

Ordinary Meeting

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 24 March, 2026

Location: The Studio, Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre, Bridge Road, Nowra

Attachments (Under Separate Cover)

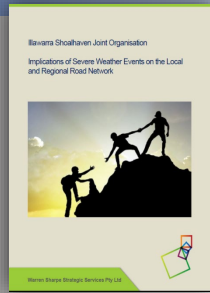
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ISJO

2025: The year in review



CL26.47 - Attachment 1

Chair's Foreword

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation (the ISJO) is a statutory body under the NSW Local Government Act and is the umbrella organisation for local government in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Region.

The ISJO has four Member Councils: Wollongong City Council, Shellharbour City Council, Kiama Municipal Council and Shoalhaven City Council. These Councils are responsible for a land area of 5,656 square kilometres and a population over 430,000. Our region contributes over \$23 billion to the national economy. 212,000 people have their jobs here.

Wollondilly Shire Council is an Associate Member of the ISJO. Wollondilly Shire has a population of 61,442 and a Gross Regional Product in excess of \$3.16 billion.

The Illawarra Shoalhaven is one of our State's most significant contributors to economic growth, employment and housing and we are proud of our longstanding record of local government cooperation and State and Commonwealth Agency partnership.

Our Regional Organisation continued in 2025 to demonstrate its high level of performance in working with Member Councils and State Agencies on issues and opportunities that matter most to our regional community. These issues and opportunities include but are not limited to Sustainability, Resilience, Environmental Protection, Connectivity, Economic Development and Employment Growth. Ample evidence of this achievement and true innovation at a Regional and State level is provided in the pages that follow.

I commend the collaborative work of the ISJO and local government generally in our Region and look forward to our leadership role and contribution developing even further in the year ahead.



Chris Homer
Shellharbour City Mayor and
Chair, the Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint
Organisation

The history of local government cooperation in our Region

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

Prior to 2015 local government in our broader 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 incarnations, local government cooperation in our region has had a common theme: that of a voluntary collective of Local Government Authorities working together to promote and foster the sustainable development of our region by building on our unique and diverse economic, natural and cultural heritage.

ISJO Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities 2035



In December 2025 the ISJO adopted its Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities 2035.

The Local Government (General) Amendment (Regional Joint Organisations) Regulation 2018 requires that Joint Organisations such as the ISJO prepare a Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities that draws from its Member Council Community Strategic Plans (CSPs), regional plans and other strategic documents to clearly identify the key areas of focus for the Joint Organisation in the years ahead.

Individually and collectively the strategic frameworks developed at a local, regional and beyond region level have a profound influence on the future of our region and the well-being of its residents.

In the context of these plans, the ISJO's Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities serves as a communication link between the local and State Government strategic frameworks that impact on and guide the future of our region. It facilitates shared understanding of these frameworks and, importantly, it promotes intergovernmental cooperation and targeted resource allocations that will assist in the achievement of the short, medium and long term goals of the entities with which the ISJO and its Member Councils work.

Community Strategy Plans describe a community's vision and aspirations for a period of ten or more years.

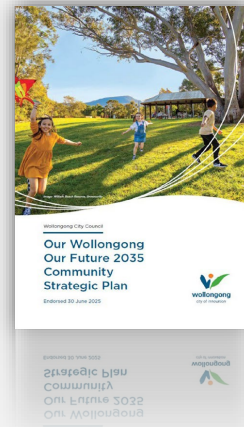
The process for creating a CSP is led by the Mayor and Councillors and through engagement with the community. The CSP is the community's plan for its future and councils have a custodial role in engaging, refining and preparing the plan on the community's behalf. As it is possible the community will identify aspirations that are not council's full responsibility role to implement, councils may need to partner with state government agencies and community groups in a CSP's delivery.



ISJO Member Council Community Strategic Plans

Key requirements in a Community Strategic Plan are:

- The plan must be for a minimum of 10 years
- It must identify community priorities and aspirations
- It is to include a vision statement, strategic objectives and strategies to achieve those objectives
- It must address the quadruple bottom line: social, environmental, economic and civic leadership issues
- It must be based on social justice principles: equity, access, participation and rights
- It is to give due consideration to State Government plans and other relevant state and regional plans.



