



CANBERRA REGION JOINT ORGANISATION

Regional leadership connecting our communities

BOARD MEETING

Friday, 6 December 2024
10am – 11.30am
Bendora & Googong Rooms
Canberra Airport
33-35 Brindabella Circuit

AGENDA AND BUSINESS PAPERS



Agenda

1. Opening Meeting	7
2. Welcome & Acknowledgement of Country	7
3. Apologies	7
4. Disclosure of Interests	7
5. Notice of Rescission	7
6. Notice of Motions	7
7. Urgent Business	7
8. Chair's Minute	8
9. Confirmation of Minutes	8
10. Presentations	8
10.1 NSW Audit Office	8
11. Reports to CRJO Board: For Decision	9
11.1 CRJO Workshops & Meetings 2025	9
11.2 ICAC Training for Board Members – "Hit the Ground Running" Councillor Onboarding Workshops	12
11.3 Action from External Audit 2023-24 - Bank Authorisation Controls and Risk Management	13
12. Reports to CRJO Board: For Noting	15
12.1 Governance and Compliance	15
12.2 Post Election Governance Requirements	16
12.3 Model Code of Conduct Complaints	17
12.4 Finance Status Quarterly Report	18
12.5 Regional Programs Status Report	21
12.6 Audit Risk and Improvement Committee Quarterly Report	22
12.7 NSW Joint Organisation Chairs Forum Minutes	23
12.8 Advocacy Submission – Councillor Conduct Framework Review	24
12.9 Interactive Panel Session on Building Exports in South East NSW via the ACT	25
13. Closed Session	26
14. Close	26
15. Next Meeting	26



Thursday, 5 December 2024

Time	Activity	
2pm	Arrive at Canberra Airport (location TBC) Location: Outside, 21 Terminal Avenue, Plaza Offices, West (airport arrivals/departures)	15mins
2.15pm	Depart Canberra Airport	30mins
2.45pm	Presentation at GIO Stadium	25mins
3.10pm	Tour of GIO Stadium	45mins
3.55pm	Finish tour and comfort stop	5mins
4pm	Depart GIO Stadium	30mins
4.30pm	Arrive Canberra Airport	1hr
	Process airside security passes	
5.30pm	Finish security clearance	

Friday, 6 December 2024

Time	Activity	
8.30am	Process airside security passes (only for those who can't collect Thursday). Location: Administration desk, 21 Terminal Ave, Level 4, Plaza Offices, West Canberra Airport	30mins
8.45am	Meet at the departure board in the atrium of the airport	15mins
9am	Commence Canberra Airport tour	40mins
9.40am	Walk to Bendora & Googong meeting rooms Location: 33-35 Brindabella Circuit, Canberra Airport	10mins
9:50am	Morning tea on arrival, comfort stop and settle in	10mins
10am	CRJO board meeting commences	5mins
10.05am	NSW Auditor General presentation	1hr
11.05am	CRJO board meeting continues	30mins
11:35am	Chair, Cr Russell Fitzpatrick panel introduction	5mins
11.40am	Interactive panel session: Building Exports in South East NSW via the ACT	1hr
12.40pm	CRJO board meeting concludes and lunch	15mins



Board Meeting Schedule

Time	Item(s)	Presenter	For	Brief
10am	1-9	Cr Russell Fitzpatrick, Chairperson	Noting	Welcome, acknowledgement of country, apologies
10.05am	10	Mr Bola Oyetunji, NSW Auditor General	Presentation	Update and overview of the current activities of the NSW Audit Office
11.05am	11.1	Hayley Chapman, Coordinator Corporate Services	Decision	2025 CRJO meeting dates and location
11.10am	11.2	Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer	Decision	ICAC training
11.15am	11.3	Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer	Decision	External audit action item
11.20am	12.1 –12.7	Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer	Noting	Various reports for noting
11.30am	12.8	Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer	Noting	Advocacy submission
11.35am	13 – 15	Cr Russell Fitzpatrick, Chairperson	Noting	Confidential matters, next meeting and meeting close.



