



FWJO
Far West Joint
Organisation



The Shire on Two Rivers



CENTRAL DARLING
SHIRE COUNCIL



Balranald Shire Council

Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities



2019 – 2022

Version 6 – August 2019

Stronger Together

Wentworth Shire

Broken Hill City

Central Darling Shire

Balranald Shire

Acknowledgements

The members of Far West Joint Organisation would like to acknowledge and thank all those that have contributed to, and assisted with the development of the Statement of Regional Priorities, including:

- Council Mayors and Far West Joint Organisation Board.
- General Managers and Council Managers
- Chief Executive Officer, Joint Organisation – Mark Forbes

Member council representatives:

Council	Mayor	Deputy Mayor	General Manager
Balranald Shire Council council@balranald.nsw.gov.au	Cr Alan Purtill	Cr Leigh Byron	Mr Michael Kitzelmann
Broken Hill Council council@brokenhill.nsw.gov.au	Cr Darrea Turley	Cr Marion Browne	Mr James Roncon
Central Darling Shire Council council@centraldarling.nsw.gov.au	Mr Bob Stewart (Administrator)	N/A	Mr Greg Hill
Wentworth Shire Council council@wentworth.nsw.gov.au	Cr Melisa Hederics	Cr Tim Elstone	Mr Ken Ross

Chair of the Joint Organisation Board is Councillor Melisa Hederics.

About the Far West Joint Organisation

Membership

The Far West Joint Organisation (FWJO) was proclaimed under the *Local Government Act 1993* in May 2018 with the Inaugural Board Meeting held on 26 July 2018 in Broken Hill. Membership of the Organisation is voluntary. Current Member Councils are Balranald Shire, Broken Hill City, Central Darling Shire and Wentworth Shire.

The FWJO Board comprises the Mayors of the Member Councils (the voting members), as well the NSW Government, represented by a nominee of the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), the Office of Local Government (OLG) Director Western Region (a non-voting member) and the General Managers of the Member Councils (also non-voting members). The Board is supported by an Executive Officer.

Purpose

Joint Organisations (JOs) are Legal Entities established by the NSW Government to work across traditional council boundaries. JOs aim to transform the way that the NSW Government and Local Councils work together to collaborate, plan, set priorities and deliver projects on a regional scale across the State.

The principle functions of the FWJO are:

Strategic Planning:

Establish strategic regional priorities within the Joint Organisation Area and be an advocate for the development or implementation of Key Strategic Regional Priorities.

Leadership and Advocacy:

Provide regional leadership for communities in the Joint Organisation Area and be an advocate for strategic regional priorities.

Intergovernmental Collaboration:

Identify, establish and strengthen those key partnerships in order to ensure intergovernmental alignment on matters relating to the FWJO.

In addition, the FWJO will also aim to strengthen its Member Councils by providing support for their respective operations.

Our vision and principles

Our Vision

Founded on a strong connection to our people and places, enabling vibrant regional futures through collaborative and effective leadership

Our Principles

The JO Board members pledge to the following principles.

We will: -

- Work collaboratively
- Have respect for all member councils and have good governance frameworks
- Think regionally and focus on strategic visions for the region whilst supporting the sustainability of individual communities and council areas
- Work with other key partners e.g. state and federal, community
- Make informed decisions based on sound risk and financial assessment
- Apply sound project methodology to managing large projects for the region ensuring capability to deliver on time and in budget

About the far west region

The Far West region covers an area of over 100,000 km² classified entirely as Remote and Very Remote Australia. Central Darling Shire is the largest council by land area but has the lowest population ratio for the State.

Member Council	Population	Land Area (sq.km)	ATSI Population (AS%)	Unemployment Rate (%)	Avg. Household Income (\$)
Balranald	2,340	21,700	7%	5.30%	\$710
Broken Hill	17,734	170	8.50%	6.20%	\$830
Central Darling	1,837	53,511	39.60%	11.20%	\$554
Wentworth	7,042	26,000	9.60%	6.10%	\$692
JO Average/total	28,953	101,381	11%	6%	\$769

(source: Australian Bureau Statistics www.abs.gov.au)

The Far West region contributes over A\$2 billion to the NSW economy in gross value added, with 23% from mining and a further 18% from agribusiness. The Far West's population approaching 30,000 is largely employed in agriculture and services.

