



FWJO
Far West Joint
Organisation

**COMMUNICATIONS AND
ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

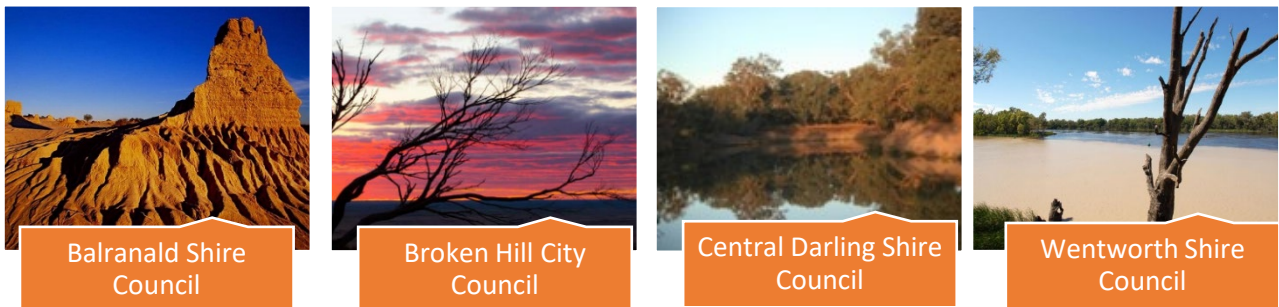
Introduction

Joint Organisations are local government entities with legal powers established by proclamation designed to bring regional and rural councils together for better regional outcomes.

The proclamation of the Far West Joint Organisation (FWJO) as a corporate entity within the NSW Local Government Act 1993, was formally announced on 4 July 2018.

The FWJO Membership consists of the following four member councils and covers an area of 101,381 square kilometres and a population of 28,953 people:

FWJO Member Councils



The operation and priorities of each Joint Organisation are determined by a Joint Organisation Board, which comprises voting and non-voting representatives.

The voting members of a Joint Organisation are representatives of member councils. A NSW government employee nominated by the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet also sits on each Board as a non-voting representative.

Each Board elects one of the member councils as the Chairperson. An Executive Officer supports the Board, performing the same role in a Joint Organisations that a General Manager performs in a council. This includes conducting the day to day management of the Joint Organisation in accordance with the regional priorities and other programs, strategies and policies of the organisation.

Joint Organisations will elevate the shared priorities and policies to perform three principle functions in their region:

1. Strategic Planning
2. Leadership and Advocacy
3. Intergovernmental Collaboration

This plan includes the key messages about the role of the FWJO and its commitment to achieving strategic regional priorities. It is to demonstrate how the FWJO can communicate with the community, stakeholders and its member councils.

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.

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)

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)

Strategic Alignment

The communication and engagement plan supports the objectives in our Statement of Regional Priorities 2019-2022. Good communication will help us achieve our vision and show how we abide by our principles.

Vision

The FWJO is founded on a strong connection to our people and places, enabling vibrant regional futures through collaborative and effective leadership.

Principles

- To work collaboratively
- To have respect for all member councils and have good governance frameworks
- To think regionally and focus on strategic visions for the region whilst supporting the sustainability of individual communities and council areas
- To work with other key partners eg state, federal and community
- To make informed decisions based on sound risk and financial assessment
- To apply sound project methodology to managing large projects for the region, ensuring capability to deliver on time and in budget

