

# ISJO

# Matters

## September 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:

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

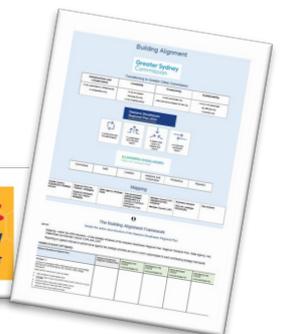
ISJO works in partnership with our Member Councils, State Agencies and peak organisations in helping achieve the best possible outcomes for our region's communities.

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



### Inside this September 2022 Edition:

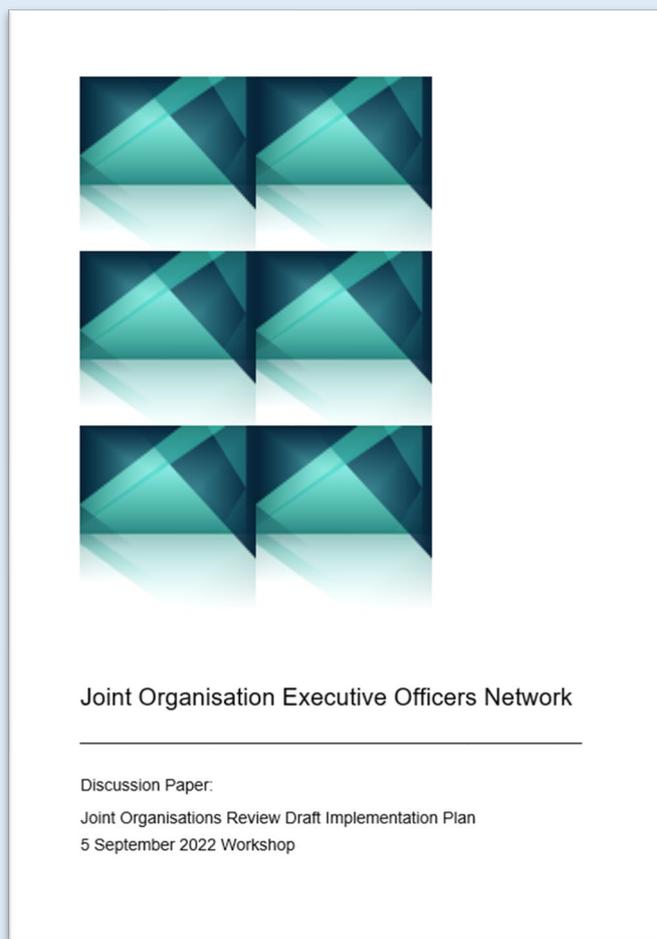
- Progressing implementation of the Joint Organisations Review
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## Our Logo

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.

## Progressing implementation of the 2021 Joint Organisations Review



In 2017, the NSW Parliament passed the *Local Government Amendment (Regional Joint Organisations) Act 2017* to establish a network of joint organisations (JOs) across regional New South Wales.

As discussed in our *February 2022 ISJO Matters*, the Office of Local Government conducted an independent review of the joint organisation framework in 2021. The objective of this review was to ensure the effectiveness of the framework so that joint organisations could better deliver their core functions.

The review report was released in December 2021 and brought together findings from an examination of background documents, a survey of all general managers of participating Councils and interviews with a total of 72 stakeholders from across all 13 of the Joint Organisations.

A copy of the report and more information about Joint Organisations can be found on the Office of Local Government website [HERE](#).

### Key findings

The review found that:

1. The JO framework was sufficiently robust to be a credible, legitimate and transparent model of regional governance
2. There was evidence that most JOs were beginning to deliver outcomes in line with the model's three core functions
3. Stakeholders agreed that the potential of JOs to coordinate and simplify state–local government collaboration represents value. However, the performance of JOs in this and other core functions was inconsistent across NSW. To ensure JOs reach their potential and are sustainable, some aspects of the model needed refinement.

## State Agencies Interagency Working Group

To assist in the implementation of the Joint Organisation Review, the Office of Local Government led the creation of a State Agencies Interagency Working Group as a means of identifying and actioning opportunities to enhance the strategic partnerships between local councils, their Joint Organisations and the State Government. The agencies represented on the Interagency Group included all the agencies with a critical working relationship with local government. These agencies included, but were not limited to, the Department of Regional NSW, the Department of Planning and Environment, Transport for NSW and Resilience NSW.