With over 30% of NSW territory, the Far West is the largest JO geographically. Irrigated farming is rapidly diversifying agribusiness and food manufacturing, supported by key water security projects.

The region is strategically placed at the crossroads of Australia’s largest state economies of NSW, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia.

While mining and agribusiness are the largest contributors to Regional Economic Output, renewable energy, particularly solar and wind, is already rapidly developing. Tourism visitor numbers have increased 4.0% annually since 2009-10, with expenditure increasing 9.8% annually in the same period to A\$369 million in 2016-17 (refer [Destination NSW](#)). Tourism growth is supported by the region’s natural heritage, national parks and rich Aboriginal culture and artefacts. The Far West has the highest Aboriginal population per capita in NSW giving the region a unique cultural and historical identity.

(source: www.investregional.nsw.gov.au/regions/far-west/)

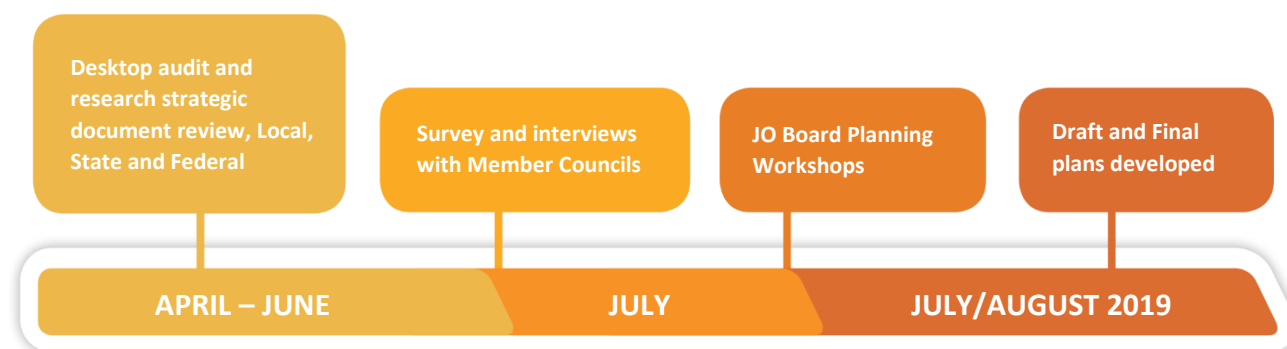
Developing the regional priorities plan

The Far West Joint Organisation commenced the development of their Statement of Regional Priorities in March 2019 with the final plan adopted by the Joint Organisation Board on:

(23 August 2019 - TBC)

Input from Member Councils was pivotal in developing a list of priorities, strategies and actions that represented the wide region of the Far West Joint Organisation. Councils participated in an online survey and one-on-one interviews to identify both their Local and Regional priorities, challenges and opportunities. A desk top audit of relevant plans and documents from all levels of government was completed to ensure that this plan integrates with and is aligned to the priorities of the NSW State Plan.

The consultation process culminated in a workshop attended by the Mayors and General Managers of the Member Councils, NSW State Agency representative and Joint Organisation staff in July 2019. Final draft was then developed, and any additional input received prior to finalising the adopted plan.



Collaboration and partnerships

The delivery of the regional priorities will be dependent on the collaboration of member councils and other key partners and stakeholders including:

LOCAL/REGIONAL	STATE	FEDERAL
Community residents	Local Member	Federal Member
Far North West JO	Regional Leadership Executive	Department Infrastructure and Local Government
Regional Development Australia	Regional Economic Subcommittee	Regional Development Australia:
Murray and Far West	Water NSW	(Various)
Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly	Health, Education, Planning, Infrastructure, Trade and Investment	
NSW Farmers Federation	NSW Premiers Department	Murray Darling Basin Authority
	Tourism NSW	
	Destination NSW, Country Outback & Riverina NSW	
	Local Land Services	
	Cross boarder collaboration	
	Various State Government Departments:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of Local Government • Premier and Cabinet • Roads and Maritime Services 	

Regional priorities

Through detailed analysis and consultation three Regional Priorities have emerged which describe the vision of the Region will look like. Strategies and actions have been developed that aim to deliver this Regional Vision.



