

The role of Namoi Unlimited is to understand the capacity and capability of existing infrastructure and networks, and then take a future focussed approach to prioritising, investing and advocating for critical and necessary infrastructure, necessary to enabling and supporting growth.

3. Engaged People seeking Skills for the Future

People and their skills are fundamental to the growth of our economies, our communities and lifestyle.

Local Government is one of the largest employers in the Namoi region and has an important role to play in the attraction of people to the region, and the development of skills to meet the future demands of the regions workforce.

The members of Namoi Unlimited will identify, promote and engage in opportunities to address skill shortages within both Councils and across communities.

Our Organisation

The Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils trading as Namoi Unlimited was established in mid 2015 as part of the NSW Government's pilot program to form new entities called Joint Organisations to facilitate collaboration among Councils.

Namoi Unlimited represents five Local Government Areas located in the New England North West of NSW:

- Gunnedah Shire Council
- Gwydir Shire Council
- Liverpool Plains Shire Council
- Tamworth Regional Council
- Walcha Council

The commitment and collaboration of members is framed in the *NSW Local Government Act*.

The principles of operating the organisation are published in *The Charter*.

This Strategic Plan 2018-2021 will inform the annual Business Plan and budget.

Our Purpose

The NSW Government established Joint Organisations of Councils in 2017 by amendment to the *NSW Local Government Act*.

The role of Namoi Unlimited is to engage and collaborate with the NSW Government, working together to build stronger councils and communities.

Our Vision

A productive, smart and liveable region.

A region recognised for its strong leadership, innovation, and excellence in regional collaboration.

Our Principal functions

The core function of Joint Organisations of Councils is collaboration - collaboration between Councils, the NSW Government and the Australian Government.

Joint Organisations are also enabled to establish collaborative arrangements with key agencies and organisations with similar functions, values and activities.

The principal functions of Namoi Unlimited will be to:

- A. Establish strategic regional priorities for the joint organisation area and develop strategies and plans for delivering these priorities.
- B. Provide regional leadership for the joint organisation area and to be an advocate for strategic regional priorities.

- C. Identify and take up opportunities for intergovernmental collaboration on matters relating to the joint organisation area.

Our Values and Guiding Principles

The values of Namoi Unlimited are:

- Member Councils will actively collaborate to lead and empower each other.
- Member Councils will engage actively, honestly and ethically.
- Member Councils will be transparent and accountable to the communities they represent.

Stakeholders and Partners

Engagement and collaboration with key stakeholders is critical to the task ahead of Namoi Unlimited.

Member Councils are; Walcha Council, Tamworth Regional Council, Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Gunnedah Shire Council and Gwydir Shire Council.

Acknowledging the partnership with the NSW Government on Joint Organisations of Councils, the NSW Government is legislated as a Member of the organisation. Representation is undertaken by the Regional Director of the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet or their delegate.

Member Councils make up the Board of directors; the Board includes the Mayors of each of the member Councils.

Partners and Relationships

Research and education are important components of the value-add and supply chains in the economy. As required research and education partners from the region and experts will be consulted and engaged in activities.

Key collaborative groups for the Joint Organisation include; the Regional Leadership Executive and the various sub-committees and task groups initiated by the NSW Government. This reflects the inter-governmental and collaboration role of Joint Organisations of Councils.

The Board will maintain strong relationships with members of the NSW and Australian Parliaments.

As required the Joint Organisation will seek support and guidance from the NSW Government, the Australian Government and their representatives for specific tasks and activities associated with the strategic regional priorities.

How to use this plan

The Strategic Regional Plan and the priorities identified within that plan provide the framework for the annual business plan for the period.

Importantly, these documents provide the basis of activity and investment for Councils involved in Namoi Unlimited Namoi. For the community this document holds the organisation to account for its activity and its successes.

A copy of the Namoi Unlimited Strategic Regional Plan is available at www.namoiunlimited.nsw.gov.au.

BUSINESS ACTIVITY PLAN (2019 - 2020)

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STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Water for the Future		Output <i>What we will do?</i>	Outcomes <i>What we will achieve by doing the doing?</i>	Budget
Planning and Prioritisation	1.1	Audit, analyse, identify and prioritise the key constraints, opportunities and innovations to secure the supply of water for communities, businesses and Local Government.	Affirm and allocate structures to manage the actions of the five member Councils to facilitate the economic, social and environmental issues and opportunities from the <i>Water for the Future Strategy</i> and the <i>Shaping the Future of the Namoi Study</i> . Identify and collate evidence to analyse the supply of water for future opportunities, demand, supply and markets for, agricultural products, services, commodities, supply chains and value propositions. Align desires for demand, growth and investment to opportunities, investment potential, community expectations and Government positions identified in work collated for a <i>Special Activation Precinct</i> , and prioritise proposals for investment based on demand and regional growth.	-
	1.2	Audit, analyse, identify and prioritise opportunities and partnerships for agriculture, agricultural products, commodities, supply and value chains, as well as services.	Targeted and strategic advice to hone the pursuit of opportunities for regional growth. Position Councils with the evidence to build investment in infrastructure including water utilities. Identification and pursuit of endowments and drivers for growth in the Business Case for a Special Activation Precinct <i>Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS)</i> . Building stronger and more resilient communities.	-
	1.3	Identify the potential impacts of change on agriculture.	A targeted and accelerated approach to growing trade and investment attraction in the region.	-
	1.4	Identify and facilitate opportunities to address change, by diversifying, opening and establishing and new markets for producers.	Identification and facilitation of key new market opportunities for regional producers. Contribute to and be recognised for, developing better ways for Government to engage and invest in regional Australia. Development of, and support for a network of trade, investment and export businesses in the region.	-
Inter-governmental Collaboration	1.5	Facilitate opportunities with government and partners for investment into the provision of water, infrastructure and skills.		
	1.6	Communicate the value of water across the region.	Pursuit of best practice planning and operations across local water operations.	\$27,040
	1.7	Identify opportunities for collaboration and best practice across water operations.	Pursuit of best practice planning and operations across local water operations and road maintenance.	\$285,000
Positions of Advocacy and Leadership	The investment in, security of, and access to water is an enabler (not a risk) for local and regional development and growth. Water needs to be a secure foundation and the enabler for business and communities to innovate and regional economies to thrive.		Undertake activities of advocacy and leadership identified in the Leadership and Advocacy Register, specifically items: 1. Water for the Future 2. Agriculture, Agribusiness and Innovation 3. Intensive Agriculture Strategy 4. Foreign Ownership of Prime Agricultural Land 5. Trade and Investment	-

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Enabling and Connected Infrastructure			Output	Outcomes	Budget
			What we will do?	What we will achieve by doing the doing?	
Planning and Prioritisation	2.1	Audit, analyse, identify and prioritise the inhibitors to industry, growth, and or safety, to identify and address infrastructure connectivity on the network of roads to rail, air, energy and telecommunications.	Facilitate and engage to establish, identify and prioritise the infrastructure inhibitors to industry and growth, and or safety. Work with Councils and the <i>Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS)</i> to substantiate and support priorities for infrastructure investment.	Identified process to highlight, substantiate and promote enabling infrastructure for the region.	-
	2.2	Identify opportunities for infrastructure investment at points that enable access to new, emerging and significant markets.	Build a Business Case to provide Councils with a repository and skills to provide evidence and research to build business cases for investment. Develop a mechanism for the engagement of border Local Government Authorities to aggregate and consolidate data and further develop regional priorities and support for economic development initiatives that drive growth.	Develop relationships, efficiencies and opportunities to work together.	-
	2.3	Support Councils to develop applications and proposals for infrastructure investment.	Respond to and participate in pilot programs to identify inhibitors and enablers across the network of roads, rail, air, energy and telecommunications infrastructure and policy.	Improved information and service delivery.	-
Collaboration and Inter-governmental Collaboration	2.4	Collaborate on the pursuit of regional infrastructure priorities.	Establish a Steering Committee of Councils with access to industry representation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Exchange information, collaborate and to substantiate the evidence for investing in road infrastructure.▪ Identify opportunities for infrastructure investment at points that enable productivity, safety and access to new, emerging and significant markets.	Develop the rationale and the forum for collaborating across regions on infrastructure.	-
	2.5	Support Councils to utilise collective and specialist skills and experience to generate inter-governmental approaches to the management and coordination of road, rail and air infrastructure, energy and telecommunications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Respond to and participate in pilot programs to identify inhibitors and enablers across the network of roads, rail, air, energy and telecommunications infrastructure, and policy such as the RMCC pilot program with the RMS.	Participate and facilitate opportunities to pursue the connectivity of infrastructure within the Namoi region, within NSW and across the Eastern seaboard.	-
			Utilise individual and collective, skills and experience to generate inter-governmental approaches to the management and coordination of road, rail and air infrastructure, energy and telecommunications. Develop the evidence based position for industries expected use of containerised freight from the region.	Contribute to and be recognised for, developing better ways for Government to engage and invest.	-
Positions of Advocacy and Leadership		Improved access for freight and commodities into markets via roads, connections to rail, Inland Rail and international air freight capability for producers. Investment in energy infrastructure and support for public transport services. Communities, people and skills can be advanced by strong, high speed and accessible telecommunications to support business and lifestyle.	Undertake activities of advocacy and leadership identified in the Leadership and Advocacy Register, specifically items: 6. Mining and Resource Development and Extractive Industries 7. Connected and Enabled Freight and Transport Infrastructure 8. Energy Infrastructure	Coordinate and facilitate access opportunities for member Councils to advocate for enabled and connected Infrastructure priorities. Creditable and evidence based regional advocacy and information that informs Government policy.	-

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Engaged People seeking Skills for the Future			
	Output <i>What we will do?</i>	Outcomes <i>What we will achieve by doing the doing?</i>	Budget
Planning and Prioritisation	3.1 Identify and address, operational and service opportunities to build scale and capacity of Councils and Namo Unlimited.	Audit workforce development plans to identify and address collectively operational opportunities or strategic service opportunities to build scale and capacity of member Councils and the Joint Organisation. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Establish a working group to engage with Councils to understand what the workforce needs are across Local Government to identify collective trends, issues and opportunities.▪ Facilitate opportunities between member Councils to share, discuss and develop capacity and capability solutions.▪ Identify the levers and opportunities to support and grow skills and talent within our region and our environments.▪ Conduct a communications campaign to promote the opportunities and careers in Local Government.	-
	3.2 Collaborate to address skill shortages, support talent and specialist skills sharing across Councils.	Capitalise on strategic and operational opportunities to increase services within Councils. Nurture skills and talent in Local Government sharing experience and expertise.	-
Collaboration and Inter-governmental Collaboration	3.3 Identify opportunities to grow education, research and business development programs and institutions.	Promote employment opportunities within Local Government. Build stronger communities and build service delivery.	-
	3.4 Collaborate to address local and regional skill shortages, support talent and specialist skills sharing in the region.	Increase the scale and capacity of Member Councils. Increase in the opportunities for learning, apprenticeships, traineeships and careers with Local Government.	-
Strong Leadership and Advocacy	Local Government is a substantial regional employer, committed to building skills and expertise across the region.		\$152,000
	Communities, people and skills can be advanced by strong, high speed and accessible telecommunications to support business and lifestyle. Communities in the region support the provision of police, emergency services, doctors, health specialists and other health professionals to address the needs of communities.	Develop opportunities for strong, connected, high speed and accessible telecommunications to support local government. Creditable and evidence based regional advocacy and information that informs Government policy.	-

Communications and Engagement Plan

Our Purpose

The NSW Government established Joint Organisations of Councils in 2017 by amendment to the *NSW Local Government Act*.

