

# Mid North Coast Regional Development Board

## 2005 – 2006 Annual Report

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## **ACTING CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE**

The last twelve months have been a period of growth and change for the Mid North Coast Regional Development Board. Several of the Board's industry development projects have come to fruition, and significant progress has been achieved in advancing an important strategic planning initiative.

A new Board was appointed by Minister David Campbell in September 2005, with seven existing members being reappointed and two new members joining the Board. Mr Peter Clark and Ms Kay Morrison bring significant and diverse professional and business skills to the Board, and provide a fresh perspective on Board priorities and activities.

During 2005/06 the MNCRDB has actively progressed industry development initiatives in the timber, manufacturing and film/multimedia sectors. Each program is based on a strategy of facilitating and supporting the establishment of collaborative industry networks that will ultimately assume responsibility for driving their own industry development activities. During the period the MNCRDB also undertook a regional marketing and investment attraction project that illustrates (nationally and internationally) the diversity, quality and innovation of businesses operating from the Mid North Coast region.

For a number of years the region's key economic development stakeholders have identified as major impediments to advancing the Mid North Coast's interests the paucity of contemporary information on the drivers and enablers of the region's economy and the absence of a comprehensive blueprint (plan) for collaborative action to facilitate economic growth. The pressing requirement for a contemporary region-specific plan has been recognised by the NSW Department of Planning who has provided funding to enable the MNCRDB to commission a Regional Economic Profile and develop a Regional Industry and Economic Plan. Matching funding is currently being sought from the Federal Government, and it is proposed to commence this vital strategic planning work in early 2007.

Given its finite resources the MNCRDB seeks to influence, inspire, inform and mobilise others; to act as a catalyst for change and lead by example; to facilitate collaboration; and to be an independent advocate. During the last year a great deal of effort has gone into a diverse range of activities with the ultimate goal of enhancing the environment within which business operates, leading to increased profitability, investment and employment in the private sector. I would particularly like to acknowledge the work being undertaken through the Regional Development Advisory Council to address some of the broader structural impediments to regional growth.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of my fellow Board members who are so willing to volunteer their time and expertise in advancing the economic development interests of the NSW Mid North Coast.

Mark Livermore

## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD – ROLE

The Mid North Coast Regional Development Board (MNCRDB) is an independent not-for-profit organisation sponsored by the NSW Department of State and Regional Development (DSRD), and is one of thirteen throughout NSW. The Board is comprised of nine business and community leaders from across the NSW Mid North Coast, appointed by the NSW Cabinet for two and four-year terms. Profiles on Board members appear at the end of this report.

Regional Development Boards are tasked to advance and champion the economic development interests of their regions. Board activities are broadly governed by a series of performance obligations under a funding contract with DSRD. These obligations require Boards to:

1. Promote regional economic development initiatives (and hence sustainable jobs) in the Mid North Coast through:

- encouraging communities to work together to attain the necessary critical mass to be competitive international investment locations
- marketing Local Government Areas and regions as business locations
- hosting Commonwealth and State initiatives or programs which have as their aim the strengthening of the profile of non-metropolitan regions as business locations and to attract skilled labour
- co-hosting initiatives of the NSW Government aimed at attracting investment and developing exports.

2. Provide advice to the NSW Government and the Minister for Regional Development on important regional development issues.

3. Involve Local Government and other key stakeholders in regional economic development through:

- project partnerships
- providing advice to Government on Local Government and key stakeholders economic development initiatives
- encouraging participation of Local Government and key stakeholders in NSW Government regional economic development forums
- encouraging collaborative marketing of the Mid North Coast.

4. Provide advice to the NSW Government and the Minister for Regional Development on strategies for regions and communities to better plan for drought and natural disasters, including the development of generic business recovery measures.

5. Develop local leadership.

6. Champion major investment projects.

7. Promote key initiatives, including infrastructure, to improve the region's business climate.

8. Host other NSW Government business related initiatives.

The Mid North Coast Regional Development Board's responsibilities cover the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Greater Taree, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Kempsey, Nambucca, Bellingen and Coffs Harbour. The region is extended to include the Great Lakes and Gloucester LGAs in joint initiatives with the Board's Federal counterpart, the Mid North Coast Area Consultative Committee.