Three priority areas have been identified:

Stronger Together		
Proactivity	Prosperity	Sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible and quality education and training opportunities • Community well-being • Transport Infrastructure • Energy Security • Emergency Management and Disaster Management, Resilience and Recovery • Leading the FWJO and its members towards the stated vision and speaking for and advocating for action that delivers that vision on behalf of FWJO members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic growth and job creation • Investment in the Region • Engage with State and Federal Government to attract and develop Space Investment into the Region • Develop a FWJO investment attraction strategy (regional, national, foreign) culminating in Regional Prospectus highlighting specific industries and investment opportunities • Improved awareness, preservation and promotion of environmental and cultural tourism attractions and values and development and maintenance of key infrastructure to facilitate our tourism industry • Embrace innovations in digital connectivity and access, addressing Black Spots where possible • Identify and develop Centres for Excellence across the Region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and Water Security • Sustainable River and Wetland Systems and Infrastructure • Investigate and monitor the impacts of Climate Change manifesting in a Region Wide Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan

Stronger together

The FWJO was formed in 2018, with the Chief Executive Officer engaged in January 2019.

The geographic size of the Region presents challenges for the Member Councils, and indeed State and Federal partners coming together in a collaborative way to identify Regional Priorities and agree on which priorities and actions the FWJO should focus on to maximise its strategic leverage and effect on Regional issues.

The philosophy of the FWJO model is to apply a Place-Based Regional approach and the collective synergy of like-minded and neighbouring Councils to work together for the benefit of the overall Region. Supported by the NSW State Government the FWJO can act as a central point of contact, a conduit and gateway for the very many State, Federal and private stakeholders and partners with interests in ensuring sustainability and growth within the Region.

For Rural and Remote Councils, the FWJO could also act as a service provider, or shared service provider in operational areas where Councils' find difficult to fill due to capacity, budget and local skills challenges.

STRATEGIES	ACTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	TIMING
Funding and resourcing the Far West Joint Organisation	Budget is formulated by the CEO, presented and considered by the Board	Annual operating budget approved by Board	Annual
	Funding provided to the JO includes Project Management costs retained by FWJO as an Administration Fee	Framework agreed	Ongoing
	The Business Model of Joint Organisations in NSW is developed to such a point that the enterprise model is self-sustaining and profitable. This will occur in collaboration with State Government	By June 2020	Agreed and Reviewed Annually
	The FWJO is resourced by Personnel from Member Councils at a contract fee, back to the Council. Key staff are identified for a specific role and engaged through a Service Level Agreement with an individual Council	July 2019	Ongoing
Collaboration between Member Councils and State Government	Specialist technical groups and Sub-Committees are formed from within the Member Councils for the purpose of sharing information, expertise, practices and resources: e.g. Engineering and Tourism.	Examples of collaboration Regular meetings/contact within specialist groups	Ongoing
	State Government representatives participate in Board meetings and CEO maintains regular networks with stakeholders	Bi-Monthly Board meetings and Examples of collaboration	Ongoing

<p>The FWJO as a Shared Service Model to Member Councils</p>	<p>Consideration is given to identifying opportunities for sharing expertise, knowledge and resources across the Member Councils.</p>	<p>Analysis completed on opportunities, costs, frameworks and governance arrangements</p>	<p>2020 onwards</p>
<p>The FWJO is committed to supporting, protecting and promoting Regional Aboriginal services, business and consultation processes for their community.</p>	<p>Support aboriginal people, in their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spiritual, social and emotional and physical wellbeing. Citizenship and political engagement Culture of success Economic independence and sustainability Integrated service delivery Devolved decision making and community autonomy 	<p>Engagement and consultation regularly with aboriginal organisations.</p> <p>Advocate for aboriginal people in decision making processes for regional strategies.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Proactivity

The Far West Region is one of the largest combined local government areas in NSW with a land area greater than that of the whole of the state of Tasmania. The townships and communities are spread over a wide area and distances between townships and to service centres present daily challenges to residents and business.