Communication and Engagement Objectives

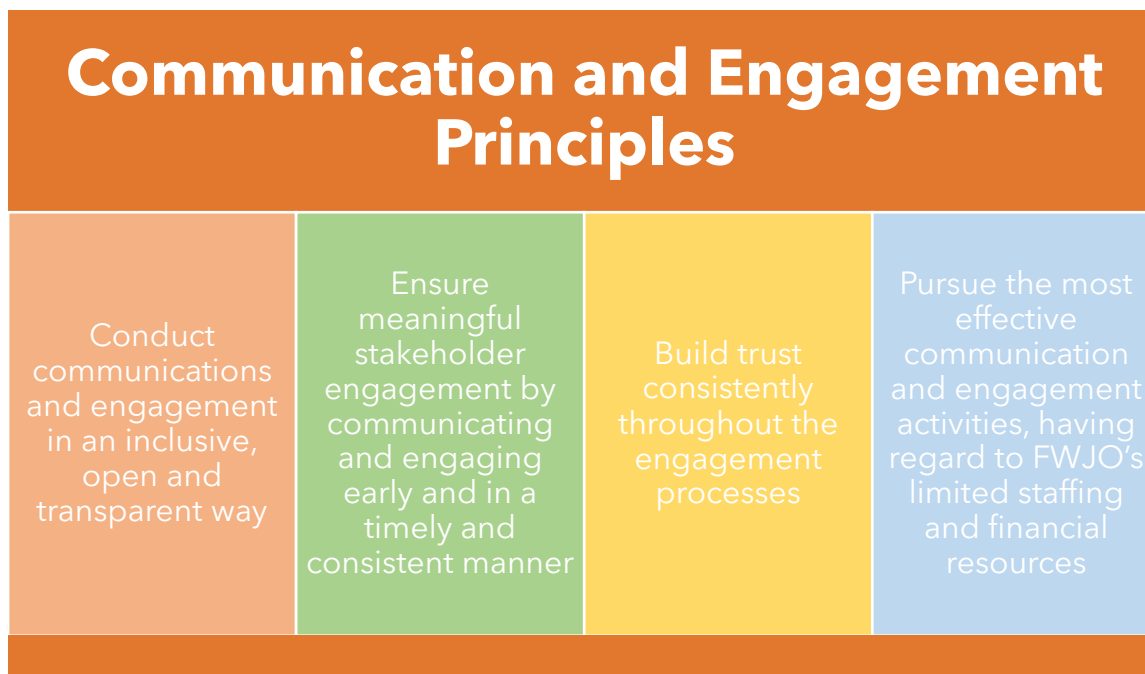
The objectives of this communication and engagement plan are to:

1. Develop an ongoing communications program to keep stakeholders and public informed about the FWJO operations and activities
2. Increase stakeholder and public awareness and understanding of the FWJO
3. Increase stakeholder participation in FWJO planning and activities

4. Build the FWJO reputation and identity through consistent messaging and an engaging visual presence

Achieving Our Objectives

In order to achieve our communication and engagement objectives, we will follow a number of guiding principles and will adopt an approach that is flexible and adaptive to the evolving FWJO planning and priority setting processes.



Our Approach

In the implementation of the Communications and Engagement Plan we will endeavour to:

- Build effectively on initial communication and engagement efforts carried out by FWJO to date
- Develop clear and consistent messaging to all stakeholders about the vision and role of FWJO
- Recognise that there are various types of audiences interested in the NSW Government's Joint Organisations legislation, structure and charter
- Place emphasis on in-person engagement at an early stage to establish strategic relationships, and then move to online engagement as appropriate
- Provide opportunities for sharing information with, and soliciting feedback from, member councils and other stakeholders

Stakeholders

We are responsible for engaging with a wide range of stakeholders who have interests in developing or participating in both the core and non-core functions and activities of the joint organisation. The Communication and Engagement strategy recognises the diverse interests of these stakeholders, which include:

- The FWJO Mayors, Councillors and Officers
- Communities, businesses and residents within the member councils' areas
- The NSW Government, in particular the Premier, Deputy Premier, Minister for Local Government, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Office of Local Government
- Other State Government Agencies and Departmental Secretaries, Directors and Regional Managers, in particular those agencies involved in the Regional Leadership Executive.
- Various Federal Government Agencies, particularly in relation to Infrastructure, Regional Development, Water, Health, Education and Tourism

- Destination New South Wales and Murray Region Tourism and other tourism organisations
- Regional Development Australia
- Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) and Local Government New South Wales (LGNSW)
- Other NSW Joint Organisations and their member councils and communities
- Cross border (Victoria) Councils and Regional Groups of Councils
- All forms of media, online, newspaper, TV and radio
- Others as appropriate from time to time

Communication and Engagement Program

The FWJO will engage with all stakeholders in a meaningful and transparent two-way communication process using effective and targeted communication, including media liaison, to enhance the awareness of the role and functions of the FWJO.