A key focus of the Interagency Working Group's discussions was preparation of a Joint Organisation Review Draft Implementation Plan

### 5 September Workshop

On 5 September 2022 a workshop involving the State Agencies and Joint Organisation Executive Officers was held as a means of initiating a co-design process for critical elements of the Joint Organisation Review Draft Implementation Plan. The workshop was chaired by Ally Dench, Executive Director of the Office of Local Government.

A discussion paper for the workshop was prepared by the ISJO on behalf of the Joint Organisation Executive Officers Network. This discussion paper may be accessed [HERE](#).

The outcomes of the workshop were very positive with three project groups formed to drive key themes in the Draft Implementation Plan.

The project groups each have representation from State Agencies and Joint Organisations and comprise:

#### ***Governance, Promotion and Communication***

Develop a Joint Organisations Communication Strategy to promote joint organisations to member councils and to provide a mechanism for better engagement between joint organisations and State Agencies

#### ***Accountability and Performance***

Develop a list of key performance indicators for joint organisations to report against

#### ***Financial Sustainability and Joint Organisation Boundaries***

Removing barriers to investment in Joint Organisations

The ISJO is the project lead for the Accountability and Performance Group and is represented on the Financial Sustainability and Joint Organisation Boundaries Group.

An update on the outcomes of the project group activities will be provided in a future edition of *ISJO Matters*.

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## A potted history of the ISJO

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation came into being on 1 July 2018 following a period in which our region trialled, in pilot form, the Joint Organisation model.

Prior to 2015 local government in our region worked together under the umbrella of the Southern Councils Group. The Southern Councils Group developed from the Illawarra Region of Councils (IROC) which began operation in 1985 and carried on until 2004. An even earlier grouping of Councils, the Illawarra Regional Organisation (Region 11), commenced in 1975 and operated until 1979.

In all its various forms, local government cooperation in our region has had a common theme: that of councils working together to promote and foster the sustainable development of our region by building on our unique and diverse economic, natural and cultural heritage.





## **Key worker affordable housing research, strategy and action plan - Illawarra & Shoalhaven**

The ISJO is partnering with [Business Illawarra](#) to deliver a major study on key worker housing affordability.

Being prepared by [Judith Stubbs & Associates](#), the research will deliver:

- A background report on what opportunities there are to increase the supply of affordably key worker housing across the region
- A booklet on relevant inter-jurisdictional ownership and rental case studies examined as being suitable for the area
- A strategy report that identifies relevant programs that will attract government support, institutional and other private investment
- An audit report on the availability of resources, land and property in the region that might be made available to implement an innovative key worker affordable housing program, and
- An overarching strategy and action plan that sets outcome targets for implementation.

Our study will add significant value and unique perspectives to other efforts to address the very serious issue of housing affordability and availability. Recent initiatives include but are not limited to:

1. The [Everybody's home report](#) that covers the Illawarra and South Coast amongst a total of five regional areas considered
2. The NSW Government's comprehensive response to the [Regional Housing Taskforce](#) recommendations, and
3. The [Wollongong City Council Draft Housing Strategy](#)

The research is being funded by Business Illawarra. The ISJO's part funding is being sourced from the Office of Local Government Capacity Building program and the ISJO's own resources.

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### **Building Alignment:** Intergovernmental Strategic Planning and Accountability Framework

In 2018 the Board of the ISJO adopted a Statement of Regional Priorities to guide the operations of our organisation. A copy of this Statement may be found [HERE](#).

The Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities sets out the vision for our region and provides an overview of how the joint organisation's strategic work program will help achieve the regional vision. It is a key tool for joint organisations and must be adopted in updated form within twelve months of a Local Government election.

The last Local Government election was held in December 2021 and preparations are underway for a very different, much more comprehensive and integrated new Statement of Regional Priorities.

Earlier this year the Board adopted the "Building Alignment" Framework. The Building Alignment Framework will utilise the structure of the key State Government principal strategy for our Region – the Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041 – and will map to it the key priorities of our member councils and the broader regional priorities of the ISJO and key State Government agencies. It will then form the basis of a reporting and accountability framework to drive in partnership achievement of our regional vision. Our Statement and its enabling strategies and reporting systems will be a first for New South Wales and will once again put the Illawarra Shoalhaven Region at the forefront of local government reform.