Access to quality health, aged care and education/training services are priorities for all the member Councils and there may be opportunity for joint partnerships and advocacy to ensure service providers are supported and prosper in the communities.

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	TIMING
<p>Accessible and quality education and training opportunities</p>	<p>Facilitate opportunities with all levels of government and regional partners for investment into the provision of health and aged care services</p>		<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>Facilitate opportunities with government and partners for investment into the provision of higher education and training services</p>	<p>HE Participation across the Region, quantified and a plan to improve engagement in place</p>	<p>July 2020</p>

	Attract Flight Training School (s) to the Region	Flight Training Investment achieved, Regional opportunities for training presented	July 2021
Community Well-being	Facilitate opportunities with Government and partners for investment into the provision of community services, health and aged care services		Ongoing
	Complete a Regional Public Works Infrastructure audit and plan for funding applications to address	Plan completed and project report provided	July 2020
Transport Infrastructure	Lobby at all levels of Government for funding for the maintenance and improvement of the Regional Transport Networks		Ongoing
	Complete a Regional Transport Network audit and plan (not limited to road networks – including all transport infrastructure such as air, train)	Plan completed and project report provided	July 2020
	Undertake concept planning for sealing of Transport Networks to allow for Triple Road Train Freight and opportunities for Warehousing and Logistics Hubs	Agreement and funding secured	July 2020
	Undertake concept planning for expansion of Broken Hill Airport and investigate the potential for creation of Pilot School		
Energy Security	Work with FWJO members and other stakeholders, and lobby providers for Regional secure and cost-effective energy services and infrastructure		Ongoing
Emergency Management	Work collaboratively on Regional Emergency Management – to manage and mitigate risks		Ongoing

Prosperity

All Member Councils have Strategic Priorities for their Local Government area for increasing their population, and with a specific focus on growing employment and business opportunities. Sustainable healthy communities need growth opportunities and attractive reasons for people to stay or move to the area.

The Region offers a different lifestyle and can leverage the uniqueness of the area to attract new residents, Migrants and visitors. Tourism and cultural heritage can contribute significantly to the economy of the Region.

The application and integration of technologies plays a vital role in enhancing the capability and growth of many sectors, including tourism, agriculture, environmental management and the renewables, it is essential to communications and supports community wellbeing, Skilled Migrant attraction and Investment Attraction.

Innovation is an essential ingredient at the heart of great Economic Development outcomes, which are often leveraged by technology and always incorporating intelligent strategic action.

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	TIMING
Economic growth and job creation	Work with stakeholders to complete a Place-Based Regional research project, focussed on Economic Strategy, Job Creation, Community and a skills Gap Analysis, and identifying opportunities where the FWJO can influence sustainable economic growth	Analysis completed and economic strategies developed	July 2020
Investment in the Region	Work with stakeholders to develop a Regional Investment Strategy and Prospectus.	Plan completed	EOFY 2020/21
	Engage with State and Federal Government to attract investment and develop new industry opportunities such as attracting Space Industry interest and Investment to Region.		
Digital Connectivity and Access	Facilitate opportunities with Government and partners for investment into the provision of fast, reliable Telecommunications, addressing where possible the challenge of Black Spots	Examples of advocacy Tangible Results in terms of Digital Coverage	ongoing

Improved Tourism attractions, signage and infrastructure, with culture and heritage protected and valued	Improve current, or create new Tourism infrastructure and/or events to attract visitors utilising State support and funding	Local program developed and approved by Tourism Committee	2019/20
	Regional signage plan and program developed, and signs established	Plan completed and signs in place	2020

Sustainability

The Far West Region is part of the Murray Darling Basin River system and the Menindee Lakes situation in 2019 highlighted the complexity and fragility of this important natural river and wetland system. The FWJO acknowledges the multi service, government and local partnerships that are involved in finding solutions and has an opportunity to consider what influence the FWJO can have in relation to this.

The natural environment has eco-tourism opportunities, and there are significant indigenous sites of cultural importance.