CRJO Board Members

COUNCIL	VOTING MEMBERS	NON-VOTING REPRESENTATIVES
Bega Valley Shire Council	Mayor, Cr Russell Fitzpatrick	Anthony McMahon, Chief Executive Officer
Eurobodalla Shire Council	Mayor, Cr Mathew Hatcher	Warwick Winn, General Manager
Goulburn Mulwaree Council	Mayor, Cr Nina Dillon	Scott Martin, A/Chief Executive Officer
Hilltops Council	Mayor, Cr Brian Ingram	Anthony O'Reilly, General Manager
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council	Mayor, Cr Kenrick Winchester	Rebecca Ryan, General Manager
Snowy Monaro Regional Council	Mayor, Cr Chris Hanna	Stephen Dunshea, A/Chief Executive Officer
Snowy Valleys Council	Mayor, Cr Julia Ham	Steven Pinnuck, Interim General Manager
Upper Lachlan Shire Council	Mayor, Cr Paul Culhane	Alex Waldron, Chief Executive Officer
Wingecarribee Shire Council	Mayor, Cr Jesse Fitzpatrick	Lisa Miscamble, General Manager
Yass Valley Council	Mayor, Cr Jasmin Jones	Julie Costa, A/Chief Executive Officer

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)

Wagga Wagga City Council	Mayor, Cr Dallas Tout	Peter Thompson, General Manager
ACT Government	David Clapham, Executive Branch Manager, Economic and Regional Policy	
NSW Premier's Department	Giles Butler, Director Regional Coordination, South	

AFFILIATE MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)

Canberra Airport	Noel McCann, Director, Planning & Government Relations	Michael Thompson, Head of Aviation,
	Jordan Fallon, Government Relations & Policy Advisor	



CRJO Board Attendees

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES		
NSW Reconstruction Authority	Heidi Stratford, Director Illawarra and South East	
	Andrew Rae, A/Director Illawarra and South East	
NSW Office of Cross Border Commissioner	Kalina Koloff, NSW Cross Border Commissioner	
Office of Local Government	Louise Taylor, Council Engagement Manager	
Regional Development Australia Southern NSW & ACT	Rowena Abbey, Chair	Olivia West, Chief Executive Officer

STAFF	
Canberra Region Joint Organisation	Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer
Canberra Region Joint Organisation	Hayley Chapman, Coordinator Corporate Services
Jennifer Lang Australia	Jennifer Lang, Chief Financial Officer

GUESTS	
Audit Office NSW	Bola Oyetunji, Auditor-General
	Reiky Jiang, Financial Audit
Interactive Panel Session: Building Exports in South East NSW via the ACT	
Office for International Engagement ACT Government	Brendan Smyth, Commissioner for International Trade
	Mark Faulkner, Assistant Director Trade & Export (Observer)
Canberra Airport	Michael Thomson, Head of Aviation
Export Council of Australia	Dianne Tipping, Chair
NSW Tourism Association	Natalie Godward, Chief Executive Officer
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Australian Government	Lucy Ryan, Director Trade Advocacy and Advice



1. Opening Meeting

Chairperson, Mayor Russell Fitzpatrick will open the meeting.

2. Welcome & Acknowledgement of Country

The following acknowledgement will be made by the chairperson.

"I would like to acknowledge and pay our respects to the Aboriginal Elders both past and present, as well as emerging leaders, and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Land on which we meet today."

3. Apologies

The chairperson will call for any apologies. The board will resolve to accept any apology and may grant leave of absence.