The core function of Joint Organisations of Councils is collaboration - collaboration between Councils, the NSW Government and the Australian Government.

Joint Organisations are also enabled to establish collaborative arrangements with key agencies and organisations with similar functions, values and activities.

The principal functions of Namoi Unlimited will be to:

- A. Establish strategic regional priorities for the joint organisation area and develop strategies and plans for delivering these priorities.
- B. Provide regional leadership for the joint organisation area and to be an advocate for strategic regional priorities.
- C. Identify and take up opportunities for intergovernmental collaboration on matters relating to the joint organisation area.

Audiences and Messaging

1. Members

Members and non-voting members are described in this document. This group require:

- Clarification and confidence in the role of Namoi Unlimited.
- Clarification of the activity to be conducted by Namoi Unlimited.
- Assistance to distribute and discuss activity in the community.
- Coordination and collaboration.
- Demonstrated value for their financial contribution to the activity.

2. State Agencies

A key role of Namoi Unlimited is to facilitate and create opportunities for inter-governmental collaboration. A key partner in the development of the Joint Organisation initiative is the NSW Government.

Engagement, co-design and support from specific state agencies for funding, policy advice and collaboration will be identified and pursued in the Business Plan.

3. Communities

The perspectives and attitudes of communities to related activity of Namoi Unlimited are contained in the Community Strategic Plans of members. Community Strategic Plans were used to form the basis of the *Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS)*.

The community requires information about the role and activity of Namoi Unlimited and demonstrated activity that will build strong communities and improve service delivery.

4. Special Interest and Advocacy Groups

The Joint Organisation is able to develop partnerships with external individuals and organisations in pursuit of its activities aligned to the Strategic Regional Priorities and the Business Plan. A number of projects and activities in this business plan will require such input.

Communications and Engagement Tools

Communications and Engagement Tools	Examples
Outreach Materials	Factsheets, briefings and presentations
Key Messaging	Communique and media releases
Face to Face Meetings and Consultation	Board meetings, consultation and project activities Partner memberships, working groups and industry consultation
Website	Publishing of information for transparency or feedback
Social Media	Publishing of information for transparency or feedback

Communications Goals and Objectives

Goals	Objectives	Key Activity	
Increase awareness and understanding	Build member, stakeholder and public understanding about the role, vision and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board meetings held across the region Councillors of member Councils invited to attend Board meetings in communities where they are held Familiarisation tours of member Council communities Public forums on the business paper of Board meetings The Executive Officer will operate from member Council facilities monthly 	Monthly
Conduct campaign activity	To build awareness of project activity	Communications and engagement will be detailed and resourced in project briefs for each of the Strategic Regional Priorities	Ongoing
Increase Member and stakeholder participation	Provide members, stakeholders and the public with timely and meaningful opportunities to work with Namoi Unlimited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media releases distributed and posted on the website and social media Coordination of events and activities associated with project activity Website www.namoiunlimited.nsw.gov.au LinkedIn 	Ongoing
	Identify and address barriers to engagement	Steering Committees and Working Groups meetings will report and include regular updates to the JOLT and Board on barriers and impediments	Ongoing
	Conduct campaigns to communicate activity and opportunities.	Communications and engagement will be detailed and resourced in project briefs for each of the Strategic Regional Priorities	Ongoing
Advocacy and leadership		Advocacy and leadership activities will be conducted annual with State and Federal MPs and departmental representatives	Ongoing
	Face to face and briefings	The above activity where possible will include consultation and briefings. This would also include participation in groups external to the Joint Organisation	Ongoing

2019 - 2020 Budget

Income	Individual Fee (inc GST)	Total Estimate 2019-2020
Membership Fees	\$33,000.00	\$165,000
▪ Namoi Water Alliance	\$5,948.80	\$29,744
Non-Voting Membership Fees	\$16,500.00	-
Retained Earnings		550
Grants – Office of Local Government	\$56,030	\$56,030
Grants		
▪ Contaminated Lands Project Officer ¹ (EPA)	\$152,000	\$152,000
▪ Climate Change and Gravel Roads across the Namoi region (OEH and LGNSW)	\$313,500	\$313,500
Interest	\$500.00	\$500
	TOTAL INCOME	\$717,324
Expenses		Total Estimate 2019-2020
Administration and Governance		\$9,040
Employees and Costs		\$232,770
Travel and Accommodation		\$10,000
Investment in Strategic Priorities	Strategic Regional Priority 1	\$313,500
	Strategic Priority 2	-
	Strategic Regional Priority 3	\$152,000
	NET OPERATING ESTIMATE	\$717,310
	ESTIMATED SURPLUS	14

¹ Income nominated to be GST FREE by the NSW Government

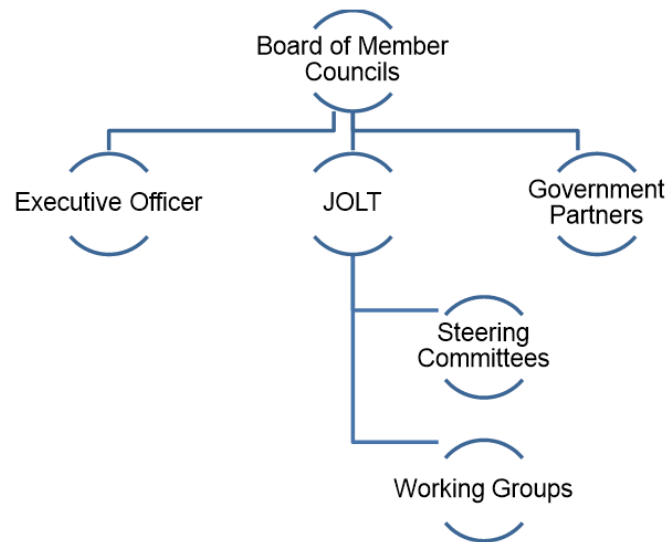
OFFICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHMENT FUNDS 2018-2019		
Strategic Regional Priority 1		-
Strategic Priority 2		-
Strategic Regional Priority 3		-
Employees and Costs		\$56,030
	TOTAL	\$56,030

Stakeholders

Engagement and collaboration with key stakeholders is critical to the tasks ahead of Namoi Unlimited.

Members	<p>Member stakeholders include; Walcha Council, Tamworth Regional Council, Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Gunnedah Shire Council and Gwydir Shire Council.</p> <p>The NSW Government is also a member representative; the position is allocated to the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet.</p> <p>There are no identified Non-voting members.</p> <p>Stakeholders can familiarise themselves on a project basis as a Project Participant.</p>
The Community	<p>The Board comprises of the Mayoral representatives of each of the members. Mayors are elected representatives from the community.</p> <p>Community support for activities will be by way of endorsement of this Strategic Regional Plan and its priorities.</p>
Research and education	<p>Research and education are important components of the value-add supply chain. As required research and education partners from the region and experts will be consulted and engaged in activities.</p>
NSW Government	<p>The primary point of contact with the NSW Government rests with the NSW Office of Local Government and the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet.</p> <p>Key collaborative groups for the Joint Organisation include; the Regional Leadership Executive (NSW) and various sub-committees and task groups developed by the NSW Government.</p> <p>The Board will maintain strong relationships with representatives of the NSW Parliament.</p>
Australian Government	<p>The Board will maintain strong relationships with representatives in the Australian Parliament.</p> <p>As required, the Joint Organisation will seek support and guidance from Australian Government representatives for specific tasks and activities associated with the strategic priorities.</p>
International Government	<p>Where the NSW and Australian Governments have key strategic relationships for trade and investment, international relations and partners maybe sought with the endorsement of the member Councils.</p>
Business and industry organisations	<p>Where the key strategic relationships can be identified for trade and investment, international relations and private partners, businesses and industry organisations maybe sought with the endorsement of the member Councils.</p>

Governance Framework



Roles & Responsibilities

(Committees of specialists and generalists working to enhance the Board's understanding or consideration of a topic.)					
DEFINING ROLE	BOARD	EXECUTIVE OFFICER	JOLT	STEERING COMMITTEES	WORKING GROUPS
	Mayors representing the Members	Employee	Senior representatives of the Board	Local Government and external specialists	Local Government specific task and or group
Governance	Framework of rules, relationships, systems and processes within and by which authority is exercised and controlled. Assessing internal controls, compliance and code of conduct. Accountable for transparency and corporate performance. Approvals and decision making on behalf of the organisation.	Facilitate and foster cooperation for the Joint Organisation. Research and analysis for recommendations for decisions to the Board.	Ensure members are informed of and engaged with projects and key decisions. Reviewing internal controls, compliance and code of conduct. Recommendations for decisions to the Board.	Research and analysis for recommendations for decisions to the Board.	Research and analysis for recommendations for decisions to the Board.
Delegations	Determines and execute decisions and delegations. Determine and delegate specialist or complex issues to committees.	Research and analysis for recommendations for deliberations to JOLT, working groups and Steering Committees.	Determine and delegate specialist or complex issues on operational opportunities and issues. Provides advice to the Board to assist with decision making.	Deliberations on specialist or complex issues to the Board.	Deliberations on specialist or complex issues to the JOLT.

Control	Accept the fiduciary duty of a Board to protect the assets and investment of members. Risk appetite and risk management.	Coordinate and guide delivery of the functions, budget and priorities. Risk management plan.	Deliberations on specialist or complex issues to the Board.		
			Provide advice to the EO in implementation of the risk management plan. Identification of risks to project activities and the organization.	Identification of risks to project activities and the organization.	Identification of risks to project activities and the organization.
			Consider reports from the EO and external experts and providing feedback as appropriate.	Direction provided by the Board.	Direction provided to JOLT.
Direction	Set and deliver the strategy including the vision, mission and the goals. Driving organisational performance to deliver value for members.	Implement the Communication Strategy to keep members informed.			
Management	Recruit, supervise, retain, evaluate and compensate the EO. Endorse position descriptions for the EO and office bearers.	Implement the Communication Strategy to keep members informed. Provide support, monitor, undertake analysis and research to draw accurate conclusions that inform delivery of operational activities, actions and shared service functions.	JOLT and EO will implement the strategic plan, budget and Annual Business Plan. Delegation from the Board to make determinations on operational matters, normally delegated to the General Manager of a Council.	As determined by the Board.	As determined by JOLT.

Appendix

Opportunities and Challenges for the Namoi²

The *Shaping the Future of the Namoi* report identified six levers, that if all could be fully harnessed, the RAI estimated that the economy of the Namoi could expand by an additional \$900million by 2030. The future factors that are likely to have the greatest effect on the future of the Namoi region are:

- National and global cycles in commodity markets;
- Maximising innovation in agricultural production;
- Seeking international investment, on the right terms;
- Engaging the Namoi in major overseas markets;
- Urbanisation; and
- Leveraging regional brand marketing to attract people to live and work in the Namoi.

