

Joint Organisation Executive Officers Network

Discussion Paper:

Joint Organisations Review Draft Implementation Plan

5 September 2022 Workshop

Introductory Note

As you are aware, the Joint Organisation Review Implementation Plan has been drafted by the State Government Interagency Group and provided to the Joint Organisations with the advice that it is in draft form for codesign.

We understand – and very much appreciate – that the purpose of the 5 September Workshop is to progress discussion on the Draft Implementation Plan and to fine tune and accelerate its implementation.

The Joint Organisation Executive Officers have met to discuss the workshop and its potential outcomes.

Arising from that discussion we suggest a two-pronged approach whereby:

1. the sustainability challenges of the network are accorded priority and are addressed by fast moving and dedicated progress
2. the balance of the implementation plan is ranked and a co-design process undertaken.

This briefing note provides context and potential structure to this approach.

First some background

We think it important that we highlight the roles that Joint Organisations have been created to undertake.

Joint Organisations are statutory bodies under the Local Government Act with Section 400R(1) of the Act stating that their principal functions are:

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

400(s) of the Act identifies other functions that a Joint Organisation might undertake:

- (1) A joint organisation may deliver services and provide assistance to or on behalf of councils (including capacity building), as agreed with the councils, and subject to any restrictions imposed by the regulations.*

One of the challenges for Joint Organisations since their establishment has been achieving a balance between their principal “why we are here” functions and their optional service delivery functions. Some of the Joint Organisations are relatively complex, well-funded entities encompassing a wide range of strategy / business / service delivery functions. Others are extremely small and resource constrained and, while they might aspire to energetically pursue service delivery / income generating activities, they have really struggled to do so.

To put the funding gap between Joint Organisations into perspective, there is more than a \$1 million difference between the Joint Organisation with the highest core funding and the Joint Organisation with the lowest.

This environment – a widely varying network with some JOs being extremely well resourced and others struggling for existence – has made it extremely difficult to generate system wide success. It has also made it difficult to ensure a consistent level of engagement across the board with State Agencies.

In the end, however, all of the Joint Organisations share a requirement to pursue their principal functions and it is these functions – regional strategy, regional leadership / advocacy and inter-governmental cooperation – that we believe are most important to our State Agency partners too.

As a result, and in the context of the Joint Organisations Review Draft Implementation Plan, the Executive Officers have identified two fundamental heads of consideration:

1. What needs to change to make the relationship with Joint Organisations (the value proposition) work consistently for State agencies?
2. Can we optimise the funding framework through a regional lens?

The table following these introductory notes outlines a number of key priorities / observations from the Executive Officers and links them to the content of the Draft Joint Organisation Review Implementation Plan.

Attachments:

There are three attachments to this paper:

1. A copy of the draft implementation plan with a numbering system inserted for each proposed action
2. A map of the Joint Organisation areas as initially proclaimed
3. A map of the current RLE boundaries

Joint Organisation Review Draft Implementation Plan

Joint Organisation Executive Officer Feedback	How this might be achieved: Draft Implementation Plan component
<p>1. Joint Organisations are keen to partner with State Agencies on ways of optimising the Joint Organisation network so that it better delivers value to the State and to local government, and they are open as to how this optimisation might be achieved at a whole of network and individual Joint Organisation basis.</p> <p>Clear focus areas include governance, leadership, reciprocal accountability and reporting.</p> <p>We acknowledge that the time might be right to review the statutory environment in which we operate.</p> <p>We also acknowledge some of the challenges associated with Joint Organisation boundaries both for some Joint Organisations and for the State Agencies / RLE that we work with.</p>	<p>1. Governance, promotion and communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support the forum of JO chairs as a means of securing collaboration between chairs, MPs and NSW Government agencies (recommendation 8) d. Commence discussions with mayors and general managers of eligible councils not currently a member of a JO to identify and understand barriers to membership <p>3. Accountability and Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop a performance framework for JOs and review against targets (recommendation 1) <p><i>Specifically:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3(a)1 Prepare a monitoring framework as part of OLG's monitoring program d. Support JOs to work more effectively within the framework of the Local Government Act (recommendation 7) <p><i>Specifically:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3(d)1 Review the regulatory and legislative requirements of JOs to determine if they remain fit for purpose <p>4. Boundaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure boundaries are suitably aligned (recommendation 6) <p><i>Specifically:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4(a)1 Review current design principles to ensure they remain fit for purpose 4(a)2 Establish a process to alter JO boundaries where warranted