The following apologies have been received prior to the meeting:

- Cr Kenrick Winchester, Mayor Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council
- Cr Dallas Tout, Mayor Wagga Wagga City Council
- Alex Waldron, Chief Executive Officer, Upper Lachlan Shire Council
- Noel McCann, Director, Planning & Government Relations, Canberra Airport

Additional attendees:

- Cr Esma Livermore, Deputy Mayor Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council

4. Disclosure of Interests

With reference to Chapter 14 *Local Government Act 1993*, and CRJO's Code of Conduct, members are required to declare any conflicts of interest in the matters under consideration by the board at this meeting.

5. Notice of Rescission

Pursuant to Clause 372 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, a voting representative may lodge a notice to rescind a motion for the CRJO's consideration.

6. Notice of Motions

Pursuant to Clause 10.2 of the Code of Meeting Practice, a voting representative may lodge a notice of motion for the CRJO's consideration.

7. Urgent Business

Pursuant to Clause 9.3 of the Code of Meeting Practice, the chair will call for any additional business. Any additional business to be discussed requires a board resolution or a ruling by the chair that the matter is of great urgency.



The CRJO board may resolve to accept any late item, information or urgent business to be discussed and/or determined at this meeting.

8. Chair's Minute

Pursuant to Clause 9.6 of the Code of Meeting Practice, the chair, without notice, may put to the meeting a minute on any matter or topic that is within the jurisdiction of the CRJO.

9. Confirmation of Minutes

Author: Hayley Chapman, Coordinator Corporate Services

- Attachments:**
1. Minutes of CRJO Extraordinary Board Meeting 25 October 2024
 2. Actions Arising from 25 October 2024 Extraordinary Board Meeting

RECOMMENDATION

That the Canberra Region Joint Organisation Board adopts the minutes and actions arising from the extraordinary board meeting held 25 October 2024.

10. Presentations

10.1 NSW Audit Office

Who: Mr Bola Oyetunji, Auditor General

Reiky Jiang, Financial Audit

Attachments: Nil

Purpose: Mr. Bola Oyetunji, NSW Auditor General, is providing a presentation to the CRJO Board meeting to provide an update and overview of the current activities of the NSW Audit Office and for question and answer-style discussion with board members and general managers.



11. Reports to CRJO Board: For Decision

11.1 CRJO Workshops & Meetings 2025

Author: Hayley Chapman, Coordinator Corporate Service

Attachments: 1. 2025 CRJO and Council Meetings

RECOMMENDATION

That the Canberra Region Joint Organisation board endorses the 2025 Canberra Region Joint Organisation board tour, dinner, meeting dates and location and workshops as the following:

Date	Meeting	Host	Location/Comments
6 March 2025 7 March 2025	Pre-meeting tour and dinner CRJO ordinary board meeting including Statement Strategic Priorities workshop	Snowy Monaro Regional Council	Cabramurra/Cooma
4 June 2025 5 June 2025	Pre-meeting dinner NSW Parliament House meeting and CRJO ordinary board meeting	CRJO	NSW Parliament House Sydney
4 September 2025 5 September 2025	Pre-meeting tour and dinner CRJO ordinary board meeting	Hilltops Council	Young
OR			
September/ October 2025	Pre-meeting dinner Australian Parliament House meeting and CRJO ordinary board meeting	CRJO & Regional Development Aust ACT & NSW	Canberra - (<i>Dependent on outcome of federal election & sitting dates</i>)
4 December 2025 5 December 2025	Pre-meeting tour and dinner CRJO ordinary board meeting	Goulburn Mulwaree Council	Goulburn
*October/ November 2025	CRJO extraordinary board meeting (financial statements)	CRJO	On line <i>*if needed</i>

REPORT

The Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO) Board is required to meet at least four times per year, as mandated by the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Efforts have been made to align all external meetings, including council meeting dates, Local Government NSW meeting dates, Country Mayors Association meetings, and NSW Parliament sitting dates to ensure minimal clashes with mayors and general manager advisory group attendees.



