



Independent Review of Local Government  
**Tweed Shire Council Submission**

February 2014

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## Introduction

The following preamble, sourced from the *Revitalising Local Government - Final Report of the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel - October 2013*, provides a summary of the Independent Review Panel's process to date:

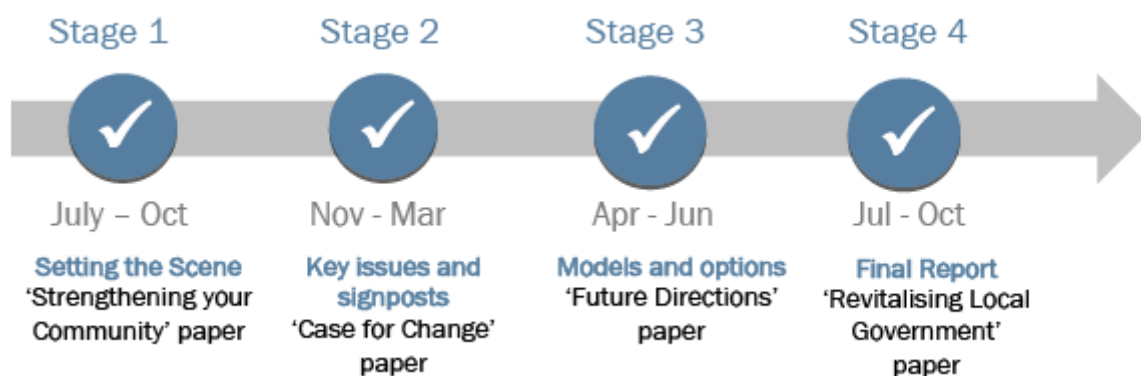
The Independent Local Government Review Panel was appointed by the NSW Government in April 2012, following an approach by the then Local Government and Shires Associations (now combined as 'Local Government NSW'). Its task has been to formulate options for governance models, structures and boundary changes:

- To improve the strength and effectiveness of local government
- To help drive the key strategic directions set out in the Destination 2036 Action Plan, and to further the objectives of NSW 2021: A Plan to Make NSW Number One (the State Plan).

The Review was carried out in four stages to maximise opportunities for councils and local communities to have their say, and to canvass ideas and directions for change with the broadest possible range of stakeholders. The Panel looked at all aspects of the local government system – not just councils but also their regional organisations and associations, the statutory bodies that regulate them and the key state agencies with which they need to work to achieve desired outcomes for their local communities.

The Panel has aimed to conduct an open and transparent consultation process: all the information used to develop its reports has been made available on the website [www.localgovernmentreview.nsw.gov.au](http://www.localgovernmentreview.nsw.gov.au). The opportunity for everyone to Have Your Say has been available on the website throughout the review. Also the Panel issued a series of media releases; gave numerous press, radio and television interviews; and made presentations at conferences, seminars and other events.

The Panel prepared and released for discussion three separate papers and held extensive consultations in all four stages.



The Review was conducted in parallel with several other important reviews looking at various aspects of local governance. Most important was the work of the Local Governments Acts Task Force, which has been paving the way for a major re-write of the Local Government Act and City of Sydney Act. The Panel and the Task Force maintained close liaison throughout, and the Panel provided the Task Force with regular updates and interim advice on legislative issues likely to feature in this final report.

The Panel also established regular dialogue with the review of the NSW Planning System carried out by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, and the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) which has been investigating local government compliance and enforcement practices as one of the State government's 'Red Tape' reviews. The Panel is confident that its proposals align closely with those of other reviews.

The release of the *Revitalising Local Government - Final Report of the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel* - October 2013 represents the concluding recommendation of the Independent Review Panel's investigation/identification of appropriate governance models, structural arrangements and boundary changes for local government in NSW which commenced in April 2012.

The following response documents Tweed Shire Council's position and suggestions, where applicable, in relation to the final recommendations. Some aspects of the report have only been noted as they do not directly affect the Tweed Shire and its communities.