The FWJO will collaborate effectively with all stakeholders to ensure that its strategic priorities align closely with those of Government Agencies and that the priorities meet community needs and expectations

The FWJO will develop promotional materials and messaging to inform and educate audience members, tailoring materials as required, and using a variety of ways to reach out to stakeholders and the public.

Information will be available on the FWJO website (www.fwjo.nsw.gov.au) and other appropriate social media platforms. Information will also be distributed electronically via email and at various meetings and events.

Media Liaison

The FWJO Chairperson will under normal circumstances be the designated media spokesperson, or this function may be delegated as required from time to time to the Chief Executive Officer. The Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer will have responsibility for preparing Media Releases, managing media enquiries and monitoring media coverage of FWJO's activities.

Key Messages

FWJO will develop clear and consistent messaging, which will support development of the promotional materials and be used by the Chairperson, Chief Executive Officer and members when engaging with stakeholders.

Key Activities

The key communication and engagement activities are outlined in Annexure A: Stakeholder Communication tools and include:

Meetings

FWJO will also target other individual audiences as appropriate. These will be strategically scheduled in conjunction with Federal and State Agencies, or at other times to encourage public participation

Given the area covered by the FWJO and the location of key local and state government stakeholders, scheduled meetings will be offered with the option to video conference to maximise stakeholder participation

Online Engagement

FWJO will engage online where relationships with stakeholders are firmly established. Contact information will always be provided and FWJO will encourage feedback from external sources and the general public;

Website

The FWJO website will aim to be informative, easy to follow, user friendly and will encourage feedback from stakeholders and the public.

The website will provide an avenue for stakeholders and public review and comment in relation to all draft policy and planning documents.

The website will be continually updated and regularly reviewed to ensure that that it is effectively targeting and addressing the needs of key audiences.

Social Media

FWJO will develop a social media strategy, targeting specific audiences and which will identify the types of information that needs to be shared via social media platforms.

Accountability and Transparency

The Chief Executive Officer will be the responsible for the effectiveness and implementation of the Communication and Engagement Plan and will arrange for the Plan to be reviewed and updated to ensure that the guiding principles are adhered to and that the goals and objectives of the Plan set out in Section 2 and the key activities set out in Section 5 are achieved.

Annexure A: Stakeholder Communication Tools

Internal Communication				
Medium	Source	Details	Schedule	Target Audience
Meetings	FWJO Board	Committee Recommendations; Status Reports; Strategies; Issues; Budget;	Quarterly	FWJO Mayors; Deputy Mayors; General Managers; OLG & DPC Representatives
	FWJO General Managers Advisory Committee	Committee Recommendations; Status Reports; Strategies; Issues; Budget;	Bi-Monthly / As required	FWJO General Managers
	Engineering & Transport Committee	To inform, share ideas, make recommendations to Board on policy	Bi-Monthly / As required	FWJO member council Engineering & Transport representatives
	Tourism Projects Committee	To implement tourism projects in the FWJO region, inform, share ideas and make recommendations to the Board	Bi-Monthly / As required	FWJO Mayors and General Managers
	In Person	Collaboration, partnership and strategies	As Required	FWJO General Managers
Email	Correspondence with JO Board and General Managers	Formal and informal emails to JO Board Members and General Managers relevant to JO Business	As Required	FWJO Board and General Managers
External Communication				
Medium	Source	Details	Schedule	Target Audience
Meetings	NSW JO Chairs	Strategies; Issues; Budget;	Quarterly	NSW JO Chairs; OLG representatives
	In Person	To inform, share ideas, determine opportunities for collaboration and partnership	As required	Local, State & Federal representatives
	In Person	To inform, share ideas, determine opportunities for collaboration and partnership	As required	Regional non-government organisations and businesses
Email	Correspondence	Formal and informal emails to relevant stakeholders relating to FWJO business	As required	Local, State and Federal Government representatives; other key stakeholders
Online	FWJO Website	Information relating to FWJO strategies, projects, meetings, events and other business	Daily	Everyone
Social Media	Facebook	Information and stories relating to FWJO and member councils	As required	Local and regional
Newspaper/Radio/Television	Media Releases	Information and stories relating to FWJO	As required	Local and regional