A recommendation was made and endorsed at the General Manager Advisory Group (GMAG) workshop held on 22 November 2024. The recommendation was based on the following:

- the optimal schedule for CRJO quarterly board meetings is to be held the first Friday of the month.
- in line with the proposed changes to the GMAG Terms of Reference, it was agreed that GMAG meetings be reduced to four per year, held approximately one month before each CRJO board meetings.

The proposed schedule, as endorsed by GMAG, for CRJO board meetings and GMAG workshops is outlined in the table below:

Date	Meeting	Host	Location/Comments
7 February 2025	GMAG workshop	CRJO	CRJO Office (Queanbeyan)
6 March 2025	Pre-meeting tour and dinner	Snowy Monaro Regional Council	Cabramurra/Cooma
7 March 2025	CRJO ordinary board meeting		
4 April 2025	GMAG workshop	CRJO	CRJO Office (Queanbeyan)
4 June 2025	Pre-meeting dinner	CRJO	Sydney, NSW Parliament House
5 June 2025	NSW Parliament House meeting and CRJO ordinary board meeting		
1 August 2025	GMAG workshop	CRJO	CRJO Office (Queanbeyan)
4 September 2025	Pre-meeting tour and dinner	Hilltops Council	Young
5 September 2025	CRJO ordinary board meeting		
or			
September/ October 2025	Pre-meeting dinner Australian Parliament House meeting and CRJO ordinary board meeting	CRJO/RDA ACT & NSW	Canberra - <i>(dependent on outcome of federal election & sitting dates)</i>
7 November 2025	GMAG workshop	CRJO	CRJO Office (Queanbeyan)
4 December 2025	Pre-meeting tour and dinner	Goulburn Mulwaree Council	Goulburn
5 December 2025	CRJO ordinary board meeting		
*October/ November 2025	CRJO extraordinary board meeting (financial statements)	CRJO	On line <i>*if required</i>



Meeting Format

It is recommended to retain the current format, which includes a board tour and dinner on the Thursday afternoon and evening prior to the Friday board meeting and board meeting commencing 9am on the Friday and concluding by lunchtime on Friday.

A request has been made to consider an option of centralising board meetings to all be held in the the Canberra/Queanbeyan area and starting and finishing board meetings later on Fridays to accommodate the option of travelling on the Friday morning.



11.2 ICAC Training for Board Members – "Hit the Ground Running" Councillor Onboarding Workshops

Author: Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer

Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Canberra Region Joint Organisation board members undertake the Independent Commission Against Corruption's training session within the Office for Local Government's "Hit the Ground Running" series of councillor onboarding workshops in 2025.

REPORT

This report outlines the need for the mayors, as CRJO board members, to undertake an Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICA) training session, as part of proposed management actions following an investigation made in 2023-24 financial year. CRJO has committed to ensuring that all board members receive this training, and it is important that we act on this to remain accountable.

As part of our commitment to good governance, and in response to the ICAC investigation, it is essential that all mayors on the CRJO board complete the ICAC training.

The OLG "Hit the Ground Running" series of councillor onboarding workshops, which aims to provide newly elected members with the tools and knowledge they need for effective leadership, offers ICAC training, and therefore enables CRJO to action the commitment to ICAC without the need for arranging a separate CRJO board-specific training session, although this remains an option.

Option 1: All mayors undertake the ICAC training session within the Office for Local Government's "Hit the Ground Running" series of councillor onboarding workshops in 2025.

- The OLG offers a session that can be undertaken online or in-person, providing a flexible option for board members.
- This would allow mayors to complete the training independently, at their convenience, within the prescribed timeframe.
- Mayors may already be planning on attending this session, as part of their council induction.

Option 2: Arrange for ICAC to attend a board meeting next year to conduct training in person.

- This option would provide an opportunity for the training to be delivered directly to the board in a group setting.
- It may also allow for a more interactive and tailored session, addressing any specific questions or concerns from board members.
- Attending a CRJO-specific session may duplicate on training if mayors are already scheduled to attend OLG sessions as part of their council induction.