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## Executive Summary

The *Revitalising Local Government - Final Report of the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel* - October 2013 represents the concluding recommendation of the Independent Review Panel's investigation/identification of appropriate governance models, structural arrangements and boundary changes for local government in NSW which commenced in April 2012.

In previous discussion papers Council's primary concern was the proposal that Tweed Shire Council become a member council in a multi-purpose council, to be known as the Northern Rivers County Council, with Lismore being the major regional centre and the home of the County Council, with the Mayor and General Manager of Lismore City Council taking up the roles of Chair and General Manager of the County Council, respectively.

It is clear that NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel (NSWILGRP) has responded to the submissions received from varying stakeholders and amended this proposal to a more acceptable Joint Organisation (JO) model:

*The Panel sees stronger regional cooperation as a central plank of local government reform. This will enhance the role of councils and facilitate more productive State-local relations, especially in strategic planning, economic development, infrastructure provision and service delivery. Thus the Panel's objective is to create a robust but flexible framework within which councils can negotiate the establishment of statutory regional organisations that will undertake strategic planning and other joint activities, and provide a platform for much more extensive and effective State-local dialogue and cooperation.*

*In 'Future Directions' the Panel proposed that the existing County Council provisions of the Local Government Act, suitably amended, could be used to establish the stronger regional entities it had in mind. Those proposals were not well received by local government, due largely to perceived problems with the current legal framework for County Councils. The Panel has therefore developed a substantially modified set of proposals for what it now terms 'Joint Organisations'.*

The Framework for Establishing New Joint Organisations includes:

- JOs would be regional bodies established under new provisions of the Local Government Act replacing those for County Councils
- Membership and ongoing active participation by councils would be mandatory
- Each JO would be established by a separate proclamation which would be negotiated amongst the member councils and with the Minister, with the assistance of expert facilitators provided by the State government
- The proclamation would set out the name, area, membership, functions, staffing and governance and financial arrangements (including payment of any 'dividends' to member councils)
- The governing body would comprise the mayor of each member council, but the proclamation could provide for additional council representatives and for 'participating observers' or advisers from outside local government

- Each JO would prepare a 10 year Strategic Business Plan and 4-year Delivery Program to guide (but not restrict) operations, both to be endorsed by member councils and updated as required
- JOs would be able to establish subsidiaries to undertake specific functions, and would incorporate existing County Councils (for which transitional provisions would apply)
- JOs would hold annual general meetings open to all councillors of member councils and to the public, at which they would report on and account for their activities, and at which priorities and strategies for the coming year could be discussed

Council supports this framework in principle, but is cautious in regard to the some elements surrounding a Joint Organisation.

It is imperative that the position of individual councils are protected and reflected in the voting rights and governance arrangements of the Joint Organisation. It is not acceptable that a shire of 9,000 residents will have the same voting rights as a shire of 90,000 residents. Equally, weighting voting rights to population numbers could see two councils dictate all outcomes (Tweed/Lismore - 56.27% of the vote; Tweed/Ballina - 56.24% of the vote; Tweed/Byron - 52.12% of the vote). Careful considerations and discussions will be needed to find an acceptable solution.

	2006	2011	2016	%	2021	2026	2031	2036
Ballina	40,300	43,000	45,800	17.63	48,500	51,300	53,800	56,200
Byron	30,700	32,900	35,100	13.51	37,400	39,800	42,100	44,300
Kyogle	9,700	9,500	9,400	3.62	9,200	9,100	8,900	8,800
Lismore	44,200	45,000	45,900	17.67	46,700	47,700	48,500	49,200
Richmond Valley	22,100	22,700	23,300	8.97	23,900	24,400	24,900	25,200
Tweed	83,100	91,800	100,300	38.61	108,700	116,900	124,800	132,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>230,100</b>	<b>244,900</b>	<b>259,800</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>274,400</b>	<b>289,200</b>	<b>303,000</b>	<b>315,700</b>

Tweed Shire Council would be willing to participate in a pilot program that may advance and explore this issue.

In addition, the role of the Regional Water Alliance, as outlined in Recommendation 17, requires more clarity in regards to the practical consequences and determination of a suitable voting/decision making mechanism that is cognisant of representational voting and constituent member voting.