The six levers and opportunities are:

A. Understanding National and global cycles

The region will be dependant on national and global cycles in prices for agriculture, mineral and energy commodities, climate variability and international economic developments.

Decision makers need to be prepared to experience and accept a wide range of possible futures stemming from national and global cycles, which are beyond their control.

Ensuring these factors are understood and pursuing the other five factors will be the best way the members can respond to this volatility, knowing that it can't be controlled.

B. Innovation in Agriculture production

Productivity in the agricultural sector remains crucial for the region's future.

Agricultural output per worker is increasing. As a result employment in the industry is falling but productivity is improving.

Productivity gains often accrue as a result of intensive pressure and competition for resources.

Factors like; reduced water availability, climate and direct competition for resources from the mining sector. Competition for resources from the mining sector has improved agricultural productivity.

A proportion of the potential gains in this area are likely to be realised without any intervention by leaders.

² Regional Australia Institute "Shaping the Future of the Namoi" Report, September 2015

The potential role for the group is to facilitate better collaborations between producers, R&D providers and agricultural service providers to increase their collective productivity.

C. Securing international investment on the right terms

Investment flows are fundamentally important to the viability of the economy.

Literature shows that foreign investment is associated with high flow-on benefits to communities in which the investment occurs.

The Namoi is a particularly attractive destination for foreign direct investment. Primary production in agriculture and mining has a strong track record of attracting foreign investment.

It is also important that local businesses are encouraged to learn from, adopt new ideas and practices that flow from foreign investment. This might also include education and training around business practices.

Leaders could also encourage networking between local producers to maximise the benefits.

D. Engaging the region in major overseas markets

This area is the most difficult to quantify, but the upsides can be considerable.

The changing nature of the global economy means that Australia's opportunities lie in Asia because of its geographic proximity to this growing market.

Existing State Government programs help businesses and regions tap into these markets, what I needed is for businesses to establish and maintain relationships over a long period of time. This assistance is critical.

This section is not about investment, but using the available tools to build engagement in major overseas markets.

Circulating the learnings about engaging in overseas markets is important for communicating the successes.

The best way to realise the potential of this factor is twofold.

- Securing investment on the right terms will improve the experience of regional businesses in general in directly operating in Asian markets.
- The second stage is realising the potential is to highlight successful investor relationships.

Importantly the JO should also look to manage attitudes and perceptions about the value of this effort.

E. Urbanisation

All over the world, larger communities are tending to remain stable or become ever-larger at the expense of population decline in smaller communities.

Leaders need to create their desired future for the region and encouraging migration into the region as a whole by leveraging a regional brand and marketing to encourage people to live and work in the Namoi.

F. Leveraging regional branding marketing to attract people to live and work here

The Namoi is not a typical region; this is a unique opportunity to leverage.

The region needs to develop its own pull factors to attract people into the region.

Regions often fail to capture and address outsider perceptions and this can be done by differentiation.

Brand Namoi is a known product; the range of job opportunities is the single most important determinant in generating migration to the region.

Brand should be closely aligned to job opportunities.

These levers form the foundation of the 2018-2021 Strategic Planning and Priorities.

What the *Shaping the Future of the Namoi* report has been able to provide is a shift in focus for the members of Namoi Unlimited. The focus will continue to be on the levers for change rather than addressing the consequences, and by working together as a collaboration and be recognised by Government as to adding value, will ensure the value and benefits of working regionally are realised



NAMOI UNLIMITED

Premier agricultural region in Australia

Namoi Unlimited is a Joint Organisation of Councils in NSW.

ABN: 35 540 425 772

Executive Officer

PO Box 555

TAMWORTH NSW 2340

T: 02 6767 5267

E: info@namoiunlimited.nsw.gov.au

GUNNEDAH SHIRE COUNCIL | GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL | LIVERPOOL PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL
TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL | WALCHA COUNCIL



NAMOI UNLIMITED

Premier agricultural region in Australia

Member Value Report

2019 - 2020

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GUNNEDAH SHIRE COUNCIL | GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL | LIVERPOOL PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL
TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL | WALCHA COUNCIL

FOREWARD

The conversation about the value of membership to Namoi Unlimited is underpinned by the requirement that Local Government must demonstrate that any activities - are the best and most efficient use of rate-payers funds. This report is intended to illustrate the activities of Namoi Unlimited and guide member Councils in discussing and assessing the value obtained from their investment.

The principal functions of Joint Organisations of Councils in NSW are to:

- A. Establish strategic regional priorities for the joint organisation area and develop strategies and plans for delivering these priorities.
- B. Provide regional leadership for the joint organisation area and to be an advocate for strategic regional priorities.
- C. Identify and take up opportunities for intergovernmental collaboration on matters relating to the joint organisation area.

Our vision is to be a productive, smart and liveable region. A region recognised for its strong leadership, innovation, and excellence in regional collaboration.

In this report, three measures have been identified to illustrate value.

1. The financial investment by the members and other stakeholders

In this financial year, the five member Councils invested \$179,740. The Executive Officer has attracted a further \$575,000 in funding from NSW Government.

2. Demonstrated evidence of advancing the strategic regional priorities identified

Part 2 of this report identifies the activities and actions against the Strategic Regional Priorities in the Annual Business Plan providing the member Councils with a way to make an objective assessment of progress and our activities.

3. Transactional assessment of project activity

This is a simple assessment as to whether we have been able to achieve the outputs or tasks identified in the 2019-2020 Annual Business Plan, or not.

Change is a constant dynamic in our world; however it is likely we may not see such a period of structural adjustment and change again in our lifetimes. It should be acknowledged that this financial year will go down in history as one of the most difficult, particularly for those of us that live in regional Australia.

The worst drought in the history of Australia continues across the Namoi region of Councils, noting that all five Local Government Areas are still in drought affected, with a small pocket in the Gwydir Shire Council still in intense drought and two parts of the southern ends of the Tamworth Regional Council and Liverpool Plains Shire Council in drought. Despite some rains and predictions of above average rainfall for the rest of 2020, our water storages have not yet fully recovered.

The summer of 2019-2020 will be remembered for the extreme bushfires that raced across the nation, impacting Walcha Council, Tamworth Regional Council and Gwydir Shire Council areas.

Wild weather and flooding also impacted the Liverpool Plains Shire Council.

Then in March 2020 our communities were impacted by the global pandemic of COVID-19.

We should be extremely proud that as a group of leaders we have been able to support each other through this very difficult time. We remain a strong and committed group, and an organisation navigating our way through the challenges that are ahead of us.

Our organisations are changing and shifting to the virtual world of working together both as Councils and as a Joint Organisation. Our communities are changing. Unemployment is expected to rise significantly. Businesses have been the social and economic impact of drought and now must adapt to social distancing and health requirements of this pandemic.

However, I also see opportunities.

Regional Australia has become an attractive place to work, to live and to raise a family.

There is a growing demand for home grown products and services and the 'buy from the bush' campaign has created a positive brand for regions.

Australian businesses are innovating and adapting to respond to COVID-19 with equipment for our health service, products and sanitisers.

More than ever, we need to be innovative and flexible in our local and regional leadership, committed to tackling the difficult challenges.

I acknowledge and thank the members and their Councils for their investment in the activities of Namoi Unlimited. Our work is acknowledged as innovative and collaborative.

There is a strong commitment from members to pursue our strategic regional priorities, stewardship of these priorities rests with the Executive Officer, and the work of steering committees and working groups. Specifically I acknowledge the efforts of:

- Tamworth Regional Council and Gunnedah Shire Council in their carriage of the Water for the Future priority;
- Walcha Council and Gwydir Shire Council in the Enabled and Connected Infrastructure priority; and
- Liverpool Plains Shire Council in people and skills, building scale, capacity and capability of the region and its human resources.

We should recognise that we are two years into the new Joint Organisation arrangements under the *NSW Local Government Act*, and whilst we have worked together during the pilot, and as a ROC for probably a decade, this agenda is relatively new. We could not have undertaken our ambitious agenda without the commitment and guidance of the Board, our General Managers and our Executive Officer. We recognise that as a cohesive collaboration of Local Government Authorities, we are stronger and more resourceful, and it has been a pleasure to serve as your Chair.



Cr Jamie Chaffey
Chairperson, Namoi Unlimited (Mayor, Gunnedah Shire Council)

INTRODUCTION

Our Purpose

The NSW Government established Joint Organisations of Councils in 2017 by amendment to the *NSW Local Government Act*. Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils trading as Namoi Unlimited was proclaimed in May 2018. The role of Namoi Unlimited is to engage and collaborate with the NSW Government, working together to build stronger councils and communities.

Our Vision

Is to be a; *productive, smart and liveable region. A region recognised for its strong leadership, innovation, and excellence in regional collaboration.*

Our Principal functions

The core function of Joint Organisations of Councils is collaboration - collaboration between Councils, the NSW Government and the Australian Government. Joint Organisations are enabled to establish collaborative arrangements with key agencies and organisations with similar functions, values and activities. The principal functions of Namoi Unlimited are to:

- A. Establish strategic regional priorities for the joint organisation area and develop strategies and plans for delivering these priorities.
- B. Provide regional leadership for the joint organisation area and to be an advocate for strategic regional priorities.
- C. Identify and take up opportunities for intergovernmental collaboration on matters relating to the joint organisation area.

Our Values and Guiding Principles

The values of Namoi Unlimited are:

- Member Councils will actively collaborate to lead and empower each other.
- Member Councils will engage actively, honestly and ethically.
- Member Councils will be transparent and accountable to the communities they represent.

Qualification

This report is designed to provide the member Councils of Namoi Unlimited, their Councillors, staff and stakeholders with a report that demonstrates the value of working together for a period of time. 'Value' is defined as illustrating the financial value, importance and usefulness.

This report consolidates the activity for the 2019-2020 financial year, and will form part of the Annual Performance Report and audit statements provided to the Minister for Local Government and the NSW Government at the end of 2020.

This document is intended to be a public document.

STRATEGIC REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Namoi Unlimited has three identified Strategic Regional Priorities;

- **Water for the Future**

Agriculture, agricultural products, commodities and services underpin the economies of the Namoi region. The dynamics of global markets, climate change and changing consumer demand, mean our core industry must evolve and adapt. The availability, security and access to water underpin every facet of agriculture. Water is also critical to the other two priorities identified. Our action will be targeted towards growth and development and water is the critical enabler for industry, business, communities, lifestyle, tourism and the environment.

- **Enabled and Connected Infrastructure**

The provision of goods and services, connecting people and business, and addressing the perception of remoteness and isolation in regional areas are all dependent on having fully functional and connected infrastructure. Roads, rail, air infrastructure, energy and telecommunications infrastructure are critical for the future growth and the development of the region.

The role of Namoi Unlimited is to understand the capacity and capability of existing infrastructure and networks, and then take a future focussed approach to prioritising, investing and advocating for critical and necessary infrastructure, necessary to enabling and supporting growth.

- **Engaged People seeking Skills for the Future**

People and their skills are fundamental to the growth of our economies, our communities and lifestyle. Local Government is one of the largest employers in the Namoi region and has an important role to play in the attraction of people to the region, and the development of skills to meet future workforce demands.