It is recommended that the board agrees to implement option 1 after consideration of the two presented options.



11.3 Action from External Audit 2023-24 - Bank Authorisation Controls and Risk Management

Author: Hayley Chapman, Coordinator Corporate Services

Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That the Canberra Region Joint Organisation Board

1. acknowledges the risk and existing risk management controls of the current authorisation process,
2. accepts the risk and existing and proposed risk management controls.

REPORT

This report addresses a finding and management action arising from the 2023-24 external audit of Canberra Region Joint Organisation's (CRJO) financial statements.

The finding and management action relate to the external audit's recommendation to implement a dual authorisation process for bank transactions. External audit raised a concern regarding the current practice of only having one authoriser for bank transactions. The primary areas of focus is the authorisation of payroll and supplier payments.

The existing risk management controls and proposed management action to not introduce a second authoriser for bank transactions was discussed at the CRJO Audit Risk and Improvement Committee meeting held 27 November 2024.

The report outlines current practice and reasons for having a single authoriser, risks related to having a single authoriser and current risk management controls and seeks the board's consideration of its appetite for the current risk level and any additional controls needed.

Current Payment Reporting:

- Payroll is processed fortnightly for 7 employees.
- Supplier payments are made either fortnightly or, in some cases, weekly.

In the opinion of external audit, there is an increased risk of fraud and corruption associated with only having a single authoriser for bank transactions who is not subject to a second authoriser's review of payments and other transactions and is a fundamental control gap in the payment process.

Current Risk Controls:

The process for approval of bank payments for payroll and supplier payment is that the CFO writes to the executive officer seeking review and approval of payroll and supplier payments, attaching full details of proposed payments.

The CFO concurrently raises the bank payment transactions for authorisation by the executive officer via the bank's online banking system.



After review of the CFO-recommended payroll and supplier payments, offline via emailed details, the executive officer authorises bank payments.

There is therefore segregation of duties with the CFO responsible for preparing the payroll and supplier payments and loading these for payment in the banking system and approval and payment transactions authorisation which is by the executive officer.

There is therefore a document trail outside of the banking system via email as to what the payment amounts within the banking system should be and to whom, so there is a record should the single authoriser amend the payment amounts.

There is also an audit trail within the bank's system which records any changes to payment amounts prior to authorisation and who made the changes.

Daily transaction limits are in place within the banking system to mitigate the risk of large sums being transferred or paid without oversight of a second authoriser.

The concern with complying with the external auditor's recommendation to implement a second authoriser for bank transactions is the operational difficulties associated with the very small number of staff at CRJO. During periods of leave, the executive officer must still authorise bank payments and, were there to be a second authoriser, they would also need to have their leave disrupted to authorise bank payments.

Proposed Additional Control:

Term Deposit: Cash funds from every day transaction account not needed for daily operations are to be moved into a separate term deposit account to mitigate the risk consequence of large sums being transferred or paid without oversight of a second authoriser.

Action Plan:

- 1. Risk acknowledgement:** Inform the board of the identified, existing and additional risk management controls and the auditor's recommendation
- 2. Review and decision:** seek board consideration of risk appetite and approval of the risk and existing and additional controls or if additional measures, such as appointing two authorisers, need to be implemented.

While the current controls around payment reporting are designed to minimise risk, the lack of dual authorisation remains a key area of concern for the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee and external audit.



12. Reports to CRJO Board: For Noting

12.1 Governance and Compliance

Author: Hayley Chapman, Coordinator Corporate Services

Attachments: 1. Governance and Compliance Calendar 20241128

RECOMMENDATION

That the Canberra Region Joint Organisation Board notes the governance and compliance report.

REPORT

Please see attached the Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO) Compliance & Governance Calendar. The calendar aims to communicate to board the compliance and governance priorities as set by the NSW Office of Local Government including required actions, responsible parties, and timelines for governance compliance enhancements.