The recommendation for the popular election of mayors needs more consideration before it can be mandated. The process tends to favour candidates with more funds at their disposal and also those backed by a political party. This raises questions about whether this would be the right outcome for the community. It is also out of step with the operations of the other two tiers of government, whose leaders are not elected by voters.



## Council further supports:

- The TCorp report that makes it clear that rate revenues need to grow to cover not only annual cost increases faced by councils, but also underlying costs of service delivery, including progressive elimination of operating deficits and funding infrastructure needs. This means that in most cases rates do need to rise by substantially more than the current annual peg if councils are to achieve long-term sustainability.
- The provision of up to 15% of the road component of FAG grants to be set aside for strategic regional projects provided that the funds are used on local roads/projects and not roads/projects that are the responsibility of the State government.
- A uniform set of performance indicators that would provide information to be used in a positive manner to increase the performance of the sector.
- The reduction in regulatory burdens for business, council and the community and continual service review of Council operations.

## Part B: Finance and Governance

### 5.0 Fiscal Responsibility

*Recommendation 1 Establish an integrated Fiscal Responsibility Program, coordinated by DLG and also involving TCorp, IPART and LGNSW to address the key findings and recommendations of TCorp's financial sustainability review and DLG's infrastructure audit (5.1 and 5.3).*

Council supports the Delivery Program accurately and fully reflecting the provisions of its asset and financial plans. Council's fiscal responsibilities are an important element of the IP&R framework. The linking of service levels and asset maintenance with the level of rates and charges needs to be an ongoing discussion within communities.

Tweed Shire Council received a TCorp Financial Sustainability Rating of 'Moderate/Neutral' and an Infrastructure Management Assessment of 'Strong'.

*Recommendation 2 As part of the program:*

- *Adopt and agreed set of sustainability benchmarks (5.1)*
- *Introduce more rigorous guidelines for Delivery Programs as proposed in Box 9 (5.2)*
- *Commission TCorp to undertake regular follow-up sustainability assessments (5.3)*
- *Provide additional training programs for councillors and staff (5.3)*
- *Require all councils to employ an appropriately qualified Chief Financial Officer (5.3)*

Council supports a set of sustainability benchmarks in asset and financial management, the level of rates and charges, setting of service standards, increased efficiency and performance improvement to achieve the long term goal of financial sustainability.

**Recommendation 3** *Place local government audits under the aegis of the Auditor General (5.4)*

Council supports the concept of local government audits being under the control of the Auditor General to ensure consistency of approach and audit scope. It is noted that existing audit contracts will be honoured.

**Recommendation 4** *Ensure that the provisions of the State-Local Government Agreement are used effectively to address cost-shifting (5.5)*

Council supports the following comments:

*"The critical issue now is to ensure that this provision is implemented effectively. This will require further discussions on three fronts:*

- First, to establish an agreed approach to assessment of 'consequential financial impacts', and to ensure that all State agencies understand what is involved and their obligations to consult*
- Second, to review pensioner rebates (see section 6.2)*
- Third, to ensure that any future arrangements for rate-pegging and/or setting fees and charges enable councils to recover cost increases associated with additional services or functions covered by the Agreement."*

However, councils should be given the option to consult with their community about the functions to be devolved from other levels of government.

## **6.0 Strengthening the Revenue Base**

**Recommendation 5** *Require councils to prepare and publish more rigorous Revenue Policies (6.1)*

Council supports more rigorous long-term Revenue Policies in consultation with the community.

**Recommendation 6** *Commission IPART to undertake a further review of the rating system focused on:*

- Options to reduce or remove excessive exemptions and concessions that are contrary to sound fiscal policy and jeopardise councils' long term sustainability (6.2)*
- More equitable rating of apartments and other multi-unit dwellings, including giving councils the option of rating residential properties on Capital Improved Values, with a view to raising additional revenues where affordable (6.3)*

Council looks forward to IPART undertaking a further review of the rating system, however would note that the removal of some exemptions could see land that belongs to benevolent institutions and is used or occupied by them for benevolent purposes being rated for the highest potential use, which could be business, residential or farmland.

