

ISJO Matters

April 2022

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Region comprises the local government areas of Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and the Shoalhaven.

Our region is renowned for its scenic beauty, diversity and its innovative industrial, service, creative and knowledge economy. The Illawarra Shoalhaven has a population in excess of 400,000 and a gross regional product (GRP) of \$25.091 billion.

It is one of Australia's most significant regional contributors to national prosperity.

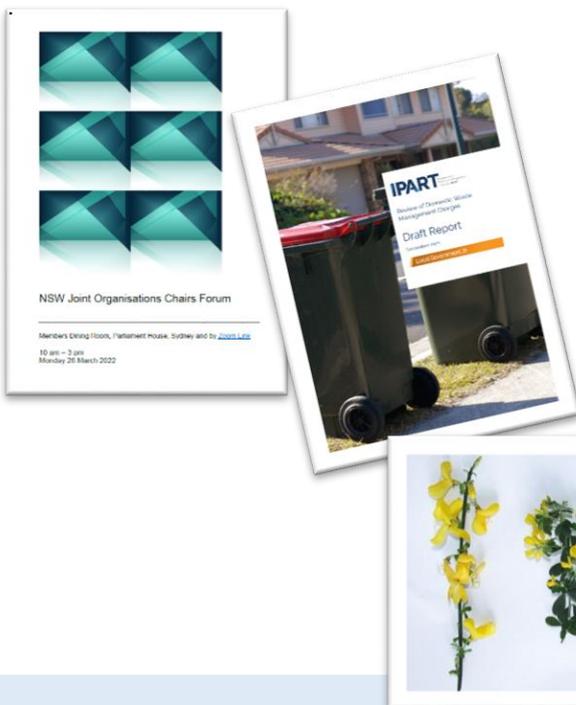
The Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation (ISJO) is an authority operating within the framework of the NSW Local Government Act.

ISJO's role is to:

- (a) Establish strategic regional priorities for the joint organisation area and to establish strategies and plans for delivering those strategic regional priorities
- (b) Provide regional leadership for the joint organisation area and to be an advocate for strategic regional priorities, and
- (c) Identify and take up opportunities for inter-governmental co-operation on matters relating to the joint organisation area.

ISJO works in partnership with our Member Councils, State Agencies and peak organisations in helping achieve the best possible outcomes for our region's communities.

ISJO Matters is our Joint Organisation Newsletter and provides information on recent programs and projects undertaken under the ISJO Banner.



Inside this April 2022 Edition:

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Our Logo

ISJO's logo was adopted in 2019 and is a graphic representation of the geographic placement of our four Member Council areas (Wollongong to the north, then Shellharbour, Kiama and the Shoalhaven to the south) and the strategic linkages and shared (overlapping) operational, economic, community and infrastructure interests that drive our collective endeavours.

Joint Organisations Review update

At its 25 February 2022 Meeting the ISJO Board considered an update on the Joint Organisation Review commissioned by the Office of Local Government in 2022 and released by the Minister for Local Government in December 2022. A summary of the Review can be found in the [February 2022 Edition](#) of *ISJO Matters*.

In the last few weeks a number of actions have taken place to accelerate the Review's implementation.

The principal activity has been the holding at Parliament House of a facilitated implementation workshop. The workshop, which took place on 28 March 2022 involved the Chairs and Executive Officers of the State's Joint Organisations together with representatives of the Office of Local Government and members of the State Agencies Group coordinated by the Office of Local Government and which will have oversight of the Review implementation process. Costs associated with the venue were met by the Office of Local Government and by the ISJO. The Department of Regional NSW funded the consultant facilitator. The ISJO was also responsible for coordination of the Parliament House workshop and the development of its business paper.



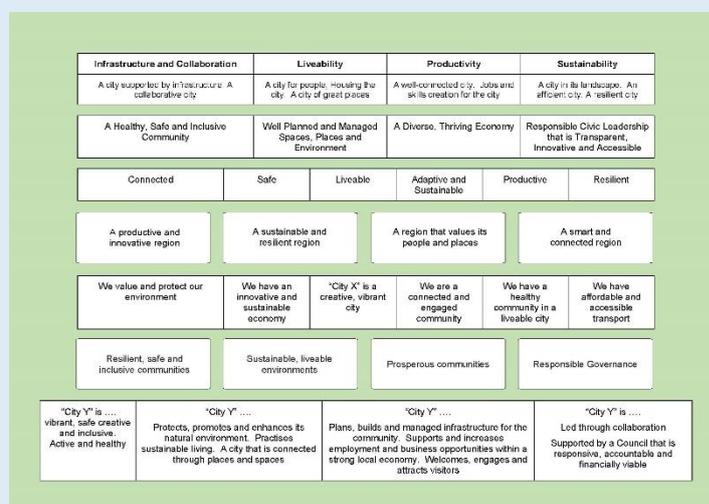
The State Agencies interagency group will now consider the outcomes of the workshop. The Joint Organisations Chairs Forum will also respond proactively to opportunities arising from the workshop for an enhanced collective voice for Joint Organisations throughout the State.

