

### 9.1.1

## CENTRAL NSW JOINT ORGANISATION (CNSWJO) BOARD MEETING - 29 FEBRUARY 2024

**File No:** 07.00017/29

### RECOMMENDATION:

That the report on the CNSWJO Board Meeting on 29 February 2024 be noted.

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### REPORT:

The CNSWJO Board met on 29 February 2024 at Condobolin and were welcomed to Condobolin by Cr John Medcalf, Deputy Mayor of Lachlan Shire Councillor and immediate past Chair of the CNSWJO Board.

The Board received a presentation from Ms Gerry Collins from Department of Regional NSW regarding Regional Coordination and Delivery Program.

Councillors John Medcalf and David Somervaille were recognised for the years of service to the region. The Board also acknowledged the passing of Cr Don Fitzpatrick, former Mayor of Oberon.

### Value to Council

80% of CNSWJO resources are dedicated to providing its operational support program. This program delivers a return on investments of 9.4:1 for every dollar Council spends on its membership fees. This value is made up of grant income, monies saved through the CNSWJO procurement program and public relations value from its tourism marketing.

The work the region does in writing submissions, media, supporting projects and project teams, developing collateral and providing opportunities for members in various forums to represent their views is not included in the above figure of 9.4:1 ROI. However, this value is reported quarterly to the Board.

This work continues year on year and for the 2022/2023 year the value is summarised as:

- 13 [Submissions - Central Joint Organisation \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://nsw.gov.au) were lodged in line with CNSWJO policy on matters important to the region;
- 13 Plans, strategies and other collateral that members can leverage for funding, advocacy, forward planning and other purposes;
- \$4.2m in net cost savings across 18 regional contracts from a spend of \$25.3m.
- \$2.05m in grants for members to support training for Fluoride Operators, disaster risk reduction, Business case and Strategy Development JONZA - Net Zero Acceleration Grant and other energy management, best practice in aggregated procurement, tourism and regional development;

- \$1.4m in public relations value and over \$472k in advertising value which encompassed 11 media releases and various social media metrics. The PR program delivered a major tourism marketing campaign for “Come Out, We’re Open” which formed a large body of work within the PR program in 2023.

Grant funded projects for the 2022/2023 year were:

- The Joint Organisation Net Zero Acceleration Program;
- Disaster Risk Reduction Fund program;
- Bridge Assessments;
- Come Out We’re Open flood recovery program
- A Business Case for Priority Investment in the Nexus between Net Zero and Energy Security;
- A Regional Centre of Excellence in Water Loss Management;
- Transitioning Integrated Water Cycle Management Plans to Integrated Planning and Reporting; and
- A Spare Capacity in Housing Project.

Most of these are being finalised this year or are ongoing.

This value is delivered primarily by the various operational teams across the region including the CNSWJO;

- General Managers’ Advisory Committee
- Water Utilities’ Alliance
- Transport Technical Committee
- Tourism Managers Group
- Planners’ Group
- Human Resources Managers Group
- WHS/Risk Management Group
- Training, Learning and Development Group
- Energy Group
- Regional IT Group
- Building Surveyors Skills Shortages Working Group
- Disaster Risk Reduction Steering Committee

## **Adoption of the Draft Statement of Budget and Revenue**

CNSWJO will adopt its Statement of Budget and Revenue (the Statement) at its May meeting after an exhibition period of 30 days. The budget includes a 3% increase in fees, below that of the IPART rate pegged rate rise for Councils of 4.5% - 5.5%.