The members of Namoi Unlimited will identify, promote and engage in opportunities to address skill shortages within both Councils and across communities.

1. FINANCIAL INVESTMENT BY THE MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

1.1 Revenues

The revenue streams for 2019-2020 include the annual membership contribution of each Council, and grants and funding contributions to projects by stakeholders. The table below illustrates the investment of member Councils and that Namoi Unlimited attracted \$575,000 in funding from the NSW Government this financial year.

Revenue	Amount	Percentage
Member Contributions		
▪ Membership Fees	\$152,700	20.23%
▪ Namoi Water Alliance	\$27,040	3.58%
TOTAL	\$179,740	100%
Projects		
▪ Increasing Resilience to Climate Change	\$285,000	37.77%
▪ Contaminated Lands Capacity Building	\$140,000	18.54%
▪ Office of Local Government	\$150,000	19.88%
TOTAL	\$575,000	100%

1.2 Benchmarks

The second measure of financial investment by members is to benchmark revenue and expenditure against other Joint Organisations. These benchmarks are part of a report prepared by the Ministers Advisory Committee for Joint Organisations. The benchmarks for revenue and expenses¹ are provided in the table below.

Grants and program contributions achieved by Namoi Unlimited significantly exceeds the NSW benchmark.

Membership contributions for Namoi Unlimited for the 2019-2020 financial year were \$30,540 per member. Membership fees on the previous year increased by CPI in accordance with the Revenue Policy. Member contributions exceed the NSW benchmark by 3.24%.

REVENUE	Namoi Unlimited	NSW Joint Organisations
Grants & Program Contributions	67.3%	52.98%
Members Contributions	21.01%	17.77%
Investment/Other Income/Seed Funding	11.63%	17.38%
Procurement and Rebates	0.00%	4.02%
Contract Administration Management Fees	0.00%	7.26%
Interest	0.06%	0.59%
	100%	100%

¹ Revenue and expenses percentages are based on the 2019-2020 actual figures, however these figures may be amended after the 2019-2020 Annual Audit is completed.

The majority of revenue for 2019-2020 was against project expenses, project expenses are on par with the NSW benchmark.

The investment in salary and wages is 25%, which is above the NSW benchmark, however when combined with administrative expenses of NSW Joint Organisations the percentage for salaries and wages is significantly lower. This partly reflects compensation to the Executive Officer to undertake administrative responsibilities for the organisation.

The value of the media and communications resource exceeds the benchmark for NSW; however communications, the website and our social media following has been greatly enhanced by having this contracted resource available to the Joint Organisation and its members.

EXPENSES	Namoi Unlimited	NSW Joint Organisations
Project Expenses & Consultancies	70.00%	69.76%
Salary, Wages, Recruitment & Training	25.00%	22.94%
Administration & Depreciation	2.00%	7.19%
Chairpersons Fees	0.00%	0.07%
Media & Communications	3.00%	0.04%
	100%	100%

1.3 Future Financial Sustainability

The financial sustainability has been a priority for the Board, and at the end of 2019-2020 our pathway to financial sustainability has been detailed in a three year Financial Sustainability Plan.

Financial Sustainability will be defined by our ability as members to invest in the strategic regional plans and priorities identified, and to achieve them, making a difference for our communities over time.

2. DEMONSTRATED EVIDENCE OF ADVANCING THE STRATEGIC REGIONAL PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED

This section of this report describes progress toward the identified outcomes of each strategic priority identified in the Strategic Regional Plan 2018-2021 and the actions included in the Annual Business Plan.

2.1 STRATEGIC REGIONAL PRIORITY: Water for the Future Strategy²

Identified Outcomes	Activity
Targeted and strategic advice to hone the pursuit of opportunities for regional growth.	<p>The Namoi Water for the Future Strategy has aligned water resources, with land availability, growth opportunities and has been accepted as a critical piece of research for the NSW Government's regional water strategies.</p> <p>Namoi Unlimited worked with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) to develop the Namoi Economic and Spatial Supply Chain Assessment Report.</p>

² Text in italics in this section of the report is credited to MacroPlan Dimasi (2019). Namoi Economic and Spatial Supply Chain Assessment Report

Identified Outcomes	Activity
	<p><i>The main economic enabler of the region is the strong private sector investor interest in the expansion of meat processing and intensive agriculture.</i></p> <p><i>This is linked to the Namoi region's strong natural endowments which have underpinned the region's historical strength in agriculture.</i></p>
Identification and pursuit of endowments and drivers for growth in the Business Case for a Special Activation Precinct Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS).	<p>The Namoi Economic and Spatial Supply Chain Assessment Report as well as the New England North West Intensive Agriculture Gap Analysis identify the drivers and impediments for economic development.</p> <p><i>Economic enablers for the Namoi region could include that the region is strategically located in a high value fertile agricultural region with good access to regional and national freight routes (both road and rail), good access to ports and airports and its hinterland is rich in the complementary agricultural activities that can be easily leveraged to turbo-charge the Namoi economy.</i></p> <p>Although the NSW Government invested in the development of the Namoi Economic and Spatial Supply Chain Assessment Report, a Special Activation Precinct proposal was not presented to the NSW Cabinet by DPIE.</p> <p>The outcome of that report was that; <i>if the identified expansion plans are realised, the beef, lamb, poultry and grain industries will be a significant economic enabler for the Namoi region.</i></p> <p><i>The proposed expansion of these industries could generate directly, indirectly and via induced spending at local businesses around 2,700 jobs (expanding the workforce by 7%, equivalent to 1.4% per annum over a 5-year horizon).</i></p> <p>Namoi Unlimited is pursuing five identified goals from this Report;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GOAL 1 - Strategic economic planning and development GOAL 2 - Improved coordination of land use and planning GOAL 3 - Roads and transport networks GOAL 4 - Climate Change Adaptation GOAL 5 - Marketing and promotion to attract investment <p>This project is being pursued through Regions NSW, DPIE and other agencies. A project brief has been presented to the Australian Government also.</p> <p>Training for Council staff into the development of business cases for projects with NSW Treasury was postponed due to COVID.</p>
Building stronger and more resilient communities.	<p>In response to drought; Namoi Unlimited coordinated training and employment activities across all five member Council areas.</p> <p>The objectives of these events were to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To coordinate events across the Local Government Areas of Walcha Council, Tamworth Regional Council, Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Gunnedah Shire Council and Gwydir Shire Council that adds to

Identified Outcomes	Activity
	<p>existing program and support delivery by agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide access to opportunities for locals to discuss drought support and local casual employment opportunities and understand the training requirements to support obtaining casual work. To provide an opportunity for one-day training to be conducted in the five Local Government Areas to encourage people to undertake training locally. <p>The program of events were extremely successful with the identified outcomes being;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five events coordinated across each of the Local Government Areas in Nundle, Walcha, Gunnedah, Bingara and Quirindi. Opened additional links for Councils into existing program support and agencies providing the support. Although the threat of bushfires across the region impacted attendance, over 100 people attended these events to obtain support, access training in their own communities and talk to people about job opportunities. 56 people undertook training over the five days, which is significant. There was a genuine link made between compliance training and work opportunities. 32 people enquired or have enquired about employment across the region. 19 course enquiries have been made to the training providers post the event; this is additional potential people for training.
<p>Increase the scale and capacity of Member Councils.</p> <p>Pursuit of best practice planning and operations across local water operations.</p> <p>Pursuit of best practice planning and operations across local water operations and road maintenance.</p>	<p>Increasing scale and capacity is targeted to Local Water Utilities and operations in the Namoi Water Alliance, activity highlights included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of competency training program for water operators; Renewal of the tender and consultancy services for members; Completion of a Gap Analysis to identify requirements for Councils to undertake and complete Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) plans; Commencement of a new collaboration with DPIE – Water on the Namoi Regional Water Strategy; and Confirmed eligibility for funding under the Regional Town Water Strategy for member Councils. Smart Water Mark membership for the next three years. Pursuit of changes to the application of Section 60 of the Local Government Act Approval for water or sewage treatment works and applications for Tamworth Regional Council and Walcha Council. <p>Namoi Unlimited was successful in a funding application to the NSW <i>Increasing Resilience to Climate Change Program</i> and received \$285,000</p>

Identified Outcomes	Activity
	<p>to investigate the use of recycled water in Australia and on gravel roads, conduct a community survey about the expectations of use into the future and conduct a pilot with two of the member Councils in the use of recycled water on gravel roads.</p> <p>Research demonstrates that there are opportunities in NSW to increase the use of recycled water where it is safe to do so.</p>
Increase in the opportunities for learning, apprenticeships, traineeships and careers with Local Government.	<p>There is a skill shortage in water operations emerging, both in staff and trainers.</p> <p>Members have engaged to collaborate on upskilling staff to a competency level of Certificate III.</p> <p>Prior to COVID, the group was expected to engage with their training provider to discuss (1) ongoing training requirements, (2) how Councils can assist with assessment, and (3) a train the trainer proposal.</p> <p>Members have also agreed to rotate meetings across the five Council areas, and include tours of facilities creating learning and collaboration opportunities.</p>
Develop opportunities for strong, connected, high speed and accessible telecommunications to support local government.	<p>Namoi Unlimited attended consultations on the NSW Government's digital connectivity strategy this year, reinforcing the findings of the national review into telecommunications.</p> <p>Namoi Unlimited requested that regions collaborate to develop a Regional Digital and Connectivity Strategy that identifies works and priorities for the long-term.</p>
A targeted and accelerated approach to growing trade and investment attraction in the region.	<p>The pursuit of the Namoi Trade and Investment Strategy slowed in 2019-2020 due to the ongoing impact of the worst drought in Australia's history, depleting livestock numbers, the availability of feed and fodder, as well as water in the region.</p>
Identification and facilitation of key new market opportunities for regional producers.	<p>Funding for access to new markets for regional producers and the development of a network for business is being pursued through applications currently under assessment with the Australian Government.</p>
Development of, and support for a network of trade, investment and export businesses in the region.	<p>Namoi Unlimited continued to distribute information to its regional producer's network in relations to training, networking and funding programs.</p>
Contribute to and be recognised for, developing better ways for Government to engage and invest in regional Australia.	<p>Namoi Unlimited remains a respected member of the NSW network of Joint Organisations, and is one of four Joint Organisation representatives on the Ministers Advisory Group for Financial Sustainability of Joint Organisations.</p> <p>Namoi Unlimited is in a collaborative process with DPIE – Water in the development of the 30 year for water and infrastructure in the Namoi.</p>