STRATEGIES	ACTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	TIMING
Food and Water Security	Menindee Lakes RAMSAR initiative is supported by the FWJO	Scoping and planning completed Project recommenced	Sept 2019 2020
	To facilitate opportunities with Government and partners to ensure regional water security and healthy River Systems	Examples of advocacy	Ongoing
Local Water Security	Member Councils identify local water security strategies and work collaboratively to access funding for water security measures	Individual Council plans completed Regional Plan developed Examples of advocacy	July 2020
Action to address the impacts of Climate Change	Understand and quantify the threat of Climate Change in the Far West, and through engagement with expert parties, understand what is possible to achieve, lobby and advocate for that action.	Convene a Regional Practitioners Round Table Forum to explore options, and design a plan Complete an up to	June 2020

	<p>Complete a Region wide Application for the Increasing Resilience to Climate Change Grants Program (Round 3) as the FWJO</p> <p>Collaborate and engage with key stakeholders and partners to influence action and outcomes to address the impacts of Climate Change</p>	<p>date Region Wide Climate Change Risk Assessment as per ISO 3100</p> <p>Application Submitted</p>	<p>By: July 2020</p>
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Desktop audit of relevant plans, programs, reports list

The following documents were reviewed as part of the development of this Regional Strategic Priorities plan to identify the linkages and other projects, programs or initiatives.

Local/Regional:

<http://www.balranald.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/FINAL-Community-Strategic-Plan-2027.pdf>

<https://www.brokenhill.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/documents/ipampr-strategic-plans/broken-hill-2033-community-strategic-plan-2017-adopted-26-april-2017.pdf>

<http://www.centraldarling.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/Documents/Community-Strategic-Plan-2017-2027.pdf>

<file:///G:/My%20Drive/OROC/Far%20West/council%20plans/wentworth%20-Community-Strategic-Plan-FINAL.pdf>

<https://lovethefarwest.com.au/>

<https://www.brokenhill.nsw.gov.au/Council/Economic-Development/Broken-Hill-A-Blueprint-%e2%80%93-Advocating-For-Our-Future>

Tourism:

https://riverinamurray.com.au/app/uploads/2019/06/Riverina_Murray_DMP_April_2018_DigitalLQ.2.pdf

Water Sharing, Security and Environments:

https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/166866/murrumbidgee-unreg-alluvial-background.pdf

https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/145393/Lachlan.pdf

<https://www.mdba.gov.au/sites/default/files/pubs/ecological-needs-low-flows-barwon-darling.pdf>

NSW State Government:

NSW Regional Development Framework – Department of Industry

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/regional-nsw/regional-development-framework/>

<https://static.nsw.gov.au/nsw-gov-au/1520212431/Making-it-Happen-in-the-Regions-Regional-Development-Framework.pdf>

<https://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/assets/dpc-nsw-gov-au/REDS/1309a7d87b/Far-West-REDS.pdf>

Premiers Priorities

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/premiers-priorities>

Regional Growth Fund

<https://regional.gov.au/regional/programs/regional-growth-fund.aspx>

Invest NSW – Department

<https://www.investregional.nsw.gov.au/regions/far-west/>

NSW Joint Organisations ‘Working together for regional communities’ www.olg.nsw.gov.au

Western Region Economic Development Strategy (REDs)

Draft Far West Regional Plan – Dept Planning and Environment

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Regional-Plans/Far-West/Far-West-Regional-Plan>

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/-/media/Files/DPE/Plans-and-policies/far-west-regional-plan-08-2017.pdf>

<https://rdafarwestnsw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Far-West-Regional-Action-Plan-NSW-2021.pdf>

<https://www.rdamurray.org.au/assets/pdfs/RDA-plan.pdf?>

<https://www.investregional.nsw.gov.au/>

<https://majorprojects.affinitylive.com/public/f9f5f73110f7c790118b185043f70d74/Draft%20Far%20West%20Regional%20Plan.pdf>

Federal Government:

2016 ABS data www.abs.gov.au

Murray Darling Basin Plan www.mdba.gov.au/basin-plan-roll-out/