## **Submissions**

### **Submissions lodged**

The following submissions have been lodged since the last Board meeting. All have been at the request of members and/or as part of supporting the advocacy policy of the Board. All Submissions can be viewed on the website [Submissions - Central Joint Organisation \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.cnswjo.nsw.gov.au/submissions)

- [Australian Productivity Commission third inquiry into the National Water Initiative – January 2024](#)
- [Submission to the review of the Regional Development Act](#)
- [Draft NSW Energy Policy Framework](#)
- [Essential Energy Determination 2024-29 – Revised Public Lighting Pricing Proposal](#)
- [Consultation on the Future Drought Fund Investment Strategy & Funding Plan 2024-2028 – December 2023](#)
- [Submission to the NSW vocational education and training \(VET\) review – November 2023](#)
- [Response to the Department of Planning and Environment Lachlan Regional Water Strategy shortlisted actions – November 2023](#)
- [Inquiry into the planning system and the impacts of climate change on the environment and communities – November 2023](#)

### **Submissions under development**

At the time of this report the following calls for submissions are being addressed:

- DCCEE Draft Restoring the Rivers Framework Consultation;
- The inquiry into the assets, premises and funding of the NSW Rural Fire Service; and
- The draft Terms of Reference for the IPART review of NSW council financial model.

### **Disaster Risk Reduction Program**

Council has received its Disaster Risk Reduction Needs Analysis report. A regional opportunities report is being finalised to identify programming the CNSWJO can deliver to support Councils in this work.

Notably, CNSWJO are currently planning community workshops and training sessions aimed at enhancing community preparedness regarding natural disaster risks and vulnerabilities. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) evaluated three technology options: Simtables, SIMS online, and a cross-JO technology scoping study. It was decided to pursue all three options, focusing primarily on Simtables for the workshops. The workshops will introduce Simtables as a pilot program due to its distinctive nature and potential applications in disaster preparedness. The primary objective is to understand the technology's practical applications in disaster preparedness for the region and explore the potential to secure funding through existing Disaster Risk reduction initiative, contingent on a successful pilot. In the event of the success of the pilot and the purchase of the technology, a program will be developed to engage the broader community. The workshops will primarily focus on bushfire preparedness across all Local Government Areas, with added emphasis on flooding scenarios.

It is proposed that elected representatives, general managers, and other relevant staff to participate in the upcoming community workshops (possibly May) and training sessions. This emphasises the importance of community preparedness and the potential benefits that Simtable technology can bring, in enhancing disaster preparedness capabilities. This initiative aligns well with the recent needs analysis for the region, which identified key opportunities within councils.

The Simtable technology may be utilised as a tool to address some of these needs by providing a hands-on approach to understanding and mitigating disaster risks, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, and enhancing decision-making processes.

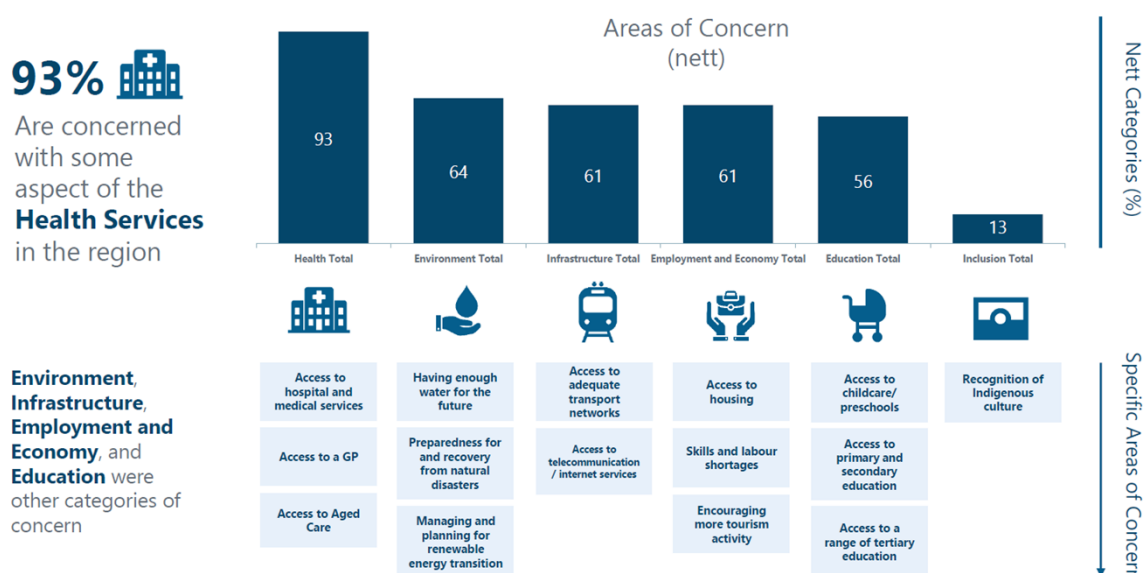
## Collaborating on community engagement

Discussions were held on data collection and support for the Community Engagement Strategies of member Councils.