# Mental health at work Resources for regional businesses



Poor service access, distance, cost and continued reluctance to seek help all contribute to higher levels of mental ill-health in the regions. Over 60% of small businesses in regional and rural NSW indicated that mental health or stress for themselves or their staff is a concern<sup>1</sup>. We spend a third of our life at work, so it's important to make sure mental health is managed and supported in the workplace.

Whether it's a cafe on the north coast, or a farm in the west, a mentally healthy workplace is where everyone feels supported, accepted and empowered at work. They are productive, great places to work.

The NSW Government has launched an online Regional resource kit with tailored advice and resources for regional businesses to promote, manage and support mental health at work.

The kit outlines factors that impact workplace wellbeing in regional NSW. For example, separating work and home life, labour shortages, seasonal work and traumatic events. The kit has simple actions for business owners and leaders to create a mentally healthy workplace no matter the region, size or industry. Learn how to make a difference in your business, and your community at [www.mentalhealthatwork.nsw.gov.au](http://www.mentalhealthatwork.nsw.gov.au).

The ISJO strongly supports this mental health initiative, and we would encourage you to download the resource kit by clicking [HERE](#).

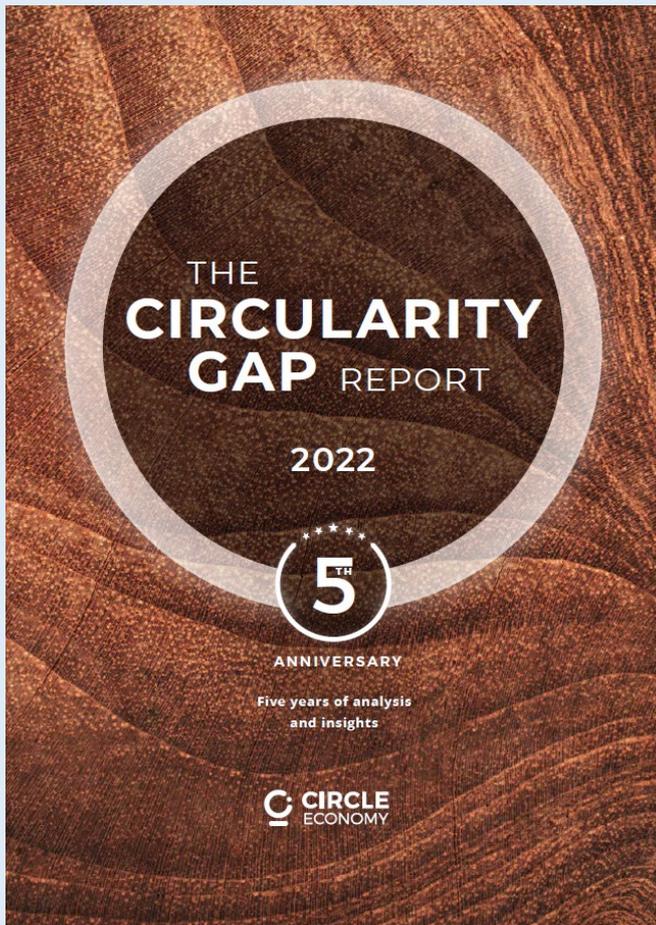


[www.mentalhealthatwork.nsw.gov.au](http://www.mentalhealthatwork.nsw.gov.au)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/our-work/surveys>

## Environment, Waste, Resilience and Sustainability

### Enviro 22



The [2022 Circularity Gap Report](#) estimated that only 8.6% of materials globally are genuinely circular. This means that the use of over 90% of materials is linear, that is it is used once and then discarded. This is resulting in massive and unmanageable issues of waste and pollution. To put this in context, global consumption has reached 100 billion tonnes. This means that over 90 billion tonnes of materials are wasted each year and the figure is growing.

With 70% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions coming from material management there is an urgent need to transform the way we deal with materials. This transformation comes from designing differently and establishing systems that support repair, refurbishment and reuse.

**Enviro 22**, hosted by the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association ([WMRR](#)) was held in Canberra at the end of August to address these issues and opportunities.

Presentations focused on setting Carbon budgets, raw material production and the need for strategic control of those materials, the policy certainty shift away from linear, the importance of data and remote sensing and solutions that suit scale.

Taku Ide spoke to the importance of sequestering CO<sub>2</sub> into the soil as a way of helping to meet net zero targets. He noted that diversion from landfill is a large contributor to CH<sub>4</sub> reduction and fleet is the major contributor to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Disturbingly, we learnt that eating a medium sized steak will contribute the same amount of CO<sub>2</sub> as driving a vehicle for 100 kilometres and that, by 2050, we will be dealing globally with 20 million tonnes of Solar panel waste not including the packaging waste that is generated through production and transport.