Joint Organisation Executive Officer Feedback	How this might be achieved: Draft Implementation Plan component
<p>2. Joint Organisations are keen to grow awareness of their actions, initiatives, resources and plans amongst their key stakeholders – both internally within local government and externally with State Agencies and other sectors. We acknowledge that many of our stakeholders really do not know why Joint Organisations exist, what they have achieved and what partnerships with them might accomplish.</p>	<p>1. Governance, promotion and communication</p> <p>e. Profile successful JO projects and initiatives and showcase best practices (recommendation 9)</p> <p><i>Specifically:</i></p> <p>1(b)1 Use OLG fortnightly newsletter to showcase JO initiatives</p> <p>1(b)2 Share examples of good JO practice and success stories across the JO network and through Regional Leadership Executive (RLE) meetings</p> <p>1(b)3 Develop a suite of material demonstrating the value of JOs to state agencies and councils</p> <p>1(b)4 Prepare and distribute targeted communications outlining the value of JOs to non-member councils, State Government agencies, councillors and senior staff</p>

Joint Organisation Executive Officer Feedback	Draft Implementation Plan component
<p>3. The Joint Organisation Chairs Forum – which comprises the Chairs of each of the State’s Joint Organisation (and who are the Mayors of a Joint Organisation member council) – views the Department of Regional NSW as the key enabling partner in the relationship with State Agencies. This is principally, though not exclusively, because of the coordination role DRNSW plays in the network of RLEs across New South Wales</p> <p>4. There are, however, a number of other key agencies that develop and implement plans in the areas within which the Joint Organisations operate. Given the mandated inter-governmental cooperation role of Joint Organisations there is opportunity for the implementation and development of accountability frameworks to assist State Agencies in doing their work and to facilitate strategic partnerships between the Agencies, Joint Organisations and councils.</p> <p>The regional plans that Joint Organisations are engaging with include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Transport • Water • Regional Development (REDS) • Destination Networks <p>5. There is an opportunity to systematically leverage local council Community Strategic Plans and the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework more broadly to add value to the work of State Agencies. This could be managed through collaboration and integrated planning at an RLE level. Some JOs and RLEs have commenced this work.</p> <p>This is potentially a very powerful opportunity given the strength of the IP&R framework and the reportedly low awareness amongst some Agencies as to its long term strategic role, its linkage to resourcing and the very detailed community consultation that is involved in its preparation and reporting</p>	<p>1. Governance, promotion and communication</p> <p>b. Profile successful JO projects and initiatives and showcase best practices (recommendation 9)</p> <p><i>Specifically:</i></p> <p>1(b)5 Make better use of the statement of regional priorities to feed into RLE activities</p> <p>4. Accountability and Performance</p> <p>a. Develop a performance framework for JOs and review against targets (recommendation 1)</p> <p><i>Specifically:</i></p> <p>3(a)1 Prepare a monitoring framework as part of OLG’s monitoring program</p> <p>Leveraging local government / Joint Organisation planning is not overtly referenced in the Draft Implementation Plan. It may, however, be the single greatest opportunity to embed effective strategic partnerships with State Agencies – to the benefit of those agencies as well as Councils and Joint Organisations.</p> <p>Joint Organisations report that there a growing number of RLEs that are tapping into the coordination capacity and local knowledge of Joint Organisations and that outcomes are being delivered through sound partnerships and mature funding relationships.</p> <p>The challenge is to apply this consistently throughout the State.</p>

Joint Organisation Executive Officer Feedback	Draft Implementation Plan component
<p>6. There are multiple Council functions (waste, water, planning, transport, resilience, emergency management, visitor economy, regional development, cybersecurity, spatial services, net zero emissions, health to name a few) which have either significant State agency interest or regulation and where JOs are seeking to explore partnering in implementation in a systemic way across the State leveraging a the JOs as a regulated mechanism for delivery through a regional lens offering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sound governance, reporting, decision making by GMs and Mayors b. Implementation using Council collaborations of staff – growing and embedding capacity c. Cost savings and other efficiencies through aggregation d. Continuity – JOs, like Councils, are proclaimed – and require no machinery of government changes. <p>7. Regarding optimisation of the funding framework, JOs have welcomed inclusion in the opportunity, however report that the structure of some or all grants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclude JOs – for example “The applicant must be the asset owner” • Do not incentivise collaboration at a regional level • Do not enable / encourage regional prioritisation <p>Given the growing multi-agency support role – we wonder whether there is an opportunity for a Treasury bid to fund this role under some type of SLA?</p>	<p>2. Greater financial sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support NSW Government agencies to showcase JOs as a strong and respected partner (recommendation 4) b. Encourage NSW Government agencies to prioritise investing in the JO network (recommendation 5) <p><i>Specifically:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2(b)1 Identify funding opportunities for JOs 2(b)2 Identify where investment is not being made in the JO network and remove barriers to investment

