



CANBERRA REGION
JOINT ORGANISATION

Regional leadership connecting our communities

CHARTER



1. Introduction

1.1. Name and Legal Status

- a. The name of the joint organisation is the Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO).
- b. The CRJO is a body corporate established on 11 May 2018 by proclamation under Part 7 Chapter 12 of the Local Government Act 1993 “the Act”
- c. While the principal functions of the joint organisation are provided for in the Act and through this Charter, powers are also conferred on the joint organisation as a statutory corporation under Section 50 of the *Interpretation Act 1987*. Other functions may be conferred on a joint organisation by legislation and may be delegated to a joint organisation by one or more member councils.

1.2. Interpretation

This Charter is to be interpreted in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* and *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* and the *Interpretation Act 1987*.

1.3. Definitions

In this Charter, the following terms apply:

Act	The <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> .
Affiliate	Means a person(s) or an entity other than a government organisation that has been determined by the Board to be a non-voting member and includes corporate and not-for-profit organisations.
Associate Member	Means those councils that are not proclaimed under the Act to be part of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation.
Board	Means the joint organisation board, consisting of the mayors of each member council, any additional voting representatives of these member councils appointed under section 400T of the Act and any other non-voting representatives who may attend, but are not entitled to vote at, a meeting.
Charter	Means this document, outlining the operational and governance principles for the Joint Organisation and any other agreed matters, consistent with the Act and other laws.
Chairperson	Means the person, who is a mayor, elected to the office of chairperson by the voting representatives on the Board from among the voting representatives who are mayors.
Councillor	Means a person elected or appointed to civic office and includes a mayor.



Executive Officer	Means the person employed by the Joint Organisation to conduct the day-to-day management of the Joint Organisation in accordance with strategic regional priorities and other plans, programs, strategies and policies of the Joint Organisation and to implement without delay the lawful decisions of the joint organisation. The Chief Executive Officer has the role and functions of the Executive Officer as defined under the Act.
General Manager/Chief Executive Officer	Means the person employed by a council to conduct the day-to-day management of the council in accordance with strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the council and to implement without delay the lawful decisions of the council.
Joint Organisation (JO)	Means an organisation established under Part 7 Chapter 12 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> .
Member Council	Means those councils proclaimed under the Act to be part of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation.
Mayor	Means a person elected or appointed to civic office, who is the leader of the council.
Majority	Means 50% plus one (1) of voting members.
Non-Voting Members	Means those councils and other organisations or individuals that are members of the Joint Organisation but do not have the right to vote.
Non-Voting Representative	Means the chosen representative of a non-voting member of the Board (sometimes called an 'associate member'). This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An employee of the public service nominated by the Secretary, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.• Any other individual or representative of a council or other organisation invited by the Board to represent a non-voting member of the Board.• Any other person or a member of a class of persons prescribed by the Regulation.
Regulation	The <i>Local Government (General) Regulation 2005</i> .
Voting Representative	Means a representative of a member council on the Board.

1.4. Adopting the Charter

- a. The charter, in its original form was formally considered by the Board on 29 June 2018.
- b. The charter was adopted at the Board meeting held on 14 September 2018.
- c. The current charter was adopted by the Board on 2 August 2024, in line with CRJO's policy review process.



1.5. Amending the Charter

This Charter will be reviewed every two years at the time of the election of the Chair or at any other time by resolution of the board.

2. Establishment

2.1. Vision

The vision of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, '**Diverse, Inclusive, Connected,**' embodies the unique identity of the Canberra region and sets it apart as a dynamic and forward-thinking region.

This vision captures the essence of the region's diverse landscape, which spans from the picturesque south-west slopes to the majestic Snowy Mountains and the vibrant coastal stretches of the Sapphire Coast. It reflects our commitment to embracing and celebrating the rich cultural tapestry and heritage that define our communities.

'Connected' not only refers to our robust physical and digital infrastructure that links towns and cities but also to the strong sense of community and collaboration that underpins our approach to regional development.

The inclusiveness aspect of our vision underscores our dedication to ensuring that every individual and community, regardless of background, has equal access to opportunities and a voice in shaping the region's future.

Together, these elements create a distinct identity for the Canberra Region, one that is grounded in respect for our natural and cultural heritage and driven by a collective spirit to innovate and prosper.