Christian Keel from [Edge Consulting](#) speaking at the Conference. [Edge Consulting](#) is undertaking our research on [viable Circular Economy opportunities for our region](#).

Over the two days, networking led to many conversations around “net zero” and “circular economy” being two sides of the one coin. Many questions were discussed:

- What does circular strategy mean in our region? What is our role, who are the other players and what role do they play?
- Is it our role to contribute to interrupting business models and push for climate aligned targets?
- How can we influence sustainable procurement and measure the impact?
- Can we re-focus policy and action to the use of materials rather than production and waste?
- Is a shared ownership model a key focus and will it help to achieve net zero outcomes i.e., vehicles and charging stations, scooters, ebikes?

- Where and how are we supporting the right to repair movement and where should the demand focus be i.e., textiles, mobile devices?
- Are there opportunities to push for extended producer responsibility and return stations in shopping precincts?
- How can we collect and manage problematic waste streams locally?

By designing scaled solutions for communities or regions and having metrics based on economic growth, job creation and emissions reduction, circular principles and climate aligned targets will be taken up by more and more businesses in this region.

## Prioritising our Circular Economy Opportunities

On 23 September the ISJO will be holding a regional workshop to explore commercially viable opportunities available to us to meet net zero targets in the years ahead.

Following this workshop – which is targeted at council, State Agency and key stakeholder groups – a webinar will be held to inform the community of the outcomes of the Workshop and to further explore opportunities in the circular economy.

The workshop and webinar are part of a wider circular economy initiative funded by the Office of Local Government's Capacity Building program, our member councils and the ISJO.

 The ISJO would like to extend an invitation for you to help shape the circularity and future prospects of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Region

To date, **Edge Environment** has undertaken a detailed analysis of material flows, market opportunities and technologies. Through a combination of stakeholder engagement, research, industry knowledge and analysis, a range of feasible opportunities to help meet net zero targets have been highlighted for the Illawarra Shoalhaven region.

**We now request your strategic input to narrow the current list down to 3-5 opportunities with high feasibility to implement over the next one to five years**

*This is stage one of our approach to boost circularity in the region and keep materials in the productive economy, to be progressed by stage two facilitating the implementation of identified opportunities*

**WORKSHOP DETAILS 23 SEPT, 2022**  
 9:00am - 1pm  
 Followed by optional networking lunch

**Shellharbour Civic Centre,  
 76 Cygnet Ave**  
 Shellharbour City Centre  
 Free parking off Benson Ave,  
 Accessible parking off Cygnet Ave

**RSVP BY FRIDAY 17TH SEPT**  
 Yvette Barrs  
 0407 431 746  
 ybarrs@isjo.nsw.gov.au  
*Refreshments and lunch will be provided*

**AGENDA**

9AM • **WELCOME**

- **PROJECT BACKGROUND**
- **MATERIALS AND OPPORTUNITIES**
- **PRIORITISATION OF OPPORTUNITIES**
- **COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**
- **NEXT STEPS**

1PM • **NETWORKING LUNCH**



### Varroa Mite Response

In June 2022, *Varroa destructor*, a parasite of European honey bees, was detected in surveillance hives at the Port of Newcastle.

At the beginning of September 2022, 99 premises in NSW had bees infested with Varroa Mite. The location of these premises ranged from Sydney up to the Hunter Valley region, one property in north-west NSW and one on the north coast near Coffs Harbour.

As reported in the August edition of *ISJO Matters*, the NSW Department of Primary Industries requested assistance from authorised weed officers within our State to help with the Varroa Mite Response. The ISJO, through its Illawarra District Weeds Authority (IDWA) division, offered its resources and we were contacted and asked to participate in the Program.

The IDWA's Biosecurity Weeds Inspector, Tony Martin, joined the response team based in the Central Coast and Hunter regions undertaking the role of Team leader Destruction AO (Authorised Officer).