Identified Outcomes	Activity
Creditable and evidence based regional advocacy and information that informs Government policy.	<p>The register of positions of advocacy was finalised and distributed to member Councils. Positions of Advocacy promoted by Namoi Unlimited are provided in Appendix A.</p> <p>Member Councils have been asked to endorse the positions to further strengthen advocacy.</p>
Coordinate and facilitate access opportunities for member Councils to advocate for economic growth, business development, and business cases for water and other infrastructure development.	<p>In October 2019, member Councils undertook an advocacy event to Canberra with business and agricultural representatives from the Namoi region.</p> <p>Meetings were held with The Hon Mark Coulton MP Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government and the Assistant Trade and Investment Minister, Senior Adviser to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Treasurer, The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP, with Commonwealth Environmental Office representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Regional Australia Institute and Senior Advisers with Water and Drought Department of Agriculture.</p> <p>In addition to the advocacy to the Commonwealth Government over the impact of drought on the region, advocacy on behalf of members in the Water for the Future strategic priority occurred, specifically;</p> <p>Advocacy across Water for the Future included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regions NSW – Resources for Regions Program Review Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development NSW Legislative Assembly has tasked the Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development to inquire into and report on, the impacts of drought on regional NSW Drought – its impact and solutions for State, Commonwealth and Local Governments Water for the Future Special Activation Precinct for the Namoi region Business and Drought Section 60 of the Local Government Act Socio-economic Analysis of the Murray Darling Basin Northern Basin Commissioner – Murray Darling Basin <p>A planned advocacy trip to the NSW Parliament in May 2020, had to be postponed due to COVID.</p>

2.2 STRATEGIC REGIONAL PRIORITY: ENABLED AND CONNECTED INFRASTRUCTURE

Identified Outcomes	Activity
Identified process to highlight, substantiate and promote enabling infrastructure for the region.	<p>Namoi Unlimited developed a process to address proposed additions to the Namoi Roads Network Strategy. This adds to the development of new initiatives for the Strategy.</p> <p>\$134.2million of the identified priorities have been funded with the</p>

Identified Outcomes	Activity
	support of the Namoi Roads Network Strategy.
Develop relationships, efficiencies and opportunities to work together.	Relationships with Transport for NSW (RMS) remain the key stakeholder in roads and freight. As members of the Roads and Transport Working Group the RMS provides a strategic and collaborative view to the regional priorities.
Improved information and service delivery.	Additional relationships have been created with the safety and quality team in connection with the collaborative approach to Roads Maintenance Contracts with Councils (RMCC). The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator also participates in Steering Committee meetings as required.
Develop the rationale and the forum for collaborating across regions on infrastructure.	Collaborative approaches to the New England Joint Organisation were made to assist with the development of their Roads Strategy. Consultation on their plan and linkages into the Namoi has not yet commenced.
Participate and facilitate opportunities to pursue the connectivity of infrastructure within the Namoi region, within NSW and across the Eastern seaboard.	MacroPlan Dimasi (2019) identified specific Transport, Freight, Road Network and Public Transport priorities; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of road networks including bridge strengthening issues were identified to meet high mass limit specifications to support the use of high productivity vehicles. Funding is required to build road network capacity – bridges, road strengthening and overpasses for key transport networks. Lack of public transport to meat processors in Tamworth. Almost all personnel drive by car. Whitehaven Mines offers 16 public transport bus services a day and this works well for their employees, but other industries find it hard to compete for the higher wages and better conditions offered at the Mine. Inland Rail could be a great benefit for reducing high transport costs for the region. Access to intermodal terminal facilities would help reduce freight costs and offer opportunities for more local downstream processing. Heavy vehicle regulation an issue as American made machinery is often too big to comply with NSW road network requirements.
Contribute to and be recognised for, developing better ways for Government to engage and invest.	Namoi Unlimited commenced a second pilot with Transport for NSW (RMS) around the new contract and additional clauses identified in that contract. Areas identified for potential collaboration include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clause 3.7 Industrial Relations Management Clause 3.8 Interfaces, communication and stakeholder engagement Clause 6 Subcontracting Clause 10.8 Prequalification for Sub-Contractors Clause 12.2 Compliance and Notifications of Compliance 12.3 Clause 12.3 NSW Code and NSW Guidelines Clause 12.4 Aboriginal participation in construction

Identified Outcomes	Activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clause 12.5 Heavy Vehicle Law – Chain of Responsibility Provisions Clause 12.6 Skills Development and Training Clause 12.8 Environmental Management Clause 12.10 Quality Management and Records Clause 12.14 Building Code 2016 when specified Clause 12.15 Australian Government WH&S Accreditation Clause 17.5 Benchmarking across zones Clause 21.2 Safety and protection of persons and property Clause 21.3 Clean up work areas and premises Clause 25.2 Public and Ministerial inquiries
Coordinate and facilitate access opportunities for member Councils to advocate for enabled and connected Infrastructure priorities.	<p>Namoi Unlimited coordinated the consultations and identification of priorities under the Commonwealth Roads of Strategic Importance (ROSI) program.</p> <p>The Joint Organisation has prioritised and submitted proposals into the New England Corridor and the Toowoomba to Seymour Corridor.</p> <p>The identified priorities submitted were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Boundary Road, Gwydir Shire Council IB Bore Road, Gwydir Shire Council New England Highway Upgrades on the southern side of Tamworth, Tamworth Regional Council Intersection of the New England Highway at Willow Tree to Quirindi, Liverpool Plains Shire Council Chimney Sweep Bridge, Walcha Council Surveyors Creek Bridge, Walcha Council
Creditable and evidence based regional advocacy and information that informs Government policy.	<p>NSW Road Classification Review Committee and their Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Roads of Strategic Importance (ROSI) future priorities and linkages.</p>

2.3 STRATEGIC REGIONAL PRIORITY: ENGAGED PEOPLE AND SKILLS

Identified Outcomes	Activity
Capitalise on strategic and operational opportunities to increase services within Councils.	<p>With the completion of an audit of skill shortages across Councils last financial year, this years focus was on identifying and creating a pathway for careers into Local Government for three specific target markets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth
Promote employment opportunities within Local Government.	<p>Namoi Unlimited recognises that approximately 70% of the regions young people will not go to university after school. This presents a unique opportunity to attract young people aged 15-19 years into careers in the Local Government sector.</p>
Increase in the opportunities for learning, apprenticeships, traineeships and careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Nations people <p>As a significant regional employer a focus on the employment of First</p>

Identified Outcomes	Activity
with Local Government.	<p>Nations people from across the region is a significant opportunity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women 35 years + <p>The final target market is women aged 35 and over, supporting women to re-enter the workforce, and retrain to develop a career in Local Government.</p> <p>The overarching criterion across these target markets is to promote and support people living in the Namoi region.</p> <p>A campaign to actively promote careers in Local Government has been interrupted because of COVID-19.</p>
Nurture skills and talent in Local Government sharing experience and expertise.	<p>Working groups and steering committees are focused on sharing experience and expertise, these groups are particularly active;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Namoi Water Alliance Namoi Roads and Transport Steering Committee Contaminated Lands – planning and compliance Procurement, economic development and marketing teams for the implementation of VendorPanel
Build stronger communities and build service delivery. Increase the scale and capacity of Member Councils.	<p>The most significant investment in building stronger communities is the purchase of the extension software for VendorPanel. VendorPanel helps private and public organisations simplify procurement processes, reduce risk, maximise value.</p> <p>VendorPanel has functionality that simplifies procurement and provides the Councils with;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preferred Supplier List Management – simplifies the management of Preferred Supplier Lists to increase spend under contract and drive competition and transparency. Supplier Insurance & Accreditation Integration - VendorPanel integrates with global pre-qualification platform Avetta making it easy for buyers to review Supplier status before including them in bids or awarding work. Sourcing - simplifies the way Staff source from Supplier lists and the Marketplace, and get total control of your sourcing. Social Procurement - integrates Social Procurement/Local and Regional Economic Development into our supply chain to make a positive impact, drive economic development and support objectives. Public Tenders - streamlines management of your public tenders, with simple integrated evaluation tools, powerful reporting and one-click reporting. Contract Management Integration – where Buyers can pass details of successful suppliers and responses to a CM application, including VendorPanel Contracts, to create a draft contract. Integrated Reporting & Analytics - drives strategic value with data driven insights and total visibility of sourcing via informative and easy to read dashboards.

Identified Outcomes	Activity
	<p>Namoi Unlimited facilitated the development of policy, procedures and registers for Councils to address contaminated lands.</p> <p>Namoi Unlimited has developed a framework for the investigation of Shared Services across the region.</p> <p>Representation on the New England North West Regional Leadership Executive and sub groups;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ New England North West Drought Taskgroup▪ Northern NSW Renewables Working Group▪ New England North West Regional Economic Development Sub-Committee▪ New England North West Regional Plan 2036 <p>The development of shared services in general is extremely complex. The framework provides Councils with the detail about how investigations are to be undertaken, the development and analysis of a business case, as well as the development of any shared service.</p>
Creditable and evidence based regional advocacy and information that informs Government policy.	<p>Advocacy on the application of Section 44 Rural Fires Act, attracting an extension on the submission of expenses for Councils.</p> <p>Additional areas of advocacy were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Community and Council led recovery after drought, fire, flood and COVID▪ SENATE ENQUIRY SUBMISSION Jobs for the Future in Regional Areas▪ NSW Network of Joint Organisations▪ Capacity and support for Small Business in Regional NSW▪ Socio-economic Analysis of the Murray Darling Basin

3. TRANSACTIONAL ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT ACTIVITY

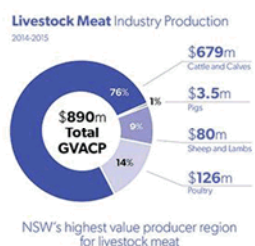
ALIGNMENT TO THE STRATEGIC REGIONAL PRIORITIES	ALIGNMENT TO KEY FUNCTIONS	ACTIVITY AND DESCRIPTION	CASH VALUE TO COUNCILS (includes annual budget expenditure and grant funding)	IN-KIND VALUE TO COUNCILS (includes annual budget expenditure and grant funding)	STAFF INVESTMENT (Based on \$200 per hour x five for the Executive Officer.)		STATUS	
					Executive Officer	Member Councils Contribution	Completed or Ongoing	Not proceeding
							Pending	
Water for the Future Enabled and Connected Infrastructure Engaged People seeking Skills for the Future	Inter-governmental Collaboration	Establishment grant for the Joint Organisation of Councils from the NSW Government through the Office of Local Government.	\$150,000	-	\$2,400	-		
		New England North West Regional Leadership Executive	-	-	\$12,000	-		
		New England North West Regional Economic Development Sub-Committee	-	-	\$6,000	-		
		New England North West Regional Plan 2036 – monitoring committee and project liaison for the Joint Organisation, completed projects include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepare a Regional Intensive Agribusiness Strategy to foster ongoing investment, specify guidelines for intensive agriculture and food processing and map suitable future precincts for these uses.Map important agricultural land and develop guidelines to support the implementation of the important agricultural land mapping through local plans.Deliver an annual New England North West Housing and Land MonitorPrepare guidelines for local housing strategies that will provide guidance on planning for local affordable housing needs.	-	-	\$8,000	-		
		Increasing resilience to Climate Change to manage the impact of reduced water availability on gravel roads and the potential use of waste water.	\$285,000		\$30,000	\$5,000		
		NSW Joint Organisation Executive Officer and Chairs Networks, Ministerial Advisory Group meeting	-		\$25,600	\$12,600		
		LGNSW Sustaining Regions Forum and Drought Response Forum	-	-	\$3,200	-		
		Canberra Advocacy event – representation to Ministers and advisors for education, local Government and regional development, energy, trade and investment, drought and local Members of Parliament and discussions with the Regional Australia Institute.	\$10,000	-	\$10,000	-		
		Community consultations representations Farm Household Assistance Review, New England North West Drought Taskforce	-	-	\$4,800	-		
		Namoi Economic and Spatial Supply Chain Report ³	-	\$175,000	\$12,800	-		
		Namoi Water Alliance	\$27,040		\$30,000	\$8,000		
		Trade and Investment Strategy	-	-	\$5,000	-		
		Small and Medium Enterprises Export Hub application to develop and support the network of exporters in the Namoi region.	-	-	\$8,000	-		
		Representation of Member Councils with Safe and Secure Water to facilitate opportunities with government and partners for investment into the provision of water, infrastructure and skills.	\$165,000	-	\$16,000	-		
		Application for Regional Town Water Strategy funding ⁴ and negotiations on IWCMs for Councils.						
	Inter-governmental Collaboration	New England North West Drought Task group – distribution of factsheets, program	-	-	\$15,000	-		

³ This is an estimated as the report was paid for by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

⁴ This is an estimated of the quote for works. Quote is estimated at \$220,000. Councils are eligible for 75% of funding from the NSW Government.