2.2. Principles

The CRJO commits to applying the following operating and governance principles in all its activities:

a. Operating Principles

- I. **Cohesive:** speaking with one voice on regional issues and valuing equal representation.
- II. **Collaborative:** by working transparently and in the spirit of trust across member councils, communities, governments, and with a wide range of partners.
- III. **Aligned:** with consistency between member councils and NSW Government on regional strategies and policies.
- IV. **Efficient:** by avoiding duplication and using resources within and available to member Councils wherever possible.
- V. **Evidenced based:** when introducing or transitioning programs and shared services.
- VI. **Educative:** Challenging and improving as a sector and sharing information and opportunities between participating councils and the ACT.
- VII. **Flexible:** Opportunities to operate at the sub-regional as well as regional level. Principles to opt in/opt out when deemed appropriate.
- VIII. **Effective:** Delivering real outcomes for the region through collaboration and shared delivery

b. Governance Principles

- i. **Understanding** the role of the JO in assisting Councils and the State Government to deliver outcomes
- ii. **Ethics and Integrity** are embedded in operations and decision making



- iii. **Accountability** – there are clear lines of responsibility and delegations
- iv. **Finance Sustainability** – the organisation can meet all its ongoing financial commitments
- v. **Communication** – is open, responsive and transparent for all parties
- vi. **A Governance Framework** comprises:
 - **Policies** - Policies adopted by the Board and those policies that are outward looking or affect the Board
 - **Protocols** - Staff policies adopted via General Managers Advisory Group (GMAG) decision.
 - **Procedures** - Operational procedures to be implemented by the EO in consultation with GMAG.

2.3. Principal Functions

The principal functions of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation will be to:

- a. Establish strategic regional priorities for the Joint Organisation area and develop strategies and plans for delivering these priorities.
- b. Provide regional leadership for the Joint Organisation area and to be an advocate for strategic regional priorities.
- c. Identify and take up opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation on matters relating to the Joint Organisation area.

2.4. Other Functions

The CRJO may perform functions, supplementary or ancillary to its primary functions, if:

- the objective of undertaking those functions is to provide support for the operations of its Member Councils aimed at strengthening local government in its Joint Organisation area; and
- the scope, operational principles and business plan for those supplementary functions is approved by a resolution of the Board.

3. Membership

3.1. Voting Members

- a. The following are 'member councils' of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation:
 - Bega Valley Shire Council
 - Eurobodalla Shire Council
 - Goulburn Mulwaree Council
 - Hilltops Council
 - Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
 - Snowy Monaro Regional Council
 - Snowy Valleys Council
 - Upper Lachlan Shire Council
 - Wingecarribee Shire Council
 - Yass Valley Council
- b. The voting member for each Council will be the Mayor or designated alternate who is an elected member of that Council.



3.2. Associate Members

The following organisations are Associate Members of the CRJO:

- Wagga Wagga City Council,
- ACT Government.
- The NSW Government, as represented by a nominee of the NSW Premier's Department, currently the Director Regional Coordination (South).

The Canberra Airport is an Affiliate Member of the CRJO.

3.3. Changes in Membership

- a. A proclamation is required for a Joint Organisation to change voting members.
- b. Any voting member proposing to withdraw from the Joint Organisation must give 12 months written notice to the Board.
- c. This Charter may be amended to change non-voting members of the Board. In deciding whether to propose or support a change in membership, the CRJO will:
 - At the request of a member, consider a draft resolution seeking membership change, and
 - Following a resolution in support, amend this Charter as set out section 1.6 to change membership as set out at section 3.2.

3.4. Financial Contributions

a. Annual Member Contributions

Each member council is to contribute an annual monetary payment or equivalent contribution based on the following methodology:

- i. A flat Fee of \$10,000
- ii. A population fee of 77 cents per head
- iii. Both the above fee components being increased annually in accordance with the rate peg unless otherwise determined by the Board

NB: the population being based on the most recent Estimated Resident Population (ERP) of the Local Government Area of the member Council by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

b. Associate Member Contributions

Contributions to be as follows unless otherwise determined by the Board:

- i. 75% of the calculated member contribution fee for councils located in NSW
- ii. The ACT Government's contribution be determined via the development and review of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between CRJO and the ACT Government.

c. Affiliates Member Contributions

Membership fees of affiliates will be determined by the Board on a case by case basis.

d. Other Contributions

Contributions for other projects /activities shall be at the discretion of the individual member. Members may choose to be a voluntary participant in the project/activity unless the Board has determined that it is a *critical matter* for the CRJO (refer CI 3.5).

Member councils will be consulted about proposed contributions by:

- i. The Board resolving a draft schedule of fees for the upcoming financial year.
- ii. Seeking feedback from member Councils on the draft schedule of fees.
- iii. The Board determining the final schedule of fees by resolution following consideration of feedback from member Councils.

3.5. Decision Resolution

- a. In the event that the resolution of a critical matter to be determined by the Board is lost, the mechanism for the Board to move critical decisions forward is as follows:

Step 1– internal resolution using one or more of the following:

- Take into account board member views and rework the proposal.
- Establish a specific sub-committee to review and rework the proposal.
- Set aside time for the Board to discuss the proposal prior to the next Board meeting.
- Obtain and present to the Board advice from an expert or an independent report.

