

# MAYORAL MINUTES 24 FEBRUARY 2026



**PORT STEPHENS**  
COUNCIL

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# MAYORAL MINUTES

**MAYORAL MINUTE**

**ITEM NO. 1**

**FILE NO: 26/8609  
EDRMS NO: PSC2024-03152**

**MAYOR'S DIARY**

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**THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1) Note the Mayoral appointments for the period from 10 December 2025 to 24 February 2026.
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**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the Mayoral appointments for the period 10 December 2025 to 24 February 2026.

This Mayoral Minute aims to inform the Council and community of the key engagements of the Mayor for the preceding period. This is an initiative I wanted to introduce this term to provide a clear record of the engagements undertaken through the Mayoral office.

**Wednesday 10 December 2025**

- Irrawang High School Presentation Day.
- Volunteers End of Year Thank You Lunch.
- Media/photo opportunity – Shoal Bay car park.

**Thursday 11 December 2025**

- 2NUR FM – Hunter Joint Organisation advocacy priorities for 2026.
- Worimi Conservation Lands Board of Management meeting.

**Friday 12 December 2025**

- Port Stephens Council and Destination Port Stephens quarterly catchup.

**Monday 15 December 2025**

- Met with new Probationary Constables for the Port Stephens Hunter Police District.
- Irrawang Public School Presentation Day.
- Catchup with the General Manager.
- Filmed Christmas message for staff.
- Communications staff catchup.

## ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 FEBRUARY 2026

### **Tuesday 16 December 2025**

- Hume Housing – Housing Australia Future Fund – Round 3.
- ET Catchup with the Mayor.
- Tomaree High School - Celebration of Student Excellence Awards 2025.

### **Wednesday 17 December 2025**

- Planning proposal meeting – 339 Tarean Road, Karuah.

### **Tuesday 23 December 2025**

- Hume Housing – Housing Australia Future Fund – Round 3.

### **Wednesday 31 December 2025**

- D’Albora Marina New Year’s Eve fireworks event.

### **Tuesday 6 January 2026**

- Marine Rescue Port Stephens Bravery and Remembrance Breakfast.

### **Wednesday 14 January 2026**

- International Women’s Day scholarship – interview with ABC Newcastle Drive Program.

### **Monday 26 January 2026**

- Australia Day Celebrations – Raymond Terrace and Nelson Bay.

### **Tuesday 27 January 2026**

- 2026 Mayoral Academic Scholarship interviews.
- Catchup with the acting General Manager.
- Catchup with the Executive Team.

### **Wednesday 28 January 2026**

- Meeting with Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils on NSW election commitments.
- 2026 Mayoral Academic Scholarship interviews.

### **Thursday 29 January 2026**

- Jet ski trial completion media event.
- 2026 Mayoral Academic Scholarship interviews.

### **Friday 30 January 2026**

- Newcastle Airport Pty Ltd and Greater Newcastle Aerotropolis Pty Ltd Board meetings.

### **Saturday 31 January 2026**

- Peter Wilson Memorial Cup 2026.

## ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 FEBRUARY 2026

### Monday 2 February 2026

- Catchup with the acting General Manager.
- ABC radio interview re Medowie Place Plan.

### Tuesday 3 February 2026

- Participated in Newcastle Business Club Mayoral Panel.

### Wednesday 4 February 2026

- 2NURFM interview on election advocacy.
- Filmed Core and Cluster women's shelter promotion.
- Meeting with Fingal Bay Community Association re Smart Parking fees in Fingal Bay.

### Thursday 5 February 2026

- Destination Port Stephens and Central Coast Tourism re Eco tourism meeting.

### Monday 9 February 2026

- Catchup with the General Manager.
- PSFM interview on Council priorities for 2026.
- Communications staff catchup.

### Tuesday 10 February 2026

- Meeting with The Rainbow Roundtable.
- Meeting with Ausgrid re Community Battery Program.
- Catchup with the General Manager.
- Executive Team catchup.
- Port of Newcastle Clean Energy Precinct Program presentation.
- Public Access.
- Extraordinary Council meeting.