How our Strategic Priorities were developed

An analysis was undertaken of ISJO Member Council Community Strategic Plans to identify shared strategic priorities over the next ten years.

Five key goals / themes were identified in both this analysis and a review of other key inputs in the form of the NSW Government Wellbeing Framework, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the priorities of the Southern Region State Agencies Regional Leadership Executive Strategic Plan.

These five key areas of focus now constitute the strategic priorities that will guide the Joint Organisation's strategy and initiative development and form the basis of review and reporting processes in the years ahead.

They are:

1. Environment, Resilience and Sustainability

- 1.1 We will lead efforts to promote and resource climate change adaptation and to embed disaster resilience in planning and resource allocation at all levels
- 1.2 We will role model sustainability in our own practices and, in partnership with other levels of government and peak bodies, will treasure and protect our region's environment, its biodiversity and unique character
- 1.3 We will work to reduce emissions and, through responsible waste management practices, education and an embracing of the circular economy, will put our region at the forefront of initiatives to create a sustainable future.

2. Growing the contribution of our Region's Economy

- 2.1 We will build partnerships to expand access to markets and to help build an interregional case for State and Commonwealth investment in enabling economic, road and rail transport infrastructure including and especially linkages to South West Sydney, Port Kembla and the Western Sydney International Airport
- 2.2 We will work cooperatively with business and government to accelerate region-wide diversification, innovation and skills development and to expand employment opportunities in all sectors including technology-driven manufacturing, research, education, defence and the digital and visitor economies.

3. Connection, Well-Being and Sense of Place

- 3.1 We will collaborate with key agencies to support the delivery of programs that promote connectivity, liveability, safety, health and wellbeing
- 3.2 We will advocate strongly for better and more integrated public transport and for within-region linkages that open up opportunities, assist a more mobile workforce and promote equitable access to education, health and other social services
- 3.3 We will promote active lifestyles, community development, cultural awareness, creativity and a valuing of local character
- 3.4 We will acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians of the land throughout the Illawarra Shoalhaven – the Dharawal, Jerrinja, Wandj Wandj and Wodi Wodi Peoples – and recognise our responsibility to work together with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities towards improved economic, social and cultural outcomes.

4. Housing

- 4.1 We will contribute to and, where appropriate drive, initiatives to support housing affordability, diversity and availability
- 4.2 We will support programs that identify and assist in the delivery of infrastructure – including social, educational and service infrastructure – to enable housing development in priority growth areas.

5. Strategy, Governance and Partnerships

- 5.1 We will manage our resources wisely and be informative, transparent and trusted decision-makers focused on the values of our community
- 5.2 We will work together as a region, with other regions and peak bodies in local government to ensure that our sector's financial sustainability is ensured and that our collective regional interests are prioritised.

Our Vision Statement remains the Statement adopted in 2019: "A confident, vibrant, safe and productive region that optimises the potential of its people and environment now and into the future".



The ISJO region leads Regional Project tackling FOGO Contamination and Capacity



Image courtesy of NSW EPA

The ISJO is spearheading an innovative project to solve Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) contamination and processing capacity challenges across the Illawarra region (Wollongong, Shellharbour, and Kiama).

This comprehensive, multi-phase initiative showcases ISJO's leadership in waste management, aiming to turn a current problem – FOGO bin contamination and limited processing options – into an opportunity.

By coordinating efforts at a regional scale, the project seeks to ensure that the FOGO collected from households becomes a valuable resource rather than low value "contaminated oversize" destined for landfill. With only two local landfills serving the Illawarra and organics recycling facilities near capacity, ISJO's work is both urgent and strategic for the region's sustainable future.

