



John Barilaro
Deputy Premier
Minister for Regional NSW

Gabrielle Upton
Minister for Local Government

MEDIA RELEASE

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JOINT ORGANISATIONS TO BOLSTER REGIONAL COUNCILS

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW John Barilaro, and Minister for Local Government Gabrielle Upton today announced the NSW Government will introduce new laws to allow councils in regional NSW to voluntarily create new Joint Organisations in 2018.

Mr Barilaro said Joint Organisations would transform the way the NSW Government and local councils collaborate, plan, set priorities and deliver important projects in regional NSW, to help them deliver on the ambitions and priorities of their regional communities.

The announcement follows the success of a pilot program which trialled five separate Joint Organisations across NSW.

Mr Barilaro said the NSW Government would provide seed funding of \$3.3 million to support councils choosing to become a member of a new Joint Organisation.

“Joint Organisations bring together local and state governments to focus on the issues that matter most to regional communities such as building strong businesses, creating jobs, securing water supplies, improving regional transport, and developing community infrastructure, services and facilities,” he said.

“Councils choosing to take up this option will get a seat at the table in planning infrastructure and investment for their region, with support and funding from the State Government,” he said.

Mr Barilaro said over the course of the pilot period, the NSW Government had been working with councils and listening to feedback to get the Joint Organisations model right.

“The *Local Government Amendment (Regional Joint Organisations) Bill 2017* will allow councils to form new partnerships, and in turn, work on projects that cross their geographical borders. Passage of this Bill is a key pillar of our reforms to ensure regional NSW continues to be a great place to live, work and invest,” he said.

The Government has already provided \$1.5 million for five pilot Joint Organisations with an independent evaluation confirming the program delivered benefits for regional councils and communities.

The pilot process has already developed a youth employment strategy for the Illawarra, assisted the eight councils in the Namoi Joint Organisation to put together a regional investment prospectus, and allowed the Central NSW Joint Organisation to advance its Infrastructure Prioritisation Framework.

“Joint Organisations will help them manage the many challenges unique to councils in regional NSW,” Ms Upton said.

“The NSW Government will provide support to councils wishing to join Joint Organisations and will work closely with them once they’re established,” she said.

Joint Organisations would be ready to start in July 2018, comprise a minimum of three member councils and align with NSW Planning regional boundaries.

Further details on how councils can nominate to become a member of a Joint Organisation and funding arrangements will be released shortly.

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