### Wednesday 11 February 2026

- Environmental Advisory Group meeting.
- NBN News interview on the Koori Knockout.

### Thursday 12 February 2026

- Hunter Joint Organisation Board meeting, Aberdeen.
- 2026 Mayoral Academic Scholarship Presentation night.

### Monday 16 February 2026

- Catchup with the General Manager.
- Communications staff catchup.

## ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 FEBRUARY 2026

### **Tuesday 17 February 2026**

- Facilities & Infrastructure catchup.
- Executive Team catchup.
- Reconstruction Authority presentation.
- Finance/Waste Update.
- Code of Meeting Practice and Committee of the Whole discussion.

### **Wednesday 18 February 2026**

- Newcastle Airport Partnership Company meetings.
- Destination Port Stephens event “Level Up”.

### **Thursday 19 February 2026**

- Newcastle Airport Partnership and Greater Newcastle Aerotropolis Partnership meetings.
- Catchup with the General Manager.

### **Friday 20 February 2026**

- Capital Works site safety visit.

### **Monday 23 February 2026**

- Communications staff catchup.
- Catchup with the General Manager.
- International Women’s Day panel meeting.

### **Tuesday 24 February 2026**

- Executive Team catchup.
- Singapore first flight meeting.
- Public Access and Ordinary Council meeting.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.

**MAYORAL MINUTE**

**ITEM NO. 2**

**FILE NO: 26/55603  
EDRMS NO: A2004-0284**

**CODE OF MEETING PRACTICE - ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1) Adopt the Order of Business as shown in column B in this Mayoral Minute.

**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this Mayoral Minute is to amend the Order of Business for a Council meeting.

The current Order of Business places the Committee of the Whole prior to the Motions to close meeting to the public. It has been identified from a procedural perspective it would be appropriate to order the Committee of the Whole following the Motions to close meeting to the public.

It is proposed that column B be adopted as shown below:

<b>A. Current Order of Business</b>	<b>B. Proposed Order of Business</b>
1) Opening meeting. 2) Acknowledgement of Country 3) Prayer 4) Apologies and applications for a leave of absence from Mayor and Councillors. 5) Attendance by audio visual link. 6) Disclosures of interests. 7) Confirmation of minutes. 8) Mayoral minute(s).* <b>9) Committee of the Whole.</b> <b>10) Motions to close meeting to the public.*</b> 11) Reports to Council. 12) General Manager reports.* 13) Questions with Notice. 14) Questions on Notice. 15) Notices of motions.* 16) Rescission Motions.* 17) Confidential matters.* 18) Conclusion of the meeting. *if submitted	1) Opening meeting. 2) Acknowledgement of Country 3) Prayer 4) Apologies and applications for a leave of absence from Mayor and Councillors. 5) Attendance by audio visual link. 6) Disclosures of interests. 7) Confirmation of minutes. 8) Mayoral minute(s).* <b>9) Motions to close meeting to the public.*</b> <b>10) Committee of the Whole.</b> 11) Reports to Council. 12) General Manager reports.* 13) Questions with Notice. 14) Questions on Notice. 15) Notices of motions.* 16) Rescission Motions.* 17) Confidential matters.* 18) Conclusion of the meeting. *if submitted

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.

MAYORAL MINUTE

ITEM NO. 3

FILE NO: 26/19793  
EDRMS NO: PSC2024-03152

MOTIONS FOR 2026 AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION  
NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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THAT COUNCIL:

- 1) Endorses the regional motions identified by the Hunter Joint Organisation Board for lodgment to the 2026 National General Assembly.
  - 2) Lodges the regional motions to the National General Assembly (alongside other Hunter Joint Organisation Member Councils) by the closing date of 27 February 2026.
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BACKGROUND

The purpose of this Mayoral Minute is to seek Council's endorsement of 5 priority regional motions developed through the Hunter Joint Organisation (**ATTACHMENT 1**) for lodging to the National General Assembly of Local Government (NGA) to be held in Canberra from 23-25 June 2026. These motions link directly to the NGA Conference priority areas of:

- Jobs and Skills
- Roads and Infrastructure
- Financial Sustainability
- Emergency Management

In preparation for the 2026 NGA, the Hunter Joint Organisation Board of Mayors has confirmed a list of shared regional motions to be put forward at the NGA on behalf of the 10 Hunter Councils. This approach seeks to:

- Amplify the shared advocacy priorities of the Hunter's Councils on the national scale.
- Emphasise to the Federal Government the strength of alignment across the Councils regarding the region's challenges, opportunities and agreed strategic directions.