A Phased Approach to FOGO Solutions

ISJO's FOGO Contamination and Capacity Project is structured in clear phases, each building on the last to address specific objectives:

1. **Technology Scan & Base Case Analysis:** The project begins by scanning available technologies and methods to reduce FOGO contamination. The team will define the current "base case" (the status quo of FOGO processing in the region) and develop a multi-criteria analysis framework to objectively evaluate potential solutions. By rigorously investigating a range of technologies under local regulatory and operational constraints, Phase 1 establishes a strong evidence base for decision-making.

2. **Options Assessment and Cost-Benefit Evaluation:** In the second phase, a detailed assessment of viable options for managing FOGO is undertaken, including both infrastructure and process improvements. The project will gather data on priority technologies and perform cost-benefit analyses for different scenarios. This includes consulting with reference facilities and industry experts to understand real-world performance and costs. The outcome will be a set of well-costed options and draft guidelines that Illawarra councils can use to compare solutions for reducing contamination and expanding organics capacity.
3. **Dunmore Facility Case Study:** A key feature of the project is applying the research in a practical context. Phase 3 involves a case study at the **Dunmore Organics Processing Facility** (Shellharbour’s organics recycling site). The preferred solutions from Phase 2 will be modelled and tested against the “base case” at Dunmore to evaluate their feasibility and impact on the ground. This will produce a detailed report and an outcomes-based case study, including procurement specifications tailored to improving Dunmore’s operations. By piloting solutions at Dunmore, the project gains insights that can be applied to actual facility upgrades or new contracts in the region.
4. **Final Phase – Developing a Scalable Regional Model:** In the final phase, the ISJO will synthesize the findings into a regionally relevant and scalable model for FOGO management. The deliverables will include a summary of the technology scan and analysis, cost-benefit guidelines, and a roadmap that Illawarra councils can use for future investments and joint procurement. The model is intended to be modular and evidence-based, so it can guide not only immediate decisions (such as upcoming organics processing contracts) but also long-term strategy. In essence, the Illawarra will have a template for best-practice FOGO management that can adjust as volumes grow, and technology evolves.

Urgency and Regional Context

The project comes at a critical time for the Illawarra. The Illawarra has only two active landfills (operated by Wollongong and Shellharbour councils) and very limited organics processing capacity. With such constrained infrastructure, any increase in contamination or waste volumes can quickly stress the system.

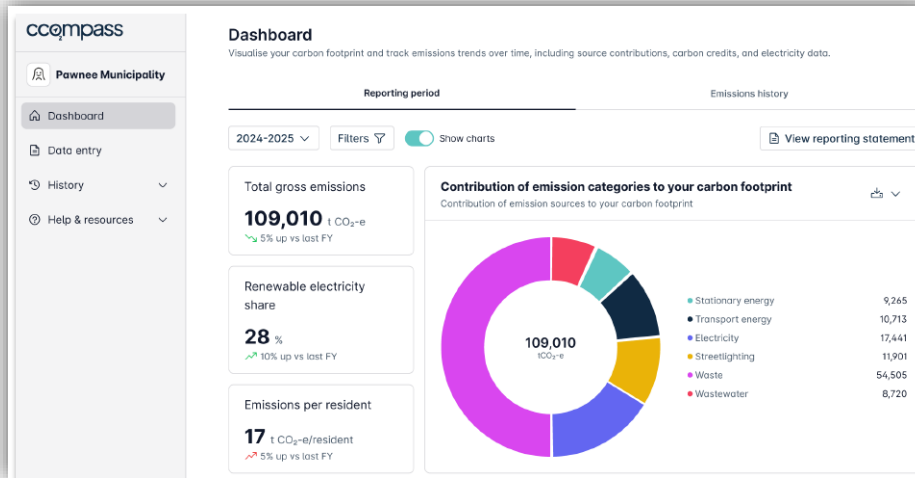
FOGO services are already in place for Illawarra households, but contamination in green bins (e.g. plastics or non-compostable materials mixed with organics) means a significant portion of collected FOGO ends up as low-value residue. At the same time, pressures are mounting to expand organics recycling. The NSW Government has mandated that commercial food organics collections be rolled out from 2025–2026, adding to the volumes needing processing. For the Illawarra, this means not only more FOGO from households, but also new streams of business and institutional food waste coming online in the next few years. Without additional capacity or efficiency improvements, these increased volumes could exceed the region’s current processing limits. The Dunmore facility, for instance, has a finite licensed throughput (around 50,000 tonnes per year) and is already one of only two organics recycling facilities in the Illawarra.