A number of Joint Organisations have now approached the ISJO for advice on a range of matters including strategy, income generation and means by which engagement with stakeholders can be enhanced. This advice will be provided progressively in the months ahead.

Building Alignment Framework

As part of its obligations under the *Local Government Act* and *Regulations*, the ISJO is required to review its Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities. The Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities sets out the vision for a region and provides an overview of the joint organisation's strategic work program to achieve this vision. It is a key tool for joint organisations and must be adopted in updated form within twelve months of a Local Government Election.

In our region and across the State a series of strategic plans, frameworks and guidelines are in place to manage the activities and resource allocations of Councils and State Agencies and to provide frameworks for the growth and development of regions, cities, towns and communities. These are all crucial documents with significant impact on the welfare and opportunities of all residents.



One of the potential issues associated with the existence of these plans is a lack of integration across strategies and a resultant potential absence of shared purpose and awareness across sectors. Partly in response to the requirement for our new Strategic Statement, partly in response to a requirement for our member Councils to review their Community Strategic Plans and in light of the Six Cities initiative to be implemented by the Greater Sydney Commission, the ISJO is partnering with the Illawarra Shoalhaven State Agencies Regional Leadership Executive to create a sense of shared narrative in our collective strategic planning.

Initially based on a mapping of all the plans to the framework of the Department of Planning and Environment's Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan, the "Building Alignment" framework will identify within one coherent strategic framework the activities of all contributors to the development of our region and its place in the wider New South Wales community.

A detailed update on our Building Alignment framework will be provided in our next *ISJO Matters*.

Strategic Program Updates

Environment and Waste Programs

Keep Australia Beautiful Awards for Member Councils



The Keep Australia Beautiful Awards were held in Albury on Saturday 5 March 2022 and two of ISJO's member councils won awards for their projects.

Wollongong City Council won the following awards:

Communication & Engagement Award –

Operation Nappy

Response to Climate Change Award –

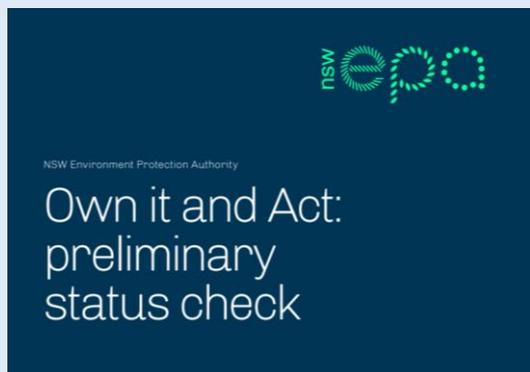
Towards Net Zero, Climate Healthy City
Overall Population Category E (>23,000)

A Shellharbour City community group – “Great Aussie Waste Challenge” – won the Resource Recovery and Waste Minimisation Award for Population Category E.

See [The Great Aussie Waste Challenge](#)

Green Connect were joint winners of the Community Spirit and Inclusion Award for their COVID Care Packages.

Litter



The EPA has awarded \$38,362 to ISJO to deliver a regional “own it and act” baseline model to assist three member Councils in modelling their current organisational baseline for litter prevention to address strengths and opportunities.

The project will develop a set of goals and an action plan to embed litter prevention within each organisation and to provide the EPA with key information regarding enablers and barriers within a local government environment.

Shellharbour and Wollongong Councils will also share in \$100,000 for a “love the lake” campaign. Shellharbour Council additionally received \$25,000 for cigarette butt litter prevention initiative. This initiative was based on a previous regional project.

Water Sensitive Communities

In 2019, the ISJO in collaboration with Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven Councils received a grant from LGNSW to implement the two-year regional program *Enabling Water Sensitive Communities*.

The ISJO's Water Sensitive Communities program is a critical component in managing growth in the region in a sustainable, resilient, and productive way while delivering livability (including urban heat) outcomes for our member council's communities.

While the grant project has now been completed, the commitment made by Councils through the management committee will see continued coordination to support the effective and efficient use of resources and to build collective capacity across and between the various organisations to enable strong leadership and guidance to industry and benefits to the community.