The regional motions:

- Are consistent with the objectives and strategic directions included in the [Hunter Joint Organisation Strategic Plan 2035](#) which are themselves drawn from the Community Strategic Plans of the 10 Hunter Joint Organisation Member Councils;

## ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 FEBRUARY 2026

- Have been adapted from the shared regional [advocacy priorities](#) of the Hunter Joint Organisation Board, to reflect the broader national and industry wide local government focus required for NGA motions (**ATTACHMENT 2**).

Supporting key arguments for the draft regional motions are outlined in (**ATTACHMENT 3**).

### Lodging of regional motions

Because the Hunter Joint Organisation entity itself is not a financial member of the NSW Local Government Association (given that Member Councils already are), the actual process of lodging the motions to the NGA needs to be undertaken by individual Member Councils. These will then be collated by the conference organisers and grouped within the Conference Business Paper.

The regional motions supported by the Hunter Joint Organisation Board for lodging to the 2026 National General Assembly include:

<b>CONFERENCE PRIORITY AREA</b>	<b>REGIONAL MOTION</b>
<b>Jobs and skills</b>	<p>This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to:</p> <p>Directly support Local Government actions and strategic planning that address imminent and substantial job losses arising from large scale industry closures in regional economies rapidly transforming to net zero by directly investing in Council led, place-based initiatives that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify future land-use options post mining and economic diversification opportunities to provide jobs of the future.</li><li>• De-risk industry investment and strategically inform and accelerate industry attraction, skills development and job creation in mining regions.</li></ul>
<b>Roads and Infrastructure</b>	<p>This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to:</p> <p>Update Federal Road funding programs so they properly account for regional realities such as longer road networks, heavier freight use, higher weather vulnerability and the capacity of councils to pay.</p>

**ORDINARY COUNCIL - 24 FEBRUARY 2026**

<b>CONFERENCE PRIORITY AREA</b>	<b>REGIONAL MOTION</b>
<b>Financial Sustainability</b>	<p>This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to:</p> <p>Lead systems reform for grant funding within Federal Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reform grant funding to non-competitive, multi-year block funding aligned to Local Government election cycles and Local Strategic Plans.</li><li>• Build consistency in the governance frameworks, systems and documentation required across various funding programs to reduce the administrative burden on Local Government.</li><li>• Improve the delivery of grant funding to councils across Australia to ensure equity and provide funding up front rather than in arrears.</li></ul>
<b>Emergency Management</b>	<p>This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Amend disaster recovery funding rules to expand eligibility to include repairs to critical council owned water and sewer infrastructure.</li></ul>
<b>Emergency Management</b>	<p>This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish a non-competitive resilience and betterment funding framework that allows resilience upgrades during the emergency works phase of recovery.</li></ul>

**ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) Functions and Membership of the Hunter Joint Organisation.
- 2) Focus and criteria for 2026 Hunter regional motions.
- 3) Supporting key arguments for draft regional motions.

ITEM 3 - ATTACHMENT 1      FUNCTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE HUNTER  
JOINT ORGANISATION.

**FUNCTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE HUNTER JOINT ORGANISATION**

The Hunter Joint Organisation is the statutory local government entity established by the NSW Government, through the NSW Local Government Act 1993, to support the Councils of the Hunter Region work together for better rural and regional outcomes. The core statutory functions of the Hunter Joint Organisation include:

1. **Strategic planning and priority setting** – to establish strategic regional priorities for the Joint Organisation area and to establish strategies and plans for delivering those priorities.
2. **Intergovernmental collaboration** - to identify and take up opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation on matters relating to the Joint Organisation area.
3. **Shared leadership and advocacy** - to provide regional leadership for the Joint Organisation area and to be an advocate for strategic regional priorities.

The Board of the Hunter Joint Organisation comprises the Mayors of the 10 member councils:

- Cessnock City Council
- City of Newcastle
- Dungog Shire Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Maitland City Council
- MidCoast Council
- Muswellbrook Shire Council
- Port Stephens Council
- Singleton Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council

More information on the focus and activities of the Hunter JO is available at <https://hunterjo.nsw.gov.au/>

**ITEM 3 - ATTACHMENT 2 FOCUS AND CRITERIA FOR 2026 HUNTER REGIONAL MOTIONS.****FOCUS AND CRITERIA FOR 2026 MOTIONS**Conference Theme

The theme for this year's NGA is *Stronger Together: Resilient. Productive. United*, to underscore the pivotal role councils play in shaping the nation's future and delivering national priorities and their unique positioning to implement place-based solutions that address both local needs and national priorities. This year's NGA encourages debate on how councils can enhance their resilience, contribute meaningfully to the nation's productivity agenda, and present a cohesive voice to the federal government on critical issues.

Focus Areas for Motions

This year's call for motions focuses on 10 priority areas:

1. Financial sustainability
2. Emergency management
3. Housing and planning
4. Roads and infrastructure
5. Closing the Gap
6. Jobs and skills
7. Environment
8. Cyber security
9. Climate change
10. Intergovernmental relations

Criteria for Motions

To be eligible for inclusion in the NGA Business Papers, and debate it on the floor of the NGA, the following criteria must be met:

- Submit a new motion that has not been debated at an NGA in the preceding 2 years as found in previous business papers on the ALGA website.
- Ensure your motion is relevant to the work of local government across the nation, not focused on a specific location or region, unless the project has national implications.
- Align your motion with the policy objectives of your state and territory local government association.
- Propose a clear action and outcome on a single issue, calling on the Australian Government to take action. Motions covering more than 1 issue will not be accepted.
- Ensure the motion does not seek to advantage one or a few councils at the expense of others.
- Avoid being prescriptive in directing how the matter should be pursued.

**SUPPORTING KEY ARGUMENTS FOR REGIONAL MOTIONS**

<b>CONFERENCE PRIORITY</b>	<b>DRAFT HUNTER REGIONAL MOTION</b>	<b>SUPPORTING KEY ARGUMENTS</b>
Jobs and skills	<p>This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to:</p> <p>Directly support Local Government actions and strategic planning that address imminent and substantial job losses arising from large scale industry closures in regional economies rapidly transforming to net zero by directly investing in Council led, place-based initiatives that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify future land-use options post mining and economic diversification opportunities to provide jobs of the future.</li> <li>• De-risk industry investment and strategically inform and accelerate industry attraction, skills development and job creation in mining regions.</li> </ul>	<p>There are 50,000 direct jobs related to coal mining in Australia, with another 150,000-200,000 indirect jobs at risk as coal demand is expected to be reduced globally.</p> <p>In the Hunter Region of NSW alone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are 12,000 direct and indirect jobs forecast to be lost when two major coal mines close by 2030.</li> <li>• Government investment is occurring in two pilot projects (Lake Macquarie and Muswellbrook) to develop Masterplans for the reuse of mine sites, however, there remains a lack of planning for over 20 mine sites and thousands of hectares of mining related lands across the region.</li> <li>• There is currently 92,000ha of mining-related land in the Singleton LGA that does not have a strategic land use planning framework in place to facilitate the repurposing of these lands, thereby inhibiting the enormous potential of these assets for supporting the region's transformation, creating new jobs and their contribution to Australia's economy.</li> </ul> <p>Federal Government investment in locally led strategic planning to repurpose former mining and energy lands in regions across Australia is essential to repurpose these lands for the new industries and jobs that will support the nation's economic transformation.</p>
Roads and Infrastructure	<p>This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to:</p> <p>Update Federal Road funding programs so they properly account for regional realities such as longer road networks,</p>	<p>Regional councils across Australia are struggling to maintain road networks following extreme weather events.</p>

**ITEM 3 - ATTACHMENT 3 SUPPORTING KEY ARGUMENTS FOR DRAFT REGIONAL MOTIONS.**

CONFERENCE PRIORITY	DRAFT HUNTER REGIONAL MOTION	SUPPORTING KEY ARGUMENTS
	<p>heavier freight use, higher weather vulnerability and the capacity of councils to pay.</p>	<p>Recent NSW and Commonwealth Inquiries demonstrate Local Governments are facing mounting financial risks that threaten their long-term sustainability.</p> <p>We appreciate that in 2025–26, the Commonwealth will contribute \$630 million in road funding to 128 NSW councils through programs such as Roads to Recovery and Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure, but these funding streams do not recognise the disparity in size and scale of road networks between metropolitan and regional NSW.</p> <p>This will be complemented by the NSW Government's Budget pledge of \$3 billion over 10 years, equivalent to \$300 million per year, for road safety and weather-related transport infrastructure recovery in regional NSW. Together this totals \$930m for NSW roads.</p> <p>Whilst the funding support is welcomed, it will not adequately address the backlog in road repairs. In May 2025, the NRMA reported that NSW councils are facing an immediate backlog in road repairs valued at \$3.4 billion.</p> <p>Existing federal road funding programs often use legacy formulas that fail to adequately account for actual condition, usage, or network scale in regional and rural areas.</p>
<p>Financial Sustainability</p>	<p>This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to:</p> <p>Lead systems reform for grant funding within Federal Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reform grant funding to non-competitive, multi-year block funding aligned to Local Government election cycles and Local Strategic Plans.</li> </ul>	<p>Local Governments rely on grant funding to deliver up to 60% of assets and services in regional areas, yet the current system creates significant challenges. Short-term, competitive grants are often misaligned with councils' legislated Strategic planning cycles, forcing delivery of projects that do not reflect local priorities and reducing efficiency. The application and reporting burden absorbs scarce staff time, disadvantaging smaller regional councils with limited capacity. Short funding cycles also drive workforce turnover, skill loss, service disruption, and inflated contractor costs, while inconsistent governance requirements add further administrative strain. Over time, this weakens council capability,</p>

**ITEM 3 - ATTACHMENT 3 SUPPORTING KEY ARGUMENTS FOR DRAFT REGIONAL MOTIONS.**

CONFERENCE PRIORITY	DRAFT HUNTER REGIONAL MOTION	SUPPORTING KEY ARGUMENTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build consistency in the governance frameworks, systems and documentation required across various funding programs to reduce the administrative burden on Local Government.</li> <li>• Improve the delivery of grant funding to councils across Australia to ensure equity and provide funding up front rather than in arrears.</li> </ul>	<p>frustrates communities, and leads to fragmented outcomes, particularly where councils compete rather than collaborate.</p> <p>Councils need stable, predictable funding. A shift to non-competitive, multi-year block funding aligned to Local Government election cycles and Strategic Plans would enable strategic, place-based delivery; reduce administrative burden; build workforce capability and resilience; encourage regional collaboration; and strengthen community trust through lasting, locally driven outcomes.</p>
Emergency Management	<p>This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to:</p> <p>Amend disaster recovery funding rules to expand eligibility to include repairs to critical council owned water and sewer infrastructure.</p>	<p>The repair of critical council owned water and sewer assets are currently ineligible for cost recovery under national natural disaster recovery funding arrangements. In rural and regional communities however, council managed water and sewer infrastructure are critical public assets, every bit as essential as roads, bridges, or community facilities that do qualify for recovery funding.</p> <p>These Council managed water and sewer services are fundamental to public health, safety, and liveability. With natural hazards and disasters becoming more frequent and severe, the lack of financial support risks undermining councils' ability to maintain these essential services.</p>
Emergency Management	<p>This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to:</p> <p>Establish a non-competitive resilience and betterment funding framework that allows resilience upgrades during the emergency works phase of recovery.</p>	<p>Current disaster recovery funding arrangements do not provide the opportunity for Councils to be reimbursed for undertaking betterment works on damaged local infrastructure during the emergency works phase of disaster recovery. If betterment works were to become eligible for reimbursement during this phase, it would substantially improve the financial and resource efficiency associated with delivering improvements to local infrastructure that enhances long term infrastructure and community resilience.</p>