In short, doing nothing is not an option.

Leading by Example - Regional Innovation with Broader Impact

Many areas are grappling with similar issues – from contamination in organics bins to insufficient local processing facilities especially as FOGO services expand nationwide. The tools, frameworks, and lessons developed through this project will be transferable to those regions. In the future, a council alliance elsewhere in NSW could replicate the Illawarra’s approach, confident that the solutions have been tried and tested.

Tracking towards Net Zero



Sample image of the updated Carbon Compass dashboard displaying emissions categories and their contribution to a Council's overall emissions output.

A key outcome identified in our Joint Organisations Net Zero Acceleration 3.0 Program ((JONZA 3.0)) delivery program will be the provision of a tool – the Carbon Compass emissions reporting tool.

Developed by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) Sustainable Councils Team in collaboration with Net Zero consultancy experts, 100% Renewables the Carbon Compass tool is designed to streamline emissions reporting across regional NSW offering a simple, effective and accessible way to track Council operational emissions.

It is freely available to all JONZA participating Councils

While the ISJO councils already have established emissions reporting practices using a mix of in-house and third-party platforms to report Scope 1 and 2 emissions, the Carbon Compass brings a regional lens to emissions data allowing comparisons across Council areas.

By helping councils align their efforts and improve data consistency, the tool will support the Sustainable Councils team's broader goal of gaining clearer oversight of council emissions as a refining future grant opportunities and implementing targeted support for net zero initiatives.

Carbon Compass is a tool requiring very little technical expertise and is accompanied by step-by-step user guides making it suitable for councils both in the beginning stages of emissions reporting or experienced councils with existing reporting knowledge and expertise.

Carbon Compass:

- Tracks key Scope 1 and 2 emissions including, electricity consumption from council building and streetlights, fleet fuel use, gas usage, wastewater and landfill emissions and green waste
- Supports accurate electricity accounting, distinguishing between grid-supplied and renewable energy sourced electricity
- Provides user-friendly data management, allowing users to upload supporting files and nominate contact persons within Councils to provide emission source data.

- Provides confidence tagging allowing data entries to be marked as actual, estimated, or other levels of certainty.
- Historical data entry, enabling councils to build a comprehensive emissions profile
- Compliance-ready, with alignment to NSW public sector reporting guidelines.

Regional benefits for using the Carbon Compass include:

- Consistency in emissions reporting, enabling better benchmarking and collaboration between councils
- Enhanced data quality and transparency, supporting more informed decision-making and policy development
- Streamlined reporting processes, reducing reliance on external consultants and lowering barriers for councils at different maturity levels

The updated version of the tool has been workshopped with Joint Organisation Net Zero Managers to ensure that it is fit for purpose for council application.

Once available, the Net Zero Program Managers will facilitate data collection exercises with the councils to populate emissions profiles within the tool.

By adopting Carbon Compass, ISJO Councils will have to opportunity to improve emissions reporting standards whilst at the same time aligning reporting frameworks with the broader Joint Organisation network across the State.

Workshops on interregional shared advocacy opportunities



Front row from left to right: Cr Matt Gould, Mayor of Wollondilly, Cr Ashleigh Cagney, Mayor of Camden, Cr Tania Brown, Lord Mayor of Wollongong.
Second row left to right: Cr Matthew Norris, Shoalhaven City Council, Cr Darcy Lound, Mayor of Campbelltown, Cr Cameron McDonald, Mayor of Kiama
Third row left to right: Cr Chris Homer, Mayor of Shellharbour, Cr Jesse Fitzpatrick, Mayor of Wingecarribee