Ongoing Governance Report for 2024-25 Report

In 2024-25, the following request or reports are known relating to CRJO:

Relevant Act	Received	Number	Nature	Status	Requirements
Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009	Nil	Nil	N/A	Ongoing	Annual report to Local Government Minister and Information Commissioner
Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022	Nil	Nil	N/A	Ongoing	Annual report to NSW Ombudsman
Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988	Nil	Nil	N/A	Ongoing	NSW Audit Office required to report any ICAC referrals they become aware of during annual audit of financial statements to Office of Local Government
Model Code of Conduct	N/A	Nil	N/A	Ongoing	Annual report to CRJO Board and Office of Local Government



12.2 Post Election Governance Requirements

Author: Hayley Chapman, Coordinator Corporate Services

Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That the Canberra Region Joint Organisation Board notes the post-election governance requirements.

REPORT

This report is intended to inform the board of its post-election obligations, as outlined in the NSW OLG Post Election Guide Checklist and provide an update on the progression of items.

At the first meeting

- Elections of chairpersons (completed 25/10/2024)
- Elect councillor member to Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (completed 25/10/2024)

Within 3 months

- Lodgement of returns of interests voting representatives of board of JOs (underway)

Within 12 months

- Adoption of councillors' expenses and facilities policy
- Review of organisation structure
- Adoption of a code of meeting practice
- Review of code of conduct
- Adoption of a statement of strategic regional priorities

CRJO staff intend on reporting to the board at future meetings, its progress against the post-election checklist.



12.3 Model Code of Conduct Complaints

Author: Hayley Chapman, Coordinator Corporate Services

Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That the Canberra Region Joint Organisation Board the model code of conduct complaints received for the 2023-24 financial year and that a nil report will be made to the Office for Local Government.

REPORT

As per the requirements under the Office of Local Government Compliance Calendar for Joint Organisations, all complaints made under the code of conduct must be reported to the board and the Office of Local Government by 30 December each year. This includes any complaints related to councillor conduct or breaches of the code of conduct.

After reviewing the records for the 2023-24 financial year, we can confirm that no complaints were received during this period. As such, a nil report is made to the board and will be made to the Office for Local Government for this financial year.



12.4 Finance Status Quarterly Report

Author: Jennifer Lang, Chief Financial Officer

Attachments:

1. Financial Performance Management Report 20241031
2. Project Management Financial Report 20241031
3. CRJO Financial Statement July – October 2024

RECOMMENDATION

That the Canberra Region Joint Organisation Board:

1. notes the finance report, management report and financial statements for the year to date ending 31 October 2024
2. notes the operating result as at the end of 31 October 2024; and
3. notes the forecasted end of year operating result compared to the adopted budget.

REPORT

Current year-to-date result

For the year-to-date ending 31 October 2024, the Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO) achieved a consolidated operating surplus of **\$2,065k**. Of this surplus, CRJO Operations accounts for **\$487k**. The large surplus at this stage of the financial year is primarily due to unspent grant funding that was carried forward from the 2023-24 financial year and timing of project grant expenditure.

The CRJO Operations year-to-date surplus reflects the upfront receipt of council membership fees in July 2024, which are to fund operational expenditure through to 30 June 2025.

Current year forecasted full year result

On a consolidated basis, CRJO is currently forecasting a full year surplus of **\$58k**. Of this, **\$15k** is from CRJO Operations.

CRJO Internal Audit is forecasting a year end surplus of **\$43k**. It is anticipated that any forecasted surplus will be reinvested in additional services to member councils who are involved in the shared internal audit function and shared audit, risk and improvement committee arrangement, being the engagement of external resources to undertake specialist or complex audits or to fund member sitting fees for needed extraordinary meetings of the audit, risk and improvement committee (note: these additional services/meetings will be funded from the receiving council's allocated surplus).

Table 1.1 on the following page provides the breakdown of the full year forecasted versus budgeted operating result.