ALIGNMENT TO THE STRATEGIC REGIONAL PRIORITIES	ALIGNMENT TO KEY FUNCTIONS	ACTIVITY AND DESCRIPTION	CASH VALUE TO COUNCILS (includes annual)	IN-KIND VALUE TO COUNCILS (includes annual)	STAFF INVESTMENT (Based on \$200 per hour x five for the Executive Officer.)	STATUS
Enabled and Connected Infrastructure	Advocacy and Leadership	Information and contacts.				
		Namoi ROSCOs and Critical Water Panel Representation	-	--	\$8,000	-
		Namoi Water Sharing Plans review	-	-	\$2,000	
		Annual membership of the Smart Water Mark	-	-	-	\$11,000
	Planning and Prioritisation	Murray Darling Basin Socio-economic Analysis of the Impacts of the Basin Plan			\$2,000	
		NSW Digital Connectivity Strategy	-	-	\$500	-
		Namoi Roads Network Strategy	\$134,200,000			
	Inter-governmental Collaboration	RMCC new contract analysis, project planning and prioritisation, preparation			\$30,000	\$8,000
		Gunneah Shire Council will represent the region on the Department of Planning Council Stakeholders Panel.	-	-	-	\$6,400
		Contaminated Lands Officer for 3 years, this year the project delivered a policy, procedure and register template for Councils.	\$420,000	-	\$30,000	\$8,000
Engaged People seeking Skills for the Future	Inter-governmental Collaboration	Finding Your Feet Event Series	\$10,000	-	\$24,000	-
		TOTAL		\$175,000	\$285,300	\$59,000

APPENDIX 1: ENDORSED POSITIONS OF ADVOCACY

<p>1. Water for the Future</p> <p>Water is the critical enabler for industry, business, communities, lifestyle, tourism and the environment.</p> <p>Communities across the Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils deserve secure access to quality water resources.</p> <p>The availability and security of water enables Local Government and communities to plan for future social, environmental and economic growth with confidence.</p> <p>The climate of NSW is variable and drought is an inevitable feature in our landscape, therefore it should be considered in the same light as other business risks.</p> <p>Planning for the long-term is the most effective way that community and farmers can prepare for drought and other downturns.</p>	<p>A1.1 Government funding for Council owned water and sewer operations and projects that can demonstrate investment will provide improvements to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> public health water security economic, environmental outcomes and or social benefits. <p>A1.2 Governments will provide funding, programs and financial assistance to Councils to provide access to water that will;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> undertake regional strategic planning for the provision of water; provide entitlement to meet the current and future demands of growth from development; and maintain access to substantial storage capacity for emergency situations including drought. <p>A1.3 Governments support and implement policy, processes and systems that provide an equitable sharing of surface and groundwater resources and that water entitlements and allocations are secure and tradeable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surface and groundwater policy and management for NSW. NSW water resources planning, policy and regulation including negotiations with the Commonwealth. Basin specific planning, policy and management for the Great Artesian Basin and the Murray Darling Basin. Catchment planning, policy and management for the Macleay, Gwydir, Border Rivers, Namoi and Peel catchments.
<p>2. Agriculture, Agribusiness and Innovation</p> <p>Agriculture, agricultural products, commodities and services underpin the economies of the Namoi region.</p>	<p>A2.1 Governments provide programs and funding for Local Government that can stimulate the economy for business and support businesses to maintain employment and where prolonged impact of drought on regional and local employment and the economy can be demonstrated, small business can access similar assistance to that offered to primary producers.</p>	<p>COAG Agreement and Natural Disasters policy and application</p> <p>Drought policy and incentives</p> <p>Employment and incentives policy, jobs and action plans for employment in regional Australia</p>
<p>3. Intensive Agriculture Strategy</p> <p>In the New England North West of NSW agricultural production accounts for 17.5 per cent of the State's gross agricultural value, the second highest regional contribution in NSW. The strength of the sector will rely on favourable climate and soils, access to national and international markets, strong broadacre cropping and grazing sectors and emerging intensive agriculture and food processing sectors.</p>  <p>Intensive agricultural enterprises create jobs in the agricultural supply chain and open opportunities for agribusiness and innovation, service, research and education.</p>	<p>A3.1 Government funding and resourcing to develop the Namoi region as a regional meat production area and food processing precinct.</p> <p>A3.2 Government support for an environment that provides consistency across the region for planning for and operations of, meat and livestock enterprises.</p> <p>A3.3 Government support for an environment that markets the Namoi region as a food and fibre hub for NSW and the world.</p> <p>A3.4 Government funding and resourcing to assist producers to accelerate production of food and fibre into world markets.</p> <p>A3.5 Government legislation and policy for the "Right to Farm" in NSW.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW Right to Farm Policy that reinforces rights and responsibilities establishes baseline and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of land use conflicts, land use planning, reviews of relevant environmental planning instruments to minimise conflicts, additional Government intervention be required. Transport and logistics planning, prioritisation and funding. Ownership and operations of abattoirs and saleyards. Investment including domestic and foreign investment. Export marketing, markets, support and resourcing. Government environmental policy relative to farming, agriculture and intensive agriculture planning and practice. Potentially reshape and consistency from a planning approach and perspective Food production, security and the protection of natural resources which sustain food production. Planning and approvals for mixed purpose operations, increasing renewables and use and operations on prime agricultural land
<p>4. Foreign Ownership of Prime Agricultural Land</p> <p>Council members of Namoi Unlimited represent some of Australia's premier agricultural</p>	<p>A4.1 Governments supports business and industry to grow and prosper in the Namoi region, creating employment and opportunities for the Local Government Areas it represents.</p>	<p>Australian Government policies on foreign investment, bilateral international treaties and free trade agreements.</p>

<p>enterprises and lands.</p> <p>Foreign economies had a total of \$3.3 trillion invested in Australia at the end of 2017. The United States and United Kingdom are the biggest investors in Australia, followed by Belgium, Japan and Hong Kong (SAR of China). China is our ninth largest foreign investor, with 2.0 per cent of the total.</p> <p>Namoi Unlimited acknowledges community concern in relation to acquisition of prime agricultural land by foreign owned entities. Namoi Unlimited will monitor media and examine decisions of the foreign Investment Review Board in relation to the purchase of prime agricultural land.</p>	<p>A4.2 Governments supports the role of the Foreign Investment Review Board as a non statutory body established to advise the Treasurer and the Government on Australia's Foreign Investment Policy. Specifically that, proposed direct interests in an agribusiness generally require approval where the value of the investment is more than \$58 million, with an exemption applying to investors from Australia's trade agreement partners and a \$0 threshold applying to Foreign Government investors.</p> <p>A4.3 Government funds the continued publication of reports on Foreign Ownership of Agricultural Land by the Australian Taxation Office.</p>	
<p>5. Trade and Investment</p> <p>The <i>Regional Australia Institute</i> told Namoi Unlimited in 2015, that if it wanted to grow the economy it needed to support; agriculture, agricultural innovation, provide opportunity for investment on the right terms and accelerate exports.</p> <p>Namoi Unlimited will engage and develop relationships in overseas markets in pursuit of new trade and investment opportunities to grow the region.</p> <p>Regions like the Namoi need specific and expert assistance to monitor dynamics of global markets, climate change and changing consumer demand, to assist industry to evolve and adapt.</p>	<p>A5.1 Governments increase the capacity and capability of, and funding for, Councils to grow the economy and create jobs across regional NSW by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resourcing Councils to providing place based response and dedicated support to businesses to export their products and services. ▪ Resourcing Councils to work with the NSW Government to attracting international investment. ▪ Increased resources for international offices, engagement, communications and marketing of regional NSW. 	<p>Australian Government policy, investment and programs for AusTrade.</p> <p>NSW Government policy, investment and programs for the Department of Industry and Trade and the Department of Primary Industries.</p>
<p>6. Mining and Resource Development and Extractive Industries</p> <p>The New England North West geology is diverse and there is the potential for mineral and energy exploration and production.</p> <p>Namoi Unlimited believes communities need to be advised and informed of the potential risks to water, land and community resources as a result of mining and resource development in the Namoi region.</p> <p>The Gunnedah coal basin contains the State's third largest coal reserves and coal seam gas potential. Coal deposits also surround the Local Government Areas of Liverpool Plains Shire, Gunnedah Shire and have the potential to impact the economy of Tamworth Regional Council and to a lesser extent the rest of the Namoi region.</p> <p>The New England North West also contains deposits of gemstones, industrial minerals and extractive materials, with many small-scale mines in operation.</p>	<p>A6.1 Governments recognises the importance of protecting important farmlands such as the Liverpool Plains.</p> <p>A6.2 Governments continue to reduce exploration licenses in areas where development of mining or resource development encroaches on agricultural enterprises.</p> <p>A6.3 Governments approach mining development sensitively to minimise negative impacts on the environment, agricultural land, neighbouring businesses and the community.</p> <p>A6.4 Governments will work with Local Government to respond to the lifecycle of mining with the intent of providing public resources and services and infrastructure that reflects growth.</p> <p>A6.5 Government deliver greater protection to agricultural land from the impacts of mining and coal seam gas (CSG) activity, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ coal seam gas exclusion zones; ▪ safeguarding biophysical strategic agricultural land ; ▪ application and scrutiny of the Gateway process for State significant mining and coal seam gas proposals; ▪ acknowledging Critical Industry Clusters including the equine industry in the Namoi region; ▪ implement a Mining and Petroleum Gateway Panel to scientifically assess mining and coal seam gas impacts on strategic agricultural land and its associated water resources; ▪ introduce regulations governing exploration activity, overseen by a Land and Water Commissioner; ▪ introduce an Aquifer Interference Policy; and ▪ introduce independent, robust and 	<p>NSW Government planning and land use legislation and policy, including the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Standing Council on Energy and Resources Multiple Land Use Framework.</p> <p>NSW Government mining and extraction legislation and policy including; NSW Mineral Exploration and Development Assessment and Approvals Process for Major Mining and Petroleum (including coal seam gas) Projects.</p>