Joint Organisation Review Draft Implementation Plan

1. Governance, promotion and communication

- b. Support the forum of JO chairs as a means of securing collaboration between chairs, MPs and NSW Government agencies (recommendation 8)

	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Status
1(a)1	Convene an independently facilitated workshop of JO executive officers to align executive officer views on the role of the JO chairs forum	OLG, Regional NSW and JO EOs	March 2022	Completed
1(a)2	Convene an independently facilitated workshop of JO chairs and executive officers to ensure the JO chairs forum is fulfilling its potential	OLG, Regional NSW and JO chairs	March 2022	Complete
1(a)3	Amend terms of reference for the operation of the JO chairs forum to include workshop outcomes and recommendations	JOs	May 2022	Complete
1(a)4	Monitor the ongoing effectiveness of the JO chairs forum to ensure it is fulfilling its potential	JOs	September 2022 and February 2022	To commence

- c. Profile successful JO projects and initiatives and showcase best practices (recommendation 9)

	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Status
1(b)1	Use OLG fortnightly newsletter to showcase JO initiatives	OLG, with content provided by JOs	Ongoing	Commenced
1(b)2	Share examples of good JO practice and success stories across the JO network and through Regional Leadership Executive (RLE) meetings	OLG, Regional NSW and JOs	March 2023	To commence
1(b)3	Develop a suite of materials demonstrating the value of JOs to state agencies and councils	OLG, Regional NSW and JOs	December 2022	Underway
1(b)4	Prepare and distribute targeted communications outlining the value of JOs to non-member councils, State Government agencies, councillors and senior staff	OLG and JOs	December 2022	To commence

	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Status
1(b)5	Make better use of the statement of regional priorities to feed into RLE activities	OLG to compile JO statements of regional priorities and provide to RLEs; JOs to promote through RLE meetings	December 2022	To commence

d. Ensure member councils understand the role of JOs (recommendation 10)

	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Status
1(c)1	Conduct a survey of councillors and senior staff of member councils of JOs to gain a baseline understanding of awareness of JOs and their value to member councils and their region	OLG, Regional NSW and JOs	To commence in August/September 2022	To commence
1(c)2	Prepare a strategy for JOs to implement to raise awareness and understanding of the role of JOs	OLG, Regional NSW and JOs	To commence in September/October 2022 following the survey	To commence
1(c)3	Conduct a follow up survey of councillors and senior staff of member councils of JOs to measure if there has been an increase in awareness of JOs and their value to member councils and their region following delivery of the strategy	OLG, Regional NSW and JOs	June 2023	To commence

e. Encourage all eligible councils to belong to a joint organisation (recommendation 11)

	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Status
1(d)1	Commence discussions with mayors and general managers of eligible councils not currently a member of a JO to identify and understand barriers to membership	OLG and Regional NSW	July 2022 and on	Commenced
1(d)2	Work with JOs, NSW Government agencies and eligible councils to remove barriers to membership where possible	OLG, Regional NSW and JOs	August 2022 and on	To commence

2. Greater financial stability

a. Support NSW Government agencies to showcase JOs as a strong and respected partner (recommendation 4)

	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Status
2(a)1	Establish a JO interagency group to support JOs to be an effective partner	OLG and relevant agencies	March 2022	Group established
2(a)2	Develop a JO review implementation plan	OLG, JO interagency group and JOs	June 2022	Commenced

b. Encourage NSW Government agencies to prioritise investing in the JO network (recommendation 5)

	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Status
2(b)1	Identify funding opportunities for JOs	OLG, Regional NSW and JOs	June 2022 and on	Commenced
2(b)2	Identify where investment is not being made in the JO network and remove barriers to investment	Interagency working group	September 2022	Underway

3. Accountability and performance

a. Develop a performance framework for JOs and review performance against targets (recommendation 1)

	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Status
3(a)1	Prepare a performance monitoring framework as part of OLG's monitoring program	OLG	December 2022	To commence

b. Develop tailored capacity building and investment in JOs (recommendation 2)

	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Status
3(b)1	Work with the Auditor General to seek to lower audit costs	OLG	September 2022	Initial meeting held – further meetings to follow

c. Strengthen governance processes in identified JOs (recommendation 3)

	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Status
3(c)1	Informed by the performance monitoring framework	OLG	2023	To commence

d. Support JOs to work more effectively within the framework of the Local Government Act (recommendation 7)