Step 2 – independent mediation (may include using any of the processes outlined in Step 1):

- Board resolves to work with an independent mediator to support Board to resolve the decision.
- Where a mediator cannot be agreed, the Board request the Office of Local Government (OLG) to appoint a mediator.

Step 3 – appoint an independent arbitrator

- Board resolves to appoint an independent arbitrator to support Board to resolve the decision.
- Where the arbitrator cannot be agreed, the board request the OLG to appoint an arbitrator.

- b. Critical matters to be determined by the board include:

- i. adoption of a Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities
- ii. adoption of the Annual Performance Statement and Financial Statements
- iii. a project/ activity deemed by the Board to be a critical matter by resolution as it will require a financial contribution from all member councils OR it is deemed to be a significant matter impacting on the organisation or across the region.

3.6. Dispute Resolution

In the event of a dispute between Board members that arises from or relates to the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, the following steps will be taken to resolve that dispute:

- a. Relevant members will advise the joint organisation prior to taking legal action.
- b. Relevant members will give notice to board members specifying the nature of the dispute.
- c. On receipt of notice, member councils must endeavour in good faith to resolve the dispute promptly using informal dispute resolution techniques such as mediation, expert evaluation or determination or similar techniques, as agreed by those members.
- d. members that are parties to the dispute will pay the mediator's costs

4. The Board

4.1. Governing Board and Role

The Board of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation consists of:

- a. the Mayors of each Member Council, who are the Voting Representatives (or a replacement Councillor of a Member Council, if the Mayor is removed from office as a Voting Representative by the Minister under the Act);
- b. the alternate for a Voting Representative appointed by the Member Council under the Regulations, while acting in the place of the Voting Representative; and
- c. the Non-Voting Representatives appointed under clause 4.2.
- d. The role of the board is to direct and control the affairs of the CRJO. The board is to consult with the executive officer in directing and controlling the affairs of the CRJO.

4.2. Non-Voting Representatives

The following persons are Non-Voting Representatives on the Board:

- i. the Mayor or a suitable Councillor Representative of Wagga Wagga City Council;
 - ii. representative from ACT Government, currently the Executive Branch Manager, Economic and Regional Policy, for so long as it remains an Associate Member;
 - iii. representative from Canberra Airport, for so long as it remains an Affiliate Member;
 - iv. a non-voting representative of the NSW Government, as represented by a nominee of the NSW Premier's Department, currently the Director Regional Coordination (South);
 - v. the General Managers of Member Councils and Wagga Wagga City Council; and any other person or a member of a class of persons prescribed by the Regulations.
- b. Non-Voting Representatives may attend and speak at meetings of the Board but may not move, second, amend or vote on motions.
 - c. The following persons may attend meetings of the Board in an advisory capacity and may be members of committees established under clause 4.9:
 - i. the Executive Officer.

4.3. Chair and Role

- a. The Chair is responsible for the conduct of meetings and shall be elected every two years by the voting representatives of the Board from one of the mayoral representatives. In the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair or a person elected at the meeting is to preside at the meeting. The Chair does not have a casting vote.
- b. The Chair is the Joint Organisation's spokesperson on strategic matters and will represent the Joint Organisation at regional forums where possible. On specific issues, the Chair may elect to delegate the spokesperson to be the Deputy Chair or the Mayor of a member Council.

4.4. Alternates

Member councils that choose to appoint an alternate representative must notify the Joint Organisation of that person's name and position.



4.5. Advisory Groups and Working Groups

- a. The Canberra Region Joint Organisation establishes the General Managers Advisory Group, otherwise known as GMAG, as a formal group to provide recommendations to the Board at each ordinary meeting of the Board.
- b. GMAG is delegated by the Board to create working groups and networks as required to assist the delivery of the functions of CRJO.
- c. Working Groups shall report through GMAG to the Board, however in special circumstances may be approved by GMAG to report directly to the Board.
- d. Working Groups may include (but not limited to) key strategic and operational areas such as:
 - i. Economic Development, Tourism, Infrastructure, Planning (land use), Strategic Planning, Waste and Resource Recovery, Human Resources, Procurement and Information Technology.
- e. Committees and advisory groups may also be established from time to time by Board resolution.
- f. The GMAG chair is delegated by the Board to oversee the performance of the Executive Officer.

5. Meetings

5.1. Meeting Frequency

Board will meet a minimum four times each year preferable in each quarter. Board meetings will be hosted in a Member Council location. Meetings will be conducted in accordance with the Code of Meeting Practice adopted by the board from time to time. Where necessary, the chair may call further meetings.

5.2. Participation and Quorum

a. Quorum

The quorum for a meeting is a majority of 50% plus 1 of the voting members who hold office for the time being and are not suspended from office.

For the purpose of determining a quorum, those voting members who are attending meeting via electronic video (such as Skype) are to be considered as present.