Land owned by such institutions currently exempt, are important community assets that benefit the wider community. The roles and functions performed by them underpin the community and support many government initiatives. They play an important role in our social fabric, and Council on that basis supports the current exemptions.

With respect to exemptions for government business enterprises, Council is cognisant of the fact that local governments enjoy relief from many taxes including income tax on Council owned businesses. If the Commonwealth were for example, required to pay council rates, and councils were required to pay all Commonwealth taxes, it would be assumed that local government as a sector would come off second best.

*Recommendation 7 Either replace rate-pegging with a new system of 'rate benchmarking' or streamline current arrangements to remove unwarranted complexity, costs, and constraints to sound financial management (6.5)*

Council agrees that proposed rate increases and associated expenditures must be subject to community consultation when preparing the Delivery Program.

Council supports the TCorp report that makes it clear that rate revenues need to grow to cover not only annual cost increases faced by councils, but also *underlying* costs of service delivery, including progressive elimination of operating deficits and funding infrastructure needs. This means that in most cases rates do need to rise by substantially more than the current annual peg if councils are to achieve long-term sustainability.

Therefore Council supports the "Earned Exemption from rate-pegging" option.

*Recommendation 8 Subject to any legal constraints, seek to redistribute federal Financial Assistance Grants and some State grants in order to channel additional support to councils and communities with the greatest needs (6.6)*

Council supports the abolition of the minimum per capita grant for redistribution to communities with greater need.

Council would further support the provision of up to 15% of the road component to be set aside for strategic regional projects provided that the funds are used on local roads/projects and not roads/projects that are the responsibility of the State government. Support for the Joint Organisations to control the regional FAGs requires further clarification as to the governance arrangements and methodology associated with grant distribution.

*Recommendation 9 Establish a State-borrowing facility to encourage local government to make increased use of debt where appropriate by:*

- *Reducing the level of interest rates paid by councils*
- *Providing low-cost financial and treasury management advisory services (6.7)*

Council strongly supports the establishment of a State-borrowing facility, that operate successfully in other states, to reduce the level of interest rates payable.

*Recommendation 10 Encourage councils to make increased use of fees and charges and remove restrictions on fees for statutory approvals and inspections, subject to monitoring and benchmarking by IPART (6.8)*

Council supports increased use of fees and charges to a level that would cover costs similar to the requirements of Domestic Waste Management Services. The removal of restrictions is supported, particularly in the environmental planning legislation/regulation where fees have not changed since 2000, whilst salary costs through award movements have increased on average 3% per annum. However, there still remain areas that are considered community service obligations such as aquatic centres in coastal shires that need to be affordable to attract patrons.

## **7.0 Meeting Infrastructure Needs**

*Recommendation 11 Factor the need to address infrastructure backlogs into any future rate-pegging or local government cost index (7.1)*

Council strongly supports this recommendation.

*Recommendation 12 Maintain the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme (LIRS) for at least 5 years, with a focus on councils facing the most severe infrastructure problems (7.2)*

Council supports the maintenance of the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme (LIRS) provided that the asset renewal being funded has been identified in the Community Strategic Plan/Delivery Program and the borrowings are also identified within the adopted Long Term Financial Plan.

*Recommendation 13 Pool a proportion of funds from the roads component of federal Financial Assistance Grants and, if possible, the Roads to Recovery program in order to establish a Strategic Projects Fund for roads and bridges that would:*

- *Provide supplementary support for councils facing severe infrastructure backlogs that cannot reasonably be funded from other available sources*
- *Fund regional projects of particular economic, social or environmental value (7.2)*

Council supports this proposal however caution needs to be exercised that councils not receiving 'strategic project' funding do not have a subsequent increase in their infrastructure backlogs.

*Recommendation 14 Require councils applying for supplementary support from the Strategic Projects Fund to undergo independent assessments of their asset and financial management performance (7.2)*

Council supports this recommendation.