Two projects the region has been collaborating on are Community Sentiment Surveying and Our PlaceMats.

The work on Community Sentiment Surveying was with four member Councils and produced advice on regional priority. Please see the graphic below.

### Areas of Key Concern for the Region



I will now read out a list of areas that your Council may or may not be responsible for, but could influence, and I would like you to tell me which 5 out of the 15 areas would be the biggest areas of concern in your community right now? You may think they are all important however which 5 areas would you say are particularly important and need immediate attention?

*Figure 1 Priorities of the community members surveyed across four local government areas*

CNSWJO has been working with RDA Central West and Regional NSW on two key projects in the last twelve months, these being a repeat of the PlaceMats project providing 48 data sets for Councils they can use in their Community Strategic Planning community consultations and the workshops with NSW Government agencies providing useful data for Councils.

The following value is provided to members through this project:

- Cost savings through aggregated procurement;
- Regular surveying supported regionally will show future regional trends;

- Other stakeholders may be interested in collaborating in this process including making a financial contribution. This may result in a greater body of shared data and better relationships between peak agencies;
- Participating in a regional program sets up a discipline for consultation processes.

## **Water**

The Water Report provided:

- An update on the project to transition local water utility strategic planning into the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework;
- Advice on the near completed Regional Water Loss Management project, grant funded with members able to access funding for water loss management equipment; and
- Advice on the completion of regional asset management assessments using the National Asset Management Assessment Framework (NAMAF).

Current consultative processes include:

- Joint Select Committee on Protecting Local Water Utilities from Privatisation;
- NSW Productivity Commission review of funding arrangements for Local Water Utilities;
- Australian Productivity Commission third inquiry into the National Water Initiative; and
- Draft Restoring the Rivers Framework, including engagement with the Murray Darling Basin Authority.

Planning is underway with Charles Sturt University for a Productive Water Policy Lab this year.

## **Energy**

There is a substantial amount of activity being undertaken to address the energy priority of the CNSWJO. Current work includes;

- Submissions;
- Implementation of the Joint Organisation Net Zero Program;
- Adoption of the Business Case for priority investment in the Nexus between Net Zero and Energy Security;
- Advocating on Council's behalf to the Australian Energy Regulator on the costs of streetlighting.

Material advice to Council from this work is that;

- Key messaging regarding the Dept of Planning Energy Framework consultation includes a case for compensating communities for the impacts of rewiring NSW in the context of support for the overall net zero aspiration;
- Councils receiving a fully funded net zero fleet strategy;
- The advocacy undertaken by CNSWJO as the lead of the Southern Lights collaboration of councils has shown a substantial reduction in street lighting pricing. The final determination by the Australian Energy Regulator should be known by May of this year.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The CNSWJO continues to deliver very good value to Councils.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The CNSWJO continues to deliver very good value to Councils.

## **BATHURST COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN – OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES:**

### **Objective 6: Community leadership and collaboration.**

Strategy 6.4      Meet legislative and compliance requirements.

Strategy 6.6      Manage our money and our assets to be sustainable now and into the future.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

01 **Inform** - to provide the public with balanced and objective information to help them understand the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

Nil

## **MINUTE**

**RESOLUTION NUMBER: ORD2024-85**

**MOVED: Cr W Aubin   SECONDED: Cr I North**

## **RESOLVED:**

That the report on the CNSWJO Board Meeting on 29 February 2024 be noted.