	<p>transparent Agricultural Impact Statement for all mining and resource development projects in the Namoi region.</p> <p>A6.6 Governments extend, support and fund bioregional assessments to provide transparent and scientific information on potential impacts of gas and coal mining developments on water and the environment.</p>	
<p>7. Connected and Enabled Freight and Transport Infrastructure</p> <p>The network of roads plays an important role in the freight challenge for NSW. The movement of freight across accessible and efficient road networks is critical for business and communities. increasing rail freight movements due to mining and resource development, rail level crossings are frequently closed.</p> <p>Investment and upgrading of rail infrastructure for passengers and freight capacity to enhance road capacity and reduce haulage costs.</p>	<p>A7.1 Government recognise and fund strategic network approaches to identifying and addressing transport and freight impediments.</p> <p>A7.2 Governments negotiate and fund the Namoi Roads Network Strategy staging an investment of \$300 million in roads to unlock the regions road transport network.</p> <p>A7.3 The Government requires ARTC to action and address;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the number of closed periods for crossings and the length of time crossings are closed; ▪ advise Councils of proposed closures of crossings; ▪ take any action to mitigate the cumulative impacts of increased rail transport on communities; ▪ collaborate with Governments to plan solutions for infrastructure upgrades; ▪ Upgrading of rail haulage network through Liverpool Plains Shire Council and the Gunnedah Shire Council. <p>A7.4 Governments plan and invest in increased capability and capacity for passenger and freight on rail on the North West Rail Line Network including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Newcastle to Narrabri, ○ Werris Creek to Tamworth ○ Newcastle to Armidale ○ Barraba Spur Line ○ Inland Rail ○ Tamworth Intermodal ○ Werris Creek Over rail bridge ○ Quirindi Over rail bridge <p>A7.5 Governments further subsidise passenger rail travel pricing.</p> <p>A7.6 Commonwealth Government funding for Roads to Recovery increase in real terms road funding direct financial assistance to Local Government.</p> <p>A7.7 Governments commit to working with Local Government and to provide funding for;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commercial air services into Gunnedah; ▪ Development of the Tamworth International Air freight capability and capacity; ▪ Slots for regional services into Sydney Airport; ▪ Providing ongoing information to Local Government about the introduction of a second airport at Badgery's Creek and the future of Kingsford Smith Airport. 	<p>Strategic rail infrastructure policy, programs and investments, the Investment Infrastructure Program, the Black Spot Program, Bridges Renewal Program, Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program, Roads to Recovery</p> <p>Roads and Maritime NSW programs for funding</p> <p>Transport for NSW Freight and Ports Strategy</p> <p>Heavy Vehicles and freight policy, frameworks and logistics</p> <p>Roads to Recovery Statement of Expectations</p>
<p>8. Energy Infrastructure</p> <p>Namoi Councils support the view that renewable energy is essential to Australia's future economic growth and prosperity and a strategic driver in providing for future jobs and assisting with the lowering of greenhouse gas emissions posed by climate change.</p> <p>The development of renewable energy sources and enterprises in the region should not be to the detriment of base load security or the introduction</p>	<p>A8.1 Governments provide financial assistance by way of subsidies and incentives to industry to develop and harness the energy technologies such as Bio Energy, Geothermal Energy, Solar Energy, Wind Energy, Pumped Hydro and HELE to support economic development and reduce energy prices.</p> <p>A8.2 Governments support and incentivise the development of the New England North West region as a Hub for Renewable energy in NSW.</p> <p>A8.3 Governments support the investigation of</p>	<p>NSW Electricity Supply Act 1995</p> <p>Australian Energy Market Commission</p>

<p>of new technologies.</p> <p>Organisations like Namoi Unlimited can work with all levels of government to plan and prepare for infrastructure and energy needed into the future.</p>	<p>energy projects to support innovation between the agricultural and energy sectors.</p> <p>A8.4 Governments engage early and consistently to inform the community of potential and approved developments.</p>	
<p>9. Federal Government Local Government Assistance Grants (FAGs)</p> <p>Namoi Unlimited supports the Australian Local Government Association's (ALGA) position on grants.</p> <p>Local government (councils) is the third tier of government in the Australian system of government. Councils are primarily responsible for providing a wide range of critical local area services including planning, libraries and waste management and for infrastructure provision (e.g. roads and footpaths, parks, sporting grounds and swimming pools) required by the local community.</p> <p>Local government nationally employs about 187,000 Australians (around 10 per cent of the total public sector). It also owns and manages non-financial assets with an estimated written down value of \$408 billion (2015-16), raises around 3.6 per cent of Australia's total taxation revenue per annum and has an annual operational expenditure of around \$35 billion (2015-16), just under 6 per cent of total public sector spending.</p> <p>Nationally, local government derives nearly 90 per cent of its revenue from its own sources (including rates and services charges), compared to around 50 per cent for state governments. Grants from other levels of government make up only 10 per cent of local government's total revenue, however these grants are particularly important in areas with a low rate base, and/or high growth rate, and rapidly expanding service and infrastructure needs.</p> <p>Local government's expenditure is directed towards the provision of local services across the nation. These services include: housing and community amenities, transport and communications, recreation and culture and general public services. These services are critical to the productivity, wellbeing and liveability of local communities and cumulatively of the nation.</p>	<p>A9.1 Secure annual Commonwealth funding for local government equal to at least 1% of Commonwealth Taxation Revenue.</p> <p>A9.2 Oppose revenue constraints such as rate capping and cost shifting.</p> <p>A9.3 Encourage councils to acknowledge Financial Assistance Grants as a Commonwealth untied grant to local government.</p> <p>A9.4 Strengthen local government's credentials as a trusted partner for tied Commonwealth grants.</p> <p>A9.5 Secure annual Commonwealth funding for joint organisations of Councils.</p>	<p>ALGA Federal Budget 2019-20 Submission</p>
<p>10. Engaged People Seeking Skills for the Future</p> <p>People and their skills are fundamental to the growth of our economies, our communities and lifestyle.</p> <p>Local Government is one of the largest employers in the Namoi region and has an important role to play in the attraction of people to the region, and the development of skills.</p> <p>Competition for skills across the region occurs across a number of sectors, for example mining and resource development offers above market rewards and conditions which inhibits the ability of Local Government to compete for skills.</p> <p>There is a perception that there are 'no jobs or limited jobs' in regional areas.</p> <p>As a group of Councils, members can collaborate to increase capacity and capability in skills areas that maybe difficult to full as individual Councils.</p>	<p>A10.1 Regional Trade Training Centre located in Gunnedah Shire Council including funding to establish and operate a trades training Centre in the heart of the Gunnedah Basin which is estimated to contain recoverable coal reserves of 1.48 billion tonnes - about 13% of NSW total coal reserves.</p> <p>A10.2 TAFE NSW is funded and strategically positioned to meet the workforce needs of Local Government, industry and the regional community.</p> <p>A10.3 Establishment of a University in the Tamworth Region including funding for the establishment of a university in Tamworth Regional Council that services the Namoi region and beyond. Commonwealth placements to fund the ongoing operations of a university in the region.</p>	
<p>11. Emergency Assistance</p> <p>Across Australia local government plays an important role building resilient and sustainable communities, particularly when it comes to</p>	<p>A11.1 To do this ALGA is actively engaging with other levels of government on the continuation of appropriate Commonwealth funding to support councils and communities to mitigate and recover from natural disasters.</p>	<p>Emergency Management Australia</p> <p>National Strategy for Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub</p> <p>Productivity Commission – Natural Disaster</p>

<p>dealing with natural hazards and other threats.</p> <p>Local governments are increasingly playing crucial roles in preparing communities through various mitigation interventions, assisting in response and playing a key leadership role in rebuilding and recovery efforts.</p> <p>Namoi Unlimited supports the ALGA policy work focuses on ensuring local government is recognised and supported in helping to build greater levels of resilience in Australia's diverse communities and geographic regions.</p> <p>The size, severity, timing, location and impacts of disasters are difficult to predict and our changing climate increases the uncertainty about future risks. Scientific modelling suggests that climate change will likely result in an increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events. Rising sea levels are increasing the likelihood of coastal erosion and severe inundation.</p> <p>Disaster resilience is a shared responsibility for individuals, households, businesses and communities, as well as for governments.</p> <p>In 2018, following floods, cyclones and fires which greatly impacted communities across Australia, the Commonwealth Government established a National Resilience Taskforce within the Home Affairs Department to lead nation-wide reforms to reduce the impact and financial burden of disasters on our communities and economy. The Taskforce's first priority is to develop a five-year national disaster mitigation framework to reduce the impact of disasters.</p> <p>Local governments contribute to Australia's biosecurity in both metropolitan and rural/regional areas. The movement of animals and other livestock through our cities and towns via ports, roads and rail, as well as by foot across diverse rural landscapes, can expose our domestic agricultural and grazing industries and natural environment to risk from invasive pests, disease and noxious weeds.</p>	<p>Emergency Management</p> <p>Investment in the mitigation of risk, the promotion of community safety and warning systems, engaging partners and communities, protecting built and natural environments and community resilience.</p> <p>Support and funding for a whole-of-government, multi-agency and all hazards approach.</p> <p>Natural Disaster Resilience</p> <p>The Commonwealth Government invests a total of \$26.1 million each year in the National Partnership Agreement on Natural Disaster Resilience to fund priority disaster resilience initiatives. These funds are matched by state and territory governments.</p> <p>Changes to the Natural Disaster Recovery (NDR) Program to allow councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ greater flexibility and the self-determination of how NDR funding is spent; ○ funding to be spent on the replacement of infrastructure to the same standard of that damaged or destroyed; ○ a disaster management program and pool of funds to fund renewal or replacement of vital public. <p>Biosecurity</p> <p>ALGA provides support to state and territory local government associations on national-scale biosecurity issues through representation on peak working groups including the National Biosecurity Committee and on Federal Government initiatives that work across the tiers of government to help maintain and protect Australia's biosecurity.</p> <p>The role and investment in this function at a Local Government level is increased.</p>	<p>Funding Arrangements (2014)</p> <p>Department of Agriculture and Fisheries</p>
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APPENDIX 2: Drought

IMMEDIATE DROUGHT RESPONSE

1. Provide an additional round of funding for Councils in the Namoi region of up to \$2million under the Drought Communities Programme funding to be spent on local infrastructure projects that provide local employment and local contractor spend.
2. Provide funding to pre-schools to fund and provide social and mental health resources for children living in drought declared communities.
3. Enact an amendment to the existing eligibility criteria for Drought Loans through the Regional Investment Corporation that will extend eligibility for loans to small business in drought declared areas, that:
 - At least 75% labour is provided to the farm business.
 - At least 50% income earned from the farm business (under non-drought circumstances).
4. Provide funding direct to Local Government Authorities to waive Land Rates on primary production land in drought impacted areas.
5. Direct program administrators to prioritise funding for incentives and businesses to support, establish and retain business and employment in drought impacted areas.
6. Investigate whether capital repayments of debt by primary producers could be fully tax deductible. This would assist primary producers reduce debt in good times so that they can draw on the equity in lean times. It would reduce interest repayments meanwhile providing a cashflow benefit. This option would have a similar effect to the Farm Management Deposit Scheme.
7. Investigate whether GST should be added to the interest repayments made by primary producers. EG, if a primary producer makes an interest repayment of \$200,000.00, the sales required to fund that is \$220,000.00. If the repayment had GST added to it, then the primary producer would be able to balance out purchases to NIL GST cost, for improved cashflow.
8. Place a \$1million off-farm asset limit under the Farm Management Deposit Scheme to ensure that the primary producers who access the Scheme need the benefit it offers and use the deposited funds in lean times. At 30 September 2019, the total holdings in the Scheme were \$5.75 billion (cf. agriculture.gov.au).
9. Provide a 100% rebate on farm Water Infrastructure up to the value of \$100,000.00 to build water reserves for future droughts.
10. Reform to the Farm Household Allowance including (and as recommended by the review committee):
 - Decoupling the FHA from the Social Security Act 1991 with the aim of simplifying and tailoring the application process and eligibility settings to farm businesses.
 - Prioritisation of a meaningful mutual obligation process, whereby farmers work with the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) to engage in a viability assessment enabling them to either plan through the current financial hardship and prepare for future business shocks, or exit the industry with dignity.
 - Revise the eligibility for the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) role to include business support. Enhance the role of the RFCS under the FHA program to focus on business coaching of recipients, with the addition of a role for a financial advisor. To minimise duplication, this should utilise existing processes undertaken by the RFCS.