Program	Full Year Forecast \$000	Full Year Budget \$000	Variance to Budget \$000
CRJO Operations	15	(56)	71
CRJO Internal Audit	43	0	43
All Other Projects	0	0	0
Total Operating Result	58	(56)	114

Table 1.1

Cost reductions and financial sustainability

CRJO continues to make significant improvements to its financial position as compared to 2023-24. Off the back of a full year consolidated deficit of \$346k for year ending 30 June 2024, the adopted 2024-25 budget included critical cost saving measures to ensure the ongoing financial sustainability of the joint organisation, in addition to rationalising all other expenditure reductions incurred in 2023-24. The 2024-25 budget reflects the changes required to return to a breakeven position by the 2026 financial year.

As at 31 October 2024, CRJO successfully delivered these measures and exceeded the budgeted cost savings, resulting in a revised full year CRJO Operations surplus of **\$15k**, a \$71k favourable variance against the budgeted CRJO Operations deficit of **(\$56k)**.

Table 1.2 below provides an overview of the cost saving measures.

Cost Saving Measure in 2024/25 Budget	Status	Additional Cost Savings Achieved \$000
Relocation of office to Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (QPRC)	Complete	45
Finalise workplace change process and implement new organisational structure	Complete	15
Sale of CRJO-owned motor vehicle (Subaru Outback)	Complete	(2)
Change in board sitting fees policy (policy change not assumed in budget)	Complete	13
		71

Table 1.2

Additional savings were achieved from the office relocation as CRJO had budgeted a three-month break lease fee and a provision for the 'make good' of the premises upon vacating. Neither expenditure was incurred as Canberra Airport waived these costs in lieu of a cash payment for their 2024/25 affiliate membership.

The nature of the new office lease with Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council also presented cost savings under the Accounting Standard AASB16 relating to the treatment of lease costs as interest and depreciation.



Implementation of workplace changes provided additional cost savings of **\$15k** when compared to budget as the salary maintenance period was than the conservatively estimated budgeted amount, following legal confirmation of the applicable redundancy period.

At its 2 August 2024 meeting, the CRJO board resolved to remove board member sitting fees (\$267.90 per mayor per meeting for year ending 2024) and retain only the chairperson's annual allowance. Although not included as a measure in the 2024/25 budget, conservatively not pre-empting the board's decision, this option balanced the joint organisation's financial responsibility by reducing the operational cost base, whilst maintaining recognition of the chairperson's significant role.

Cash balances

As at 31 October 2024, CRJO holds a consolidated cash balance of **\$2,596k**. 60% of this balance is restricted grant funding, only available for the delivery of externally-funded projects and a further 34% is required to pay operations cost for the remainder of the year, with membership fees largely paid upfront at the start of the financial year.

Refer to the attached financial performance management report for a full list of projects and cash allocations.

Table 1.3 details the committed and unrestricted distribution of cash.

Program	Cash Balance 31 Oct 2024 \$000	Restricted	Committed	Unrestricted
CRJO Operations	1,143	41	754	348
CRJO Internal Audit	(56)	0	(56)	0
All Other Projects	1,509	1,509	0	0
Total Operating Result	2,596	1,550	698	348

Table 1.3

CRJO Operations holds the remaining 44% of cash totalling **\$1,143k**, broken down into:

- Restricted – funds only available for the delivery of external grant-funded projects (in this case, funding carried forward for the Office for Local Government Capacity Building grant) **\$41k**;
- Committed – funds needed to cover operational expenditure and liabilities through to 30 June 2025 **\$754k**; and
- Unrestricted – available cash reserves **\$348k**.

It is essential for CRJO to maintain sufficient unrestricted cash reserves to cover not only unexpected expenditure, but also to fund the first or last 10-20% of a project. It is not uncommon for project milestone payments to be paid *after* costs have been incurred, resulting in CRJO Operations making this cash available to tide over until grant milestone payments are made and ensure timely delivery of the project. This was common with past projects such as those from the federal government's Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund (BCRRF) where significant cash reserves were used ahead of first milestone payments.