*Recommendation 15 Carefully examine any changes to development (infrastructure) contributions to ensure there are no unwarranted impacts on council finances and ratepayers (7.3)*

Council supports the comments of the Independent Review Panel with regard to changes to development (infrastructure contributions):

*"The Panel appreciates the Government's objectives of promoting economic development and facilitating housing supply and affordability. It is concerned, however, that the ability of councils to address their wider infrastructure and asset maintenance needs (including backlogs identified by TCorp and DLG) may be compromised if infrastructure contributions fall short of what is required to service development, and that an undue burden could be placed on ratepayers."*

*Recommendation 16 Adopt a similar model to Queensland's Regional Roads and Transport Groups in order to improve strategic network planning and foster ongoing improvement of asset management expertise in councils (7.4)*

Council would support this recommendation to provide input into the strategic network planning of the Joint Organisation.

*Recommendation 17 Establish Regional Water Alliances as part of new regional Joint Organisations proposed in section 11 (7.5)*

Council supports the concept of a regional water alliance, however as Tweed Shire is not currently a constituent council of the existing Rous County Council, more detail of the operations of the alliance is required before council commits to such a proposal.

## **8.0 Improvement, Productivity and Accountability**

*Recommendation 18 Adopt a uniform core set of performance indicators for councils, linked to IPR requirements, and ensure ongoing performance monitoring is adequately resourced (8.1)*

Council strongly supports and has previously advocated for a uniform set of performance indicators that would provide information to be used in a positive manner to increase the performance of the sector.

*Recommendation 19 Commission IPART to undertake a whole-of-government review of the regulatory, compliance and reporting burden on councils (8.2)*

Council supports the reduction in regulatory burdens for business, council and the community. Council is hopeful that this will lead to decreased costs and greater use of resources for the local economy and local government.

*Recommendation 20 Establish a new sector-wide program to promote, capture and disseminate innovation and best practice (8.3)*

Council supports this recommendation.

*Recommendation 21 Amend IPR Guidelines to require councils to incorporate regular service review in their Delivery Programs (8.4)*

Council supports this recommendation, providing that the Division of Local Government resources and leads the industry in relation to service reviews. The principles of the service reviews as outlined in box 16 are considered an adequate starting point.

*Recommendation 22 Strengthen requirements for internal and performance auditing as proposed in Box 17 (8.5)*

Tweed Shire Council has the following internal audit framework:

- Internal auditor
- Audit Committee with an independent Chair
- General Manager is not a member of the Audit Committee
- Audit Committee Charter (in accordance with the DLG's 2010 Internal Audit Guidelines)
- Internal Audit Charter

The annual internal audit operation plan is risk based (in accordance with the DLG's 2010 Internal Audit Guidelines). Operational risk is considered both in the internal audit operation planning stage and when conducting the internal audits (based on enterprise risk principles).

Based on the recommendations listed in Box 17, Tweed's internal and performance auditing function will need to expand in scope to include "performance in implementing the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program, service reviews, collection of required indicator data, continuous improvement and long term sustainability"

*Recommendation 23 Introduce legislative provisions for councils to hold Annual General Meetings (8.6)*

Council supports the concept of an Annual General Meeting to present the performance of the Council for the preceding financial year.

*Recommendation 24 Develop a NSW Local Government Workforce Strategy (8.7)*

Council supports the development of a 'NSW Local Government Workforce Strategy' to apply principles and ideas set out in the national strategy.

*Recommendation 25 Explore opportunities for the Local Government Award to continue to evolve to address future challenges facing the sector and changing operational needs.*

Council supports this recommendation including amending current requirements where councils are bound to employ their staff operating such facilities as aquatic centres under the NSW Local Government Award as opposed to the relevant Industry Award.