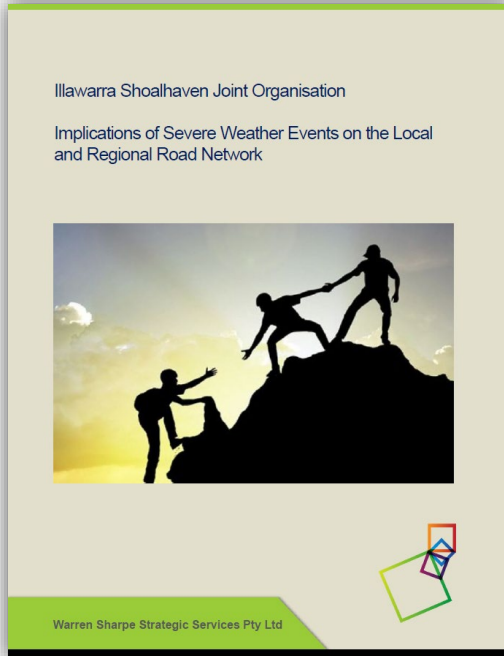
In the second half of 2025 two workshops were held to identify advocacy opportunities that spanned regional boundaries and would contribute to the development of the LGAs involved and their contribution to the State and National Economy.

The participating local government areas comprised Wollondilly Shire, Camden City, Campbelltown City, Wingecarribee Shire, Wollongong City, Shellharbour City, Kiama Municipality and Shoalhaven City.

Opportunities identified for investigation included but were not limited to:

- Interregional Connectivity including road and rail
- Global Gateways including Western Sydney International Airport and Port Kembla
- Housing capacity
- Employment opportunities
- The Visitor Economy, and
- Public Transport

Implications of Severe Weather Events on the Local and Regional Road Network



In the Illawarra Shoalhaven an acceleration in the frequency and severity of natural disasters such as fire and flood has resulted in substantial threats to our communities, major damage to critical local and regional infrastructure, enormous strain on local government finances and deep-seated trauma for communities and first responders.

In recognition of this the ISJO secured funding under the joint Commonwealth / NSW Government National Partnership Agreement on Disaster Risk Reduction to investigate a series of measures to identify and address our region's exposure to disaster risk.

A major part of the work was preparation of an evidence-based review – [Addressing the implications of Severe Weather Events on the Local and Regional Road Network](#) – to highlight the particular challenges for road infrastructure in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region generated by geographic issues specific to our region. By drawing upon actual lived experience arising from the devastating natural disasters and, taking lessons learnt from those disasters, the review offers detailed recommendations for positive change to decision-making in the future.

The review also accessed knowledge gained from assessing the natural disaster impacts affecting communities and Councils across NSW and demonstrates the advantage of sharing many of the lessons learnt from multiple disasters to better address common challenges. The review is therefore very much an advocacy document with powerful, if at times confronting, messages for all levels of Government.

CL26.47 - Attachment 1



Illawarra Shoalhaven Natural Hazards Snapshot

The Illawarra Shoalhaven region faces a complex and evolving natural hazard landscape, including floods, storms, bushfires, coastal hazards, heatwaves, and landslides and climate change is projected to intensify these risks, increasing the urgency for proactive planning and adaptation.

To support a shared understanding of these challenges, the ISJO has prepared the *Illawarra Shoalhaven Natural Hazards Snapshot*. This report consolidates publicly available data on hazard exposure, historical events as well as future climate projections for the four ISJO member councils.

It also provides localised profiles of risk, resilience, and planned mitigation actions.

The Snapshot is intended as a practical tool for councils, partners, and the community. It will also help provide local context to the NSW Reconstruction Authority for the upcoming Disaster Adaptation Plan process and strengthen alignment between local planning and regional resilience priorities.

Key Features of the Report

- Inclusion of a regional overview of natural hazards and climate projections
- Council-specific profiles detailing hazard exposure, historical disaster impacts, property risk analysis and resilience indices
- A summary of planned disaster risk reduction actions derived from each council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan.
- Data sourced from reputable agencies including ABS, NSW Government, SES, RFS, Climate Council, and Natural Hazards Research Australia.

Next steps

The ISJO is now promoting the report as a resource for councils, agencies and community stakeholders to support risk-informed decision-making and resilience planning.