12.5 Regional Programs Status Report

Author: Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer

Attachments: 1. Regional Programs Status Report December 2024

RECOMMENDATION

That the Canberra Region Joint Organisation board notes the Regional Programs Status Report December 2024.

REPORT

Please review the attached regional programs status report for a comprehensive overview of regional program activities for the period October 2024 – December 2024.



12.6 Audit Risk and Improvement Committee Quarterly Report

Author: Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer

Attachments: 1. ENDORSED ARIC Meeting Minutes CRJO June 2024
2. ENDORSED ARIC Meeting Minutes CRJO September 2024

RECOMMENDATION

That the Canberra Region Joint Organisation board notes the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee Quarterly Reports.

REPORT

The minutes from the Canberra Region Joint Organisation Audit Risk and Improvement Committee meetings are attached to this report, for noting by the board.



12.7 NSW Joint Organisation Chairs Forum Minutes

Author: Hayley Chapman, Coordinator Corporate Services

Attachments: 1. Minutes NSW JO Chairs Forum 20241114
2. Actions List JO Chairs Forum 20241114

RECOMMENDATION

That the Canberra Region Joint Organisation board notes the NSW Joint Organisation Chairs Forum minutes and action list from its meeting of 14 November 2024.

REPORT

The NSW Joint Organisation Chairs Forum meets three times per year in NSW Parliament House, hosted by the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Ron Hoenig MP.

The objective of the chairs forum is to meet as regional representatives of joint organisations to engage and exchange information on best practice and excellence in the pursuit of strategic regional priorities and collaboration activities to achieve value for the Joint Organisation network.

Attached to this report are the minutes and action list from discussions held 14 November 2024.



12.8 Advocacy Submission – Councillor Conduct Framework Review

Author: Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer

Attachments: 1. CRJO Submission to OLG Councillor Conduct Framework Review

RECOMMENDATION

That the Canberra Region Joint Organisation board notes the Canberra Region Joint Organisation submission to the Office for Local Government’s Councillor Conduct Framework Review.

REPORT

The board resolved at its extraordinary meeting of 25 October 2024 that the executive officer prepare and the chairperson sign, on behalf of the board, a submission to the Office for Local Government’s Councillor Conduct Framework Review.

The submission was made on 29 November 2024, signed by the deputy chairperson, Cr Julie Ham, in the chairperson’s absence.

The submission was made in CRJO’s own right as a local government entity rather than directly on behalf of all member councils, as requested. The submission was developed from and aligns with individual council member submissions and other input provided by member councils’ mayors and general managers to the executive officer.



12.9 Interactive Panel Session on Building Exports in South East NSW via the ACT

Author: Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer

Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That the Canberra Region Joint Organisation board notes the outcomes of the interactive panel session on building exports in South East NSW via the ACT.

REPORT

An interactive panel session will be held to explore opportunities for building exports from South East New South Wales, through the Australian Capital Territory. Key attendees will include representatives from the ACT Government, Export Council of Australia, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), NSW Tourism Association, and Canberra Airport.

The discussions will focus on leveraging the region's strengths, including agriculture, tourism, and technology, to drive export growth.

Panelists:

- **Brendan Smyth** – Commissioner for International Trade, ACT Government
- **Michael Thomson** – Head of Aviation, Canberra Airport
- **Dianne Tipping** – Chair, NSW Tourism Association
- **Natalie Godward** – Chief Executive Officer, Export Council of Australia
- **Lucy Ryan** – Director, Trade Advocacy and Advice, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)



13. Closed Session

CRJO must resolve to move into closed session to deal with any items under s10 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Nil items for closed session.

14. Close

The chair will close the meeting.

15. Next Meeting

The next Canberra Region Joint Organisation Board Meeting is scheduled to be held Friday, 7 March 2025, hosted by Snowy Monaro Regional Council.