## 9.0 Political Leadership and Good Governance

*Recommendation 26 Amend the Local Government Act to strengthen political leadership:*

- *Require councils to undertake regular 'representation reviews' covering matters such as the number of councillors, method of election and use of wards (9.1)*
- *Before their nomination is accepted, require all potential candidates for election to local government to attend an information session covering the roles and responsibilities of councillors and mayors (9.1)*
- *Amend the legislated role of councillors and mayors as proposed in Boxes 19 and 21, and introduce mandatory professional development programs (9.2 and 9.3)*
- *Provide for full-time mayors, and in some cases deputy mayors, in larger councils and major regional centres (9.3)*
- *Amend the provisions for election of mayors as proposed in Box 22 (9.3)*

Council does not support all points within Recommendation 26:

A principle of the Local Government Acts Taskforce was to ensure the council focuses on strategic decisions consistent with IPR. Confusion is created when the proposed role and responsibility of the governing body, as noted in Box 19, states - "to direct and control the affairs of the council in consultation with the general manager and in accordance with this Act." - this statement could be considered ambiguous.

Popular election of mayors needs more consideration before it can be mandated. The process tends to favour candidates with more funds at their disposal and also those backed by a political party. This raises questions about whether this would be the right outcome for the community. It is also out of step with the operations of the other two tiers of government, whose leaders are not elected by voters.

A compromise position may be for the Mayor to be treated in exactly the same way as the other two tiers of government as is the case of the Premier and Prime Minister. That is the Mayor elected by their peers for the duration of the Council term, but with the ability for the elected body as a whole to replace the leadership by majority vote. This would help to ensure that the Mayor is representative of the people and worked collaboratively with the elected body.

*Recommendation 27 Increase remuneration for councillors and mayors who successfully complete recognised professional development programs (9.2-9.4)*

Council would support any initiative to increase remuneration and professional development opportunities for the mayor and councillors.

*Recommendation 28 Amend the legislated role and standard contract provisions of General Managers as proposed in Boxes 23 and 24 (9.5)*

Council supports the role, tenure and appointment of the General Manager as outlined.

**Recommendation 29 Amend the provisions for organisation review as proposed in section 9.6**

Council supports the governing body being able to determine, on the advice of the General Manager, the upper levels of the organisation structure, and to ensure that staffing resources are being allocated in such a way that the council's priorities can be pursued.

**Recommendation 30 Develop a Good Governance Guide as a basis for 'performance improvement orders' and to provide additional guidance on building effective working relationships between the governing body, councillors, mayors and General Managers (9.7)**

Council supports the concept, but ultimately the development a Good Governance Guide is a matter for the Division of Local Government.

## Part C: Structures and Boundaries

### 10.0 Advancing Structural Reform

**Recommendation 31 Introduce additional options for local government structures, including regional Joint Organisations, 'Rural Councils' and Community Boards, to facilitate a better response to the needs and circumstances of different regions (10.1)**

Council supports this recommendation in principle, but is cautious in regard to the some elements surrounding a Joint Organisation.

It is imperative that the position of individual councils are protected and reflected in the voting rights and governance arrangements of the Joint Organisation. It is not acceptable that a shire of 9,000 residents will have the same voting rights as a shire of 90,000 residents. Equally, weighting voting rights to population numbers could see two councils dictate all outcomes (Tweed/Lismore - 56.27% of the vote; Tweed/Ballina - 56.24% of the vote; Tweed/Byron - 52.12% of the vote). Careful considerations and discussions will be needed to find an acceptable solution.

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Tweed Shire Council would be willing to participate in a pilot program that may advance and explore this issue.



*Recommendation 32 Legislate a revised process for considering potential amalgamations and boundary changes through a re-constituted and more independent Boundaries Commission (10.3)*

Council is opened minded in regard to amalgamations/boundary changes and supports in principal: *that any amalgamation or major boundary change should be preceded by careful analysis of the issues to be addressed and all the options available; that there should be full community consultation; that the process should be handled by an expert, independent body and that the Government should not be able to over-rule the findings and recommendation of that body without good cause.*

*Recommendation 33 Encourage voluntary mergers of councils through measures to lower barriers and provide professional and financial support (10.4)*

Council does not objection to this recommendation if the community supports voluntary mergers.

*Recommendation 34 Provide and promote a range of options to maintain local identity and representation in local government areas with large populations and/or diverse localities (10.5)*

Council supports this recommendation.