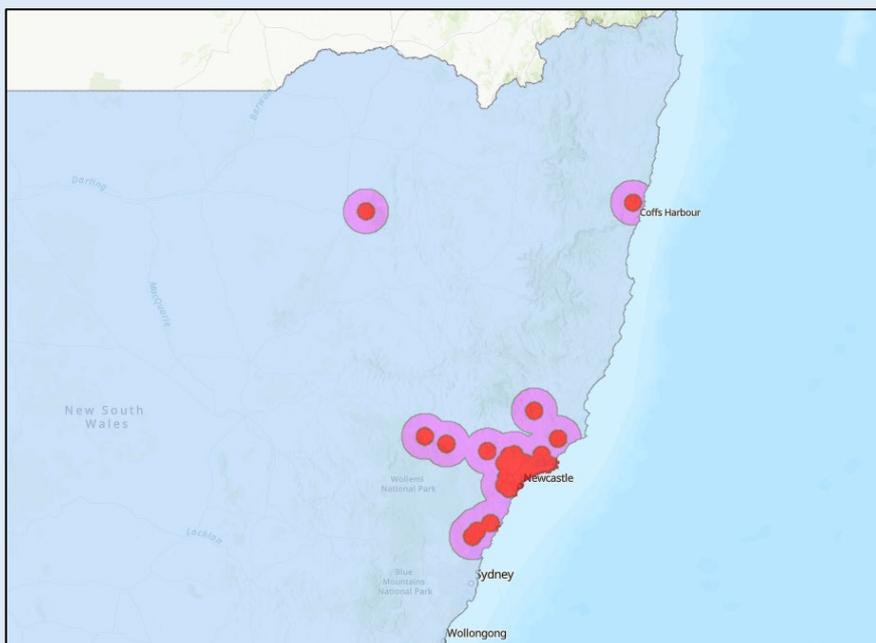
Tony's role focused on leading humane bee euthanasia activities and onsite storage securing processes at various locations. It involved liaising with hive owners and property occupiers, arranging and

confirming equipment for the euthanasia process, undertaking euthanasia of bees, securing hives, directing team members and the setting up of decontamination procedures along with the inputting of field data into a reporting system.

The destruction team would typically begin their day at the local control center where they would prepare their equipment. Reconnaissance at all scheduled premises then took place. At dusk, and when the bees had returned to their hives, the euthanasia would begin. It was generally completed by late evening.

Tony found dealing with a prohibited pest species, leading a team for destruction, securing hives, setting up decontamination sites and helping to potentially save the bee industry in NSW to be an enjoyable and rewarding task. This was particularly the case because of the potentially enormous impact of the Varroa Mite situation on the pollination / cropping industries as a whole as well as the honey industry itself in our State.

To date more than 4000 hives have been dealt with as part of Varroa Mite eradication program. The ISJO has been asked to continue its involvement in the initiative as the situation develops and will be on hand should our services again be required.



## What's on ISJO's agenda at the moment?

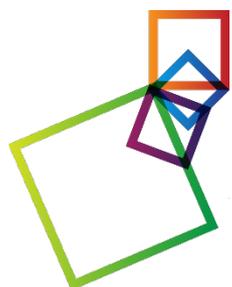
The ISJO is involved in a series of projects at its own initiative or in partnership with State Agency and key regional stakeholder groups.

Current major projects include but are not limited to:

- The Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Adaptive Pathways Pilot
- The Illawarra Shoalhaven Defence Industry Development Strategy Working Group
- The "Building Alignment" Intergovernmental Strategic Planning and Accountability Framework
- A Circular Economy White Paper
- The Illawarra & Shoalhaven Community and Justice Data Network – an initiative of the University of Wollongong and part funded by the ISJO
- Development of an organisational baseline for litter prevention capacity within Councils
- Low Emissions Fleet Transition
- Agritourism – Unlocking the full potential of regional economies (in partnership with Destination Sydney Surrounds South)
- Energy resilience for Isolated Communities
- Wollongong – Home to recycling spring clean collective service
- Assessment of the viability of increasing throughput of commercial and industrial and construction and demolition glass at the Shoalhaven glass processing facility
- LGP – Sustainable Procurement
- The Museum of Saltwater Art (in partnership with Destination Sydney Surrounds South)

We have also lodged submissions for funding to enable development of major regional strategies including:

- Building a stronger, more resilient and engaged Illawarra Shoalhaven region through a strategic approach to disaster risk reduction
- The Illawarra Shoalhaven Economic Development Strategy – A Super REDS
- EPA – Organics (FOGO) Communication and Education to reduce Contamination



## How to get more information:

Previous editions of **ISJO Matters** can be sourced by clicking on one of the following images. Please also go to our website at [www.isjo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.isjo.nsw.gov.au) or contact us on (02) 4232 3200.