The Board's mission is "to be an effective and influential body that articulates and advances the Mid North Coast's economic development interests, in partnership with the community and the public and private sectors". The Board's motto is "enhancing our region by supporting sustainable enterprise". The Board's activities are primarily directed towards increasing private sector employment by identifying and progressing opportunities to enhance the business and investment environment and supporting private enterprise.

The Board also manages a number of specific industry development projects (one-off) and programs (ongoing), using funding from relevant State and Federal Government programs where appropriate. Projects are typically undertaken in partnership with industry and other Federal, State and Local Government bodies. The Board does not directly assist individual businesses, but supports networks and industry groups. More detailed information on the Board's activities is available at [www.betterbusiness.nsw.gov.au](http://www.betterbusiness.nsw.gov.au).

The Board seeks and welcomes inquiries and submissions from the community, businesses and industry on opportunities to facilitate regional economic development. Inquiries should be directed to:

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## BOARD GOVERNANCE

The Board's primary goal is to increase private sector employment through effective action to enhance business and investment opportunities in the Mid North Coast region. The Board has adopted a set of principles that guide the conduct of its regional economic development activities. These principles include that the Board and staff will:

- operate in an ethical, respectful, transparent, accountable, socially responsible and non-partisan manner
- determine its priorities in consultation with Local Governments, communities, industries and other economic development stakeholders
- use partnerships where appropriate
- undertake initiatives that will be of significant economic benefit and have strategic and environmentally sustainable outcomes, and
- progress economic development initiatives that are realistic and outcomes focussed.

On appointment to the Board members are required to complete a statutory declaration confirming the absence of a criminal record and the accuracy of information provided in their applications. Board members are also required to endorse a Code of Conduct and Ethics that sets out personal standards of behaviour. Members are expected to put aside personal, local and business interests, and consider only the broader interests of the region and the community. The Board has adopted protocols that are applied scrupulously to manage potential conflicts of interests, including the requirement for individual declarations of any actual or perceived conflict of interest at every Board meeting.

Regional development is always a team activity, requiring constructive partnerships with both the public and private sectors. As a relatively small volunteer-based organisation with few paid staff the capacity of the Board to play an effective role in facilitating regional economic development is largely dependent on its ability to influence and gain the support of others. The Board aims to act as a catalyst to initiate sustainable economic growth.

The Board is fundamentally committed to responding to real industry and community needs with effective and practical strategies, not arbitrarily "picking winners" or trying to impose "top down" solutions. In determining its regional development objectives the Board has made considerable efforts to consult widely with public and private sector stakeholders, and has particularly valued the input and support of constituent LGAs.

The longer-term viability of industry development initiatives is dependent on the formation of resilient and inclusive networks willing to take responsibility for determining the future of their sectors. The Board seeks to engage with industry at an early stage, to encourage the formation of enterprise networks, and to support the formulation of development plans where there is a high level of industry ownership and commitment to implementation.

## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The following regional development objectives for the Board have been determined in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders and are encapsulated in the Board's 2004-2007 Strategic Plan.

- **Diversify and expand the region's agricultural base** - support and facilitate private investment in emerging agricultural industries
- **Expand the region's private forestry industry** - in partnership with growers and the industry, and consistent with triple bottom line principles, facilitate the growth of the private forestry industry and associated value chain
- **Expand the region's manufacturing base** - in partnership with industry facilitate the growth and profitability of existing manufacturers and attract new clean green businesses
- **Encourage the establishment of creative and knowledge-based industries within the region** - in partnership with industry facilitate the growth of existing and attract new creative and knowledge-based businesses to the region
- **Enhance the essential infrastructure required to support industry competitiveness (ICT, transport, roads, energy, education, health, aged care, water)** - identify and address deficiencies in the region's infrastructure; secure universal access to cost-effective broadband
- **Enhance the business and investment environment** - raise the professionalism and competitiveness of businesses in the region, enhance their access to a diverse