Fee for service opportunities

Shoalhaven Council commercial glass capture project

The ISJO team will be undertaking a regional assessment into the viability of increasing throughput of commercial and industrial (C&I) and construction and demolition (C&D) glass at the Shoalhaven Council glass processing facility. The benefits to Council from this project will not only be increased material throughput but also the promotion of Council's recycling facilities and capabilities as regional assets.

Regional biomass capacity assessment from C&I and C&D sources (BlueScope)

The ISJO team will undertake an assessment into the availability of biomass and the viability of sourcing sufficient tonnages for blast furnace operations. The project will focus on the Illawarra Shoalhaven region with capacity to expand investigations if opportunities arise through the consultation process.

Events Support

ISJO assisted in the delivery of the Kiama bulky waste drop off event with casual ISJO staff working on site from 12 - 25 March at the Minnamurra facility.

Community Recycling Centres (CRC)

Storyboards have been completed in collaboration with Councils for localised and targeted media to increase recycling of household problem waste.

The creation of short videos and distribution via social media by Councils will create improved awareness of both the environmental benefits of diverting these items from landfill and the 365 day access to a free service for householders.

Advocacy

We are continuing to liaise with the EPA on the implementation of the Waste and Sustainable Materials (WaSM) strategy and have been involved in consultation on regional implementation, strategy development and funding models.

We are also currently framing a submission on behalf of the ISJO Councils on the IPART review of the domestic waste management charge and the NSW Resource Recovery Framework review.

Additionally, we will support Councils with any difficulties that may arise as a result of the NSW plastics ban effective 1 June 2022.

IPART review of DWM charges



We have been working closely with our counterparts in both member Councils, State agencies and the wider regional groups to ensure an aligned approach to a

submission that will benefit our Councils now and into the future.

External influences such as CPI and fuel increases, duopolised recycling services and lack of investment, are all impacting local government's ability to maintain and improve service delivery to their communities.

A detailed report on this matter is included in Report 15.1 in the ISJO Board Business Paper for 1 April 2022.

A full copy of the Board Agenda may be found at [ISJO 1 April 2022 Board Meeting](#).

Regional Illegal Dumping Program

Councils are reporting a steady increase in illegal dumping incidents in association with the recent "rain bomb" and ongoing storm events.

A new illegal dumping awareness campaign will commence next week. Casual staff from the ISJO office will be out and about with our e-bikes and trailer billboards conducting community engagement with various illegal dumping messages. A targeted social media campaign will be used to reinforce the messaging and track reach across the community.

Asbestos

We were successful in securing a grant to pilot a household asbestos collection program with the aim to remove small quantities of legacy asbestos across Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama LGAs. The program has concluded and a final report to the EPA is being prepared.

Over a three month period, 5.8 tonnes of asbestos were collected from 82 properties by a licensed asbestos removal company at a cost to the program of just over \$33,000 but at no cost to residents and at a huge saving in terms of potential illegal dumping and environmental damage.

This benchmark will support the development of a proposal to Councils for ISJO to continue the ongoing delivery of a household asbestos collection program.

The ISJO has been invited to present on the pilot program at the 2022 NSW Waste conference 2022 in May.

Business and Consultancy Services

The ISJO is expanding the range of services it provides to member Councils and the wider local government sector and is now providing strategic and business planning services. This assistance is being provided at no cost to member Councils and partner organisations.



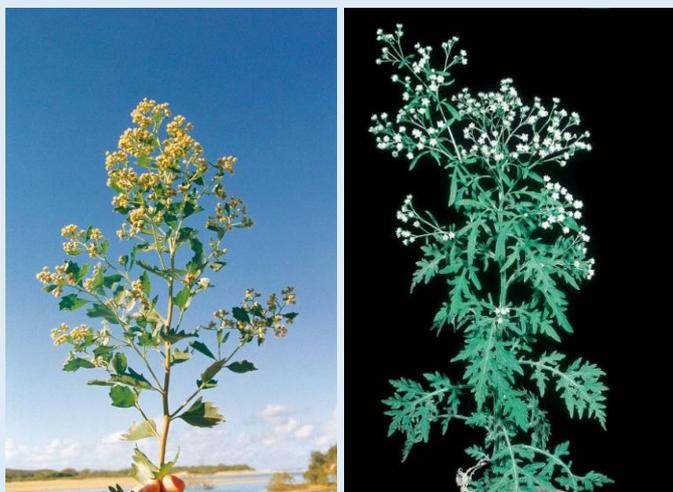
Future initiatives will focus on support for ethical conduct, sustainable practice and business development. These services will be provided on a free or fee for service basis depending on the client and Board policy.