## **11.0 Regional Joint Organisations**

*Recommendation 35 Establish Joint Organisations for each of the regions shown on Map 2 by means of individual proclamations negotiated under new provisions of the Local Government Act that replace those for County Councils (11.5)*

- *Defer establishment of JOs in the Sydney metropolitan region, except for sub-regional strategic planning, pending further consideration of options for council mergers (11.5)*
- *Enter into discussions with 2-3 regions to establish 'pilot' JOs (11.5)*
- *Re-constitute existing County Councils as subsidiaries of new regional Joint Organisations, as indicated in Table 5 (11.2)*
- *Establish Regional Water Alliances in each JO along the lines proposed in the 2009 Armstrong-Gellatly report (11.3)*
- *Set the core functions of Joint Organisations by means of Ministerial Guidelines (11.6)*
- *Seek federal government agreement to make JOs eligible for general-purpose FAGs (11.6)*

Council supports the recommendations in principle as outlined in the response to recommendation 31.

The role of the Regional Water Alliance, as outlined in Recommendation 17, requires more clarity in regards to the practical consequences and determination of a suitable voting/decision making mechanism that is cognisant of representational voting and constituent member voting.

The core functions of the JO could also be determined by the member councils rather than by Ministerial guideline.

Consideration should be given by Northern Rivers Council's to be part of the initial 'pilot' Joint Organisation as proposed.

*Recommendation 36 Identify one or more regional centres within each Joint Organisation and:*

- *Create a network of those centres to drive development across regional NSW (11.7)*
- *Consider potential mergers of councils to consolidate regional centres, as indicated in Table 6 (11.7)*

Council supports this recommendation.

*Recommendation 37 Develop close working partnerships between Joint Organisations and State agencies for strategic planning, infrastructure development and regional service delivery (11.8), and*

- *Add representatives of Joint Organisations to State agency Regional Leadership Groups (11.8)*
- *Give particular attention to cross-border issues and relationships in the operations of Joint Organisations and in future regional strategies (11.9)*

Council supports this concept and would welcome a closer working relationship with State agencies at a regional level.

## **12.0 Rural Councils and Community Boards**

*Recommendation 38 Establish a working party as part of the Ministerial Advisory Group proposed in section 18 to further develop the concept of 'Rural Councils' for inclusion in the re-written Local Government Act (12.1)*

*Recommendation 39 Include provisions for optional Community Boards in the re-written Act, based on the New Zealand model, but also enabling the setting of a supplementary 'community rate' with the approval of the 'parent' council (12.2)*

Council notes recommendations 38 - 39 as they have no direct impact on the Tweed Shire community.

## 13.0 Metropolitan Sydney

*Recommendation 40 Strengthen arrangements within State government for coordinated metropolitan planning and governance, and to ensure more effective collaboration with local government (13.1)*

*Recommendation 41 Seek evidence-based responses from metropolitan councils to the Panel's proposals for mergers and major boundary changes, and refer both the proposals and responses to the proposed Ministerial Advisory Group (section 18.1) for review, with the possibility of subsequent referrals to the Boundaries Commission (13.3)*

*Recommendation 42 Prioritise assessments of potential changes to the boundaries of the Cities of Sydney and Parramatta, and*

- *Retain a separate City of Sydney Act to recognise its Capital City role*
- *Establish State-local City Partnership Committees for Sydney and Parramatta along the lines of Adelaide's Capital City Committee (13.4)*

*Recommendation 43 Pending any future action on mergers, establish Joint organisations of councils for the purposes of strategic sub-regional planning (13.5)*

*Recommendation 44 Maximise utilisation of the available local government revenue base in order to free-up State resources for support to councils in less advantaged areas (13.6)*

*Recommendation 45 Continue to monitor the sustainability and appropriateness in their current form of the Hawkesbury, Blue Mountains and Wollondilly local government areas (13.7)*

*Recommendation 46 Promote the establishment of a Metropolitan Council of Mayors (13.8)*

Council notes recommendations 40 - 46 as they have no direct impact on the Tweed Shire community.