If the calculation of 50% plus 1 of eligible voting members does not result in a whole number, the result is to be rounded up.

Note: As an example, 50% of 10 eligible voting members is 5, plus one additional voting member so the quorum for a meeting would be 6 eligible voting members.

b. Non-Quorum Meeting

A non- quorum meeting of the Board may be held if less than 50% of voting members are in attendance.

Business may be transacted at such a meeting subject to the requirements of section 5.3.

5.3. Voting and decision making

a. Board Decisions

All Board decisions shall require 50% plus 1 majority from the voting members.

To cover the instance where absences could result in not achieving a quorum, provision has been made for both quorum and non-quorum decision making with the proviso that at least 50% of members are in attendance.

b. Out of Session Decisions

Decisions that are required in between meetings may be determined by 50% plus one (1) majority written response to an email from the Chair.

Any out of session decision will be voided unless ratified by the Board at its next meeting.

c. Quorum Decisions

Decisions shall be reached in accordance with the CRJO Code of Meeting Practice which includes:

- Each voting Member is entitled to one vote.
- Non-voting members are not entitled to vote.
- The Chair DOES NOT have a second or casting vote.
- For a vote to be carried it must be supported by at least 50% plus one (1) of the Board members eligible to vote.

Note: This means 50% plus 1 of voting members, not simply of the voting members present at the meeting.

d. Non-Quorum Decisions

Decisions of non-quorum meetings must have registered 50% plus one (1) voting members 'in favour' within 7 days of the circulating the minutes.

Failure to comply with the above will void any non-quorum decision

A motion is taken to be defeated in the event there is a failure of 50% plus one (1) of votes in favour. The Chair, or person presiding at a meeting of the Board, does not have a casting vote.

5.4. Annual Performance Statement

The Canberra Region Joint Organisation will present the annual performance statement, audited financial statements at its fourth quarter ordinary meeting.

6. Other Matters

6.1. Consultation and publication

The Canberra Region Joint Organisation will consult with all members in preparing the following documents required under the Act and will publish the adopted versions on the Joint Organisation website:

- Statement of Strategic Regional Priorities
- Annual Performance Statement which includes Audited Financial Reports.

The Canberra Region Joint Organisation will also publish an annual performance statement on its website.



6.2. Records

The Joint Organisation will keep records and provide access to relevant information in accordance with the following legislation:

- State Records Act 1998
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
- The public officer of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation is the Executive Officer who may be contacted by email via mail@crjo.nsw.gov.au

6.3. Insurance

The Canberra Region Joint Organisation will ensure that appropriate insurance is taken out to indemnify all Board members and staff members, to provide workers compensation cover and public liability cover.

6.4. Indemnity

Representatives of members of the Board and staff of The Canberra Region Joint Organisation are protected from liability for functions and duties carried out or omitted honestly, in good faith and with due care and diligence.

6.5. Policies

- a. The Canberra Region Joint Organisation has adopted the following policies:
 - Code of Meeting Practice
 - Expenses and Facilities Policy
 - Model Code of Conduct
 - Procurement Policy
 - Statement of Revenue Policy

Further policies will be adopted by the board from time to time and will be published on the Canberra Region Joint Organisation's website at www.crjo.nsw.gov.au.

6.6. Code of Conduct Reviewers Panel

a. Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct shall apply to all voting and non-voting members of the Board and all members of any advisory groups, committees and working groups or network groups of the CRJO.

b. Code of Conduct Reviewer's Panel

Code of Conduct Reviewers will be selected from a list of approved *investigation service suppliers* listed under the NSW Government Prequalification Scheme for Performance and Management Services, administered by NSW Procurement.

6.7. Organisational Structure

- a. The Board approves the position of the Executive Officer - fulfilling the role of the executive officer as defined by the Act and Regulations, reporting to the Board with the performance being overseen by the Board Chair and GMAG Chair.
- b. Other staff of the CRJO will be appointed by the Executive Officer in consultation with GMAG to meet operational and strategic requirements.



6.8. Returns Disclosing Interests

- a. A register of all Returns will be kept by the Executive Officer of all Council representatives who are Councillors or designated persons and the location of the disclosures they have completed at their Council.
- b. Returns shall not be required to be lodged by non-voting members.
- c. Designated persons that are employed by the CRJO shall complete a disclosure within three months of their appointment and the Executive Officer will table the return at the next meeting of the Board.

6.9. Seal

Recognising that the Chief Executive Officer has the authority to authenticate documents under Section 683 *Local Government Act 1993*, the CRJO chooses not to create a seal for document certification.

Version History

Version	Board Meeting Date	Resolution	Adoption	Effective From	Review Period
3	2 August 2024	08/24-07	2 August 2024	2 August 2024	As Required
All policies can be reviewed or revoked by resolution of CRJO Board at any time.					