Weeds Management Programs

The ISJO – through its Illawarra District Weeds Authority (IDWA) business unit – is responsible for priority weed control in the Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama local government areas. To oversee supervision of the Authority's priority weed control program and to ensure constituent council obligations and responsibilities are being met, the IDWA provides secretariat services to a regional committee that meets quarterly. This regional committee facilitates communication, strategy sharing and organisational updates.

The IDWA is actively involved with the South East Local Land Services Regional Weeds Committee, being represented on both the Regional Weeds committee and the associated Weeds Action Program sub-committee.

IDWA staff hold casual positions on various working groups at State, regional and local levels providing valuable input and feedback on a range of weed related issues.



[Groundsel bush](#)

[Parthenium Weed](#)

A prime objective of the IDWA Policy of Control is to ensure, as far as practical, that residents meet their General Biosecurity Duty obligations and responsibilities with respect to priority weeds. To this end the IDWA is in constant liaison and consultation with a number of government agencies and private landholders with regard to priority weed management programs. This level of consultation is strengthened through the implementation of the NSW Weeds Action Program and in particular the focus on high risk pathways and high risk sites.

Good compliance has been achieved by most government agencies and private landholders with regard to the Authority's weed control programs. Most control works are implemented on a reactive basis following requests by IDWA staff. Some government authorities and private individuals have, however, proactively undertaken control programs on lands under their care and control prior to inspections taking place.



[Scotch broom, Cape broom and Gorse](#)

Annual General Meeting

Our regional committee held its Annual General Meeting on 18 March 2022.

Cr Cath Blakey from Wollongong City Council was elected Committee Chair at the meeting.

Summary of Achievements:

A number of key achievements for 2020/2021 were identified. These achievements included, but were not limited to:

1. Continued focus on regional and local weed control programs for private landholders and government agencies with 1,494 parcels of private and state land inspected and 299 compliance re-inspections undertaken
2. 812 parcels of council controlled lands were inspected of which 271 were found to have an infestation of one or more priority weed. 1,897 kilometres of roadsides and high risk pathways were inspected and treated for one or more priority weeds. 288 hectares of reserve lands were controlled. 31 priority sites were managed and protected
3. High Risk Pathways can be any linear feature in the landscape where weeds are spreading. They are generally heavily trafficked being main road, rail and river corridors that have a high risk of new weed incursions being introduced from external sources. 1,098 kilometres of high risk pathways were inspected in the reporting period.

We will be progressing to the new ISJO website in the coming months. In the meanwhile our present site [Illawarra District Weeds Authority](#) will continue to be updated to reflect changes in the legislation (*Biosecurity Act 2015*), new priority regional and state species lists and ongoing stakeholder obligations and responsibilities.

Local Government Emergency Recovery Support Group

The NSW Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Wendy Tuckerman MP, has asked the Office of Local Government to reactivate its Local Government Emergency Recovery Support Group. The Local Government Emergency Recovery Support Group delivers peer to peer support for disaster affected councils throughout NSW.

Many offers of support have already been lodged with the Group by Councils seeking to help with the recent flood and storm emergencies. These offers of technical assistance, equipment and personnel have been offered freely and have been greeted with great enthusiasm and gratitude.

Our own regional experiences in regard to natural disasters including the devastating impacts of bushfire in the Shoalhaven have shown how much can be gained by a sharing of resources and expertise. We have also learnt through the Pandemic about how much can be achieved remotely.

The Councils of the Illawarra Shoalhaven are working to strengthen their regional ties and to promote the resilience that comes from assisting one another in times of need. As a region we welcome the reactivation of the Emergency Recovery Support Group and are looking forward to doing what we can to help Councils and Communities in their recovery processes.

From adversity comes Leadership



The NSW south coast was severely impacted by the devastating bushfires of the 2019/2020 summer with over 300 homes in the Shoalhaven destroyed and 150 houses impacted. In order to preserve the capacity of its only putrescible waste landfill, Shoalhaven City Council opted to set up a temporary bushfire demolition waste processing facility. Any demolition waste that was unaffected by asbestos contamination was able to be recycled. In the 3 months of operation the facility processed nearly 18,000 tonnes of demolition waste from 313 homes recovering a staggering 96% of the material for reuse.



Our Core Member Councils:

Wollongong City Council, Shellharbour City Council, Kiama Municipal Council, Shoalhaven City Council

Our Special Program Partners (Southern Waste Group):

Our Member Councils plus Wingecarribee Shire Council

Our Special Program Partners (RID Program):

Our Member Councils plus Eurobodalla Shire Council, Bega Valley Shire Council, Wingecarribee Shire Council and Wollondilly Shire Council

Our Weeds Management Program Councils:

Wollongong City Council, Kiama Municipal Council and Shellharbour City Council