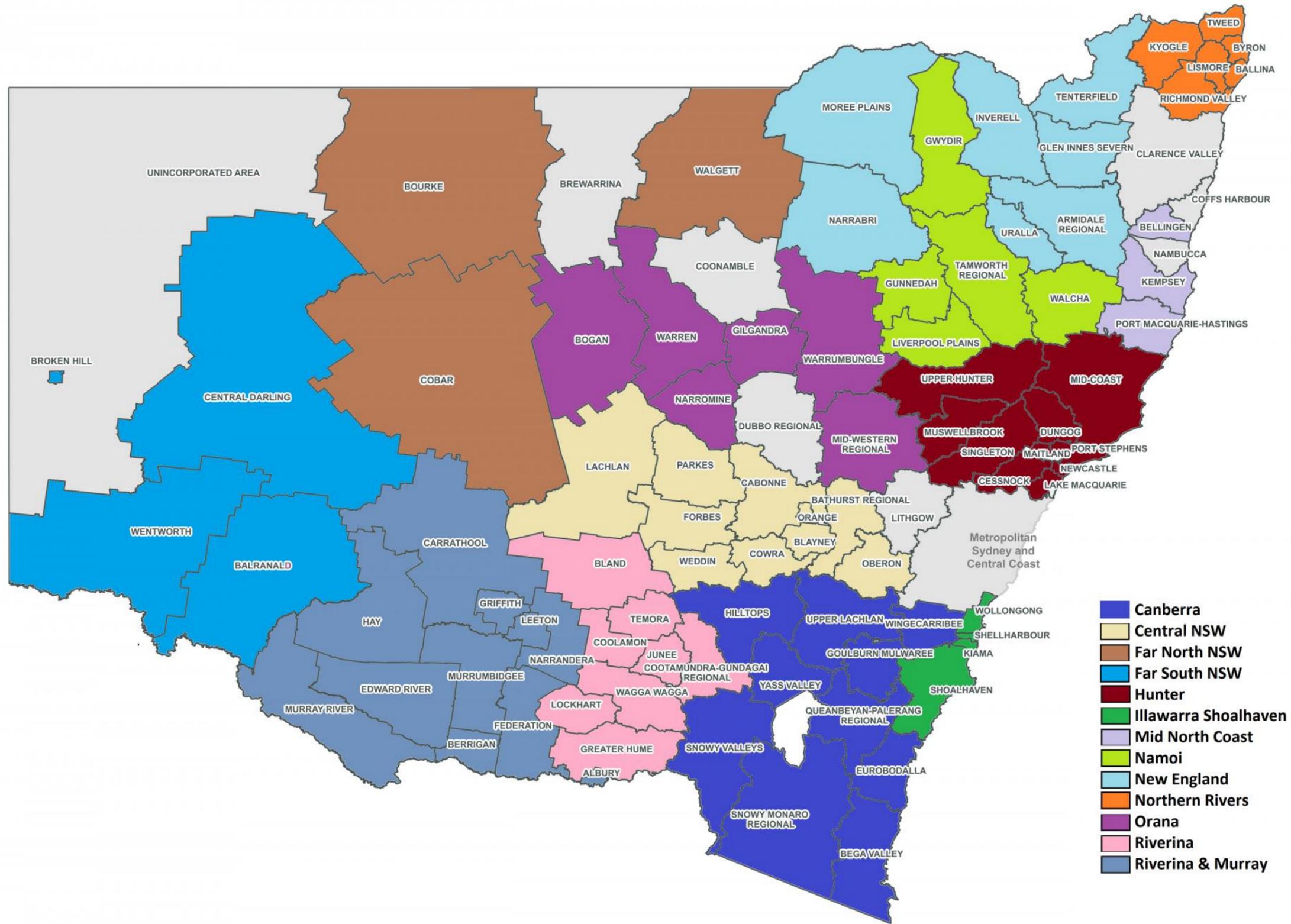
	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Status
3(d)1	Review the regulatory and legislative requirements of JOs to determine if they remain fit for purpose	OLG and in consultation with JOs	December 2022	To commence
3(d)2	Support JOs with the establishment of the ARIC framework	OLG and JOs	June 2022	Commenced
3(d)3	Identify opportunities for JOs to streamline regulatory and legislative compliance	OLG and JOs	October 2022	To commence

4. Boundaries

a. Ensure boundaries are suitably aligned (recommendation 6)

	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Status
4(a)1	Review current design principles to ensure they remain fit for purpose	OLG, Regional NSW and JOs	September 2022	To commence
4(a)2	Establish a process to alter JO boundaries where warranted	OLG and Regional NSW and JOs	September 2022	To commence

Joint Organisations Map



Regions of NSW and Regional Directors