WATER

11. Water infrastructure is critical for the region's economy. A number of reports at a State and Commonwealth level have indicated there are issues in the coordination and collaboration, management and priority of programs, policy and initiatives.

Water is the number one concern for Namoi Unlimited, its Councils, business and communities.

A psychologist commented to our delegate Jock Nivison that the most pronounced increase in clientele for her - is citizens with enormous anxiety over water security. This is being enhanced by the never ending media around "day ZERO" where towns will run out of water.

When basic human needs such as water, shelter and safety are threatened or removed then people have trouble processing anything beyond that and it is debilitating for these people.

From a business point of view, there is unanimous consensus that any town without long term water security will decline.

Namoi Unlimited, the member Councils and the delegation have water security priorities to:

- Guarantee town and business use
- Harness the potential to grow productivity and employment

Water policy and programs require a cross-government, priority focus and consolidated approach. We need National leadership and cooperation on water.

12. Increasing the Emergency Water Grant to 50% and extending the repayment period. In the 2014 drought this created a substantial injection of capital into the community and provided water security for this current drought. Animal welfare issues are more acute when water security is weakened.

RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

Research and Collaboration

13. Development of Inter-governmental and Inter-agency Committee to create and implement an early warning system for drought, be responsible for the analysis of data on crop and pasture conditions, fodder and grain stores, percentage change in livestock numbers and rainfall departure from 'normal' precipitation.

Priority for research should be the 123 Local Government Areas deemed eligible for drought communities funding.

Recording the intensity, duration and spatial coverage of drought will assist future drought measures.

Create a rigid framework around drought with clear defined levels of assistance that automatically kick in at certain levels of severity.

This will provide farmers with surety, greater capacity for budgeting and decision-making.

14. Consolidate research and review of economic development programs in regional NSW/Australia.

Funding and support for local and regional Chambers of Commerce to employ high level business development resources or contract resources that are aligned and complementary to the economic development functions of Local Government to implement a level of business support and referral.

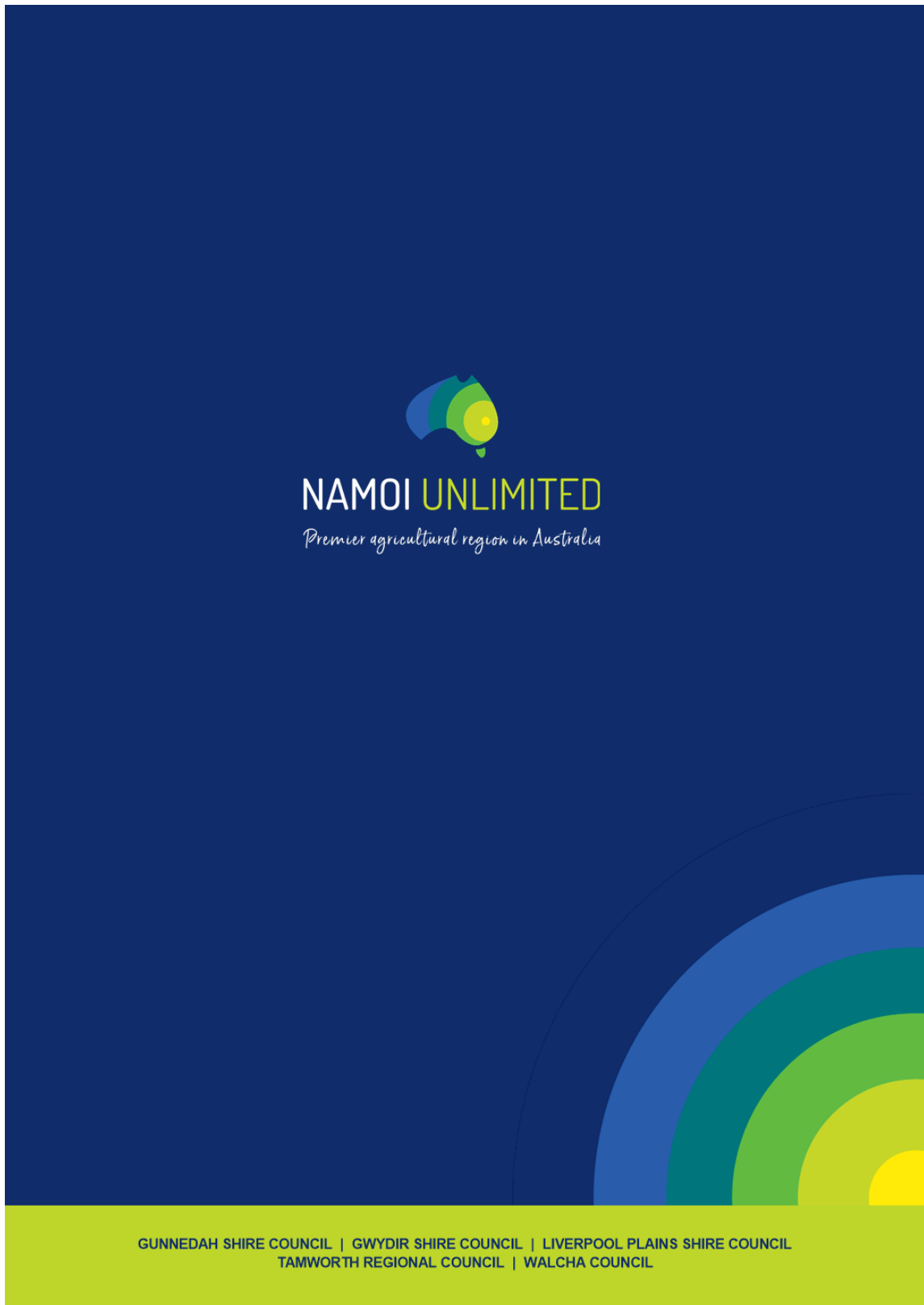
Consolidate the learnings and research on attracting, supporting and retaining business and employment to regionals. Fund appropriate organisations to assess these learnings and resource projects and activities for businesses.

Domestic and global consumers are demanding the products that Australian producers are providing and able to provide. Research primary production commodity prices for beef, dairy and others, to understand why prices at the farm gate are not keeping up with inflation. Funding and resourcing needs to be provided at a regional level rather than an industry level, to understand transport and other barriers.

This would potentially develop solutions to address the erosion of incomes on farms and generate more available funds to build resilience in farming operations.

Future Programs and Assistance

15. Consider tax reform around drought, work with the NSW Government to remove Payroll Tax in rural and remote areas, incentivise business development and employment in these areas. Work toward a resolution of Payroll Tax with the NSW Government, whereby it is eventually removed entirely and replaced entirely by a tax on production rather than fixed costs.
- Fund a regional tax relief and incentives trial and pilot program across the New England North West region to support the growth of business, employment.
16. Programs and Grants for innovation in drought management, available to individuals and business for projects that have the potential to benefit the whole industry.
- Establish infrastructure programs and incentives for businesses predominately servicing agriculture, similar to those that have been or are in place for Primary Producers.
17. Greater incentives for critical professions such as doctors, nurses, teachers to work in rural areas, and stay in rural areas.
18. Fund and enable training providers to specialise and enhance financial literacy in the agricultural sector. There are short courses like "the business edge course" that are important for farmers to build skills around strategic decision making - however, they can be expensive. There is potential to build the capability of unskilled labourers to become well informed, strategic managers.
19. Diversify the criteria for the Farm Management Deposit Scheme that can produce an income stream to dividends and interest growth in times of drought. Change the eligibility to enable company structures to access the scheme but maintain the asset tests.
20. Consider a superannuation type scheme around drought with compulsory payments (similar to the stock levy) to create an income stream and economic stimuli in drought.
21. Build resilience in agricultural communities and families by continuing and increase efforts to decentralise government departments and services. Such activities attract people to communities, ensure incomes are diversified and build capacity in agricultural reliant towns.
22. Develop clearly defined legislation around how banks will deal with farm debt, especially in times of drought; there should be a mechanism to protect good farmers from unjustified foreclosure.



Item 2 Recommendations from the Committee Meetings held 14 May 2020

FILE REFERENCE

DELIVERY PROGRAM

GOAL: 5. Organisational Management

OUTCOME: 5.1 CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

STRATEGY: 5.1.3 Administrative functions - GM - internal

AUTHOR General Manager

STAFF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST Nil

IN BRIEF/ SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

This report recommends the adoption of the recommendations from the Public Infrastructure and Community Services and Planning Committee Meetings held on 14 May 2020.

TABLED ITEMS	Nil
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OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

THAT the recommendation from the Public Infrastructure Committee meeting held 14 May 2020 is adopted:

Monthly Technical Services Report for April 2020

THAT the monthly Technical Services report for April 2020 be received

THAT the recommendations from the Community Services and Planning Committee meeting held 14 May 2020 are adopted:

Monthly Executive Report

THAT the monthly Executive Report for April 2020 be received

Monthly Organisational and Community Development Report for April 2020

THAT the monthly Organisation and Community Development Report for April 2020 be received

NSW Farmers Correspondence

THAT the correspondence and report be received

Correspondence – Resilience NSW

THAT the report be received and the correspondence noted

THAT the following Councillor Reports be noted:

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------|---|
| Cr Dixon OAM | - | Bingara Street bins |
| Cr Smith | - | Aionious' Report |
| | - | 47 Hope Street, Warialda |
| Cr Moore | - | Warialda CBD issues |
| | - | Return and Earn Scheme |
| Cr Dick | - | Gwydir Highway and Stephen Street Intersection, Warialda |
| Cr Galvin | - | Driveway opposite Bingara Sewerage Treatment Works |
| | - | Roxy Café Opportunities |
| Cr Young | - | Derelict house, outskirts of Bingara |
| | - | Truck rest area north of Bingara at Delungra Road intersection |

THAT the recommendations from the Closed Community Services and Planning Committee are adopted:

Confidential Organisation and Community Development Report for April 2020

THAT the monthly Confidential Organisation and Community Development Report for April 2020 be received

THAT the following Councillor report be noted:

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------|-------------------------|
| Cr Young | - | Naroo Statistics |
|-----------------|----------|-------------------------|

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments for this report.