## 14.0 Hunter, Central Coast and Illawarra

*Recommendation 47 Seek evidence-based responses from Hunter and Central Coast councils to the Panel's proposals for mergers and boundary changes, and refer both the proposals and responses to the proposed Ministerial Advisory Group (section 18.1) for review, with the possibility of subsequent referrals to the Boundaries Commission (14.1 and 14.2)*

*Recommendation 48 Defer negotiations for the establishment of a Central Coast Joint Organisation pending investigation of a possible merger of Gosford and Wyong councils (14.2)*

*Recommendation 49 Pursue the establishment of Joint Organisations for the Hunter and Illawarra in accordance with Recommendation 35 (14.1 and 14.3)*

Council notes recommendations 47 - 49 as they have no direct impact on the Tweed Shire community.

## **15.0 Non-Metropolitan Regions**

*Recommendation 50 Explore options for non-metropolitan councils in Group A as part of establishing the Western Region Authority proposed in section 16 (15.1)*

*Recommendation 51 Refer councils in Groups B-F to the Boundaries Commission in accordance with Table 11 and the proposed timeline (15.1)*

*Recommendation 52 Complete updated sustainability assessments and revised long term asset and financial plans for the 38 councils identified in Table 11 by no later than mid-2015 (15.2)*

Council notes recommendations 50 - 52 and acknowledges Kyogle (Group F) could be affected and have an impact on the Northern Rivers JO.

## **16.0 The Far West**

*Recommendation 53 Agree in principle to the establishment of a Far West Regional Authority with the functions proposed in Box 39 and membership as proposed in Figure 9 (16.3)*

*Recommendation 54 Adopt the preferred new arrangements for local government set out in Box 40 as a basis for further consultation (16.4)*

*Recommendation 55 Establish a project team and reference group of key stakeholders within the DPC Regional Coordination Program to finalise proposals (16.5)*

Council notes recommendations 53 - 55 and strongly supports a more effective system of local government for the western region. Council acknowledges the unique challenges for these areas of the State but also recognises the importance that these communities and in particular the rural sector plays for the benefit of the wider State economy and food supply chain.

## Part D: Implementation

### 17.0 State-Local Government Relations

*Recommendation 56 Use the State-Local Agreement as the basis and framework for a range of actions to build a lasting partnership, and negotiate supplementary agreements as appropriate (17.2)*

Council supports this recommendation.

*Recommendation 57 Introduce new arrangements for collaborative, whole-of-government strategic planning at a regional level (17.3)*

Council supports this recommendation and would welcome a closer working relationship with State agencies at a regional level.

*Recommendation 58 Amend the State Constitution to strengthen recognition of elected local government (17.4)*

Recommendation noted.

*Recommendation 59 Seek advice from LGNSW on the measures it proposes to take to meet its obligations under the State-Local Agreement (17.5)*

Recommendation noted.

*Recommendation 60 Strengthen the focus of DLG on sector development and seek to reduce its workload in regulation and compliance (17.6)*

Recommendation supported.

### 18.0 Driving and Monitoring Reform

*Recommendation 61 Establish a Ministerial Advisory Group and Project Management Office (18.1 and 18.2)*

Council supports the establishment of a Ministerial Advisory Group and Project Management Office.

*Recommendation 62 Refer outstanding elements of the Destination 2036 Action Plan to the Ministerial Advisory Group (18.1)*

Council supports this recommendation.

*Recommendation 63 Adopt in principle the proposed priority initial implementation package set out in Box 42, as a basis for discussions with LGNSW under the State-Local Government Agreement (18.3)*

Recommendation noted.

*Recommendation 64 Further develop the proposals for legislative changes detailed in Boxes 43 and 44, and seek to introduce the amendments listed in Box 43 in early 2014 (18.5)*

Council supports the proposals as outlined; however the timeframes need amendment based on the delay in the release of the final report.

*Recommendation 65 Adopt in principle the proposed implementation timeline (18.6)*

The proposed implementation timeline needs amendment based on the delay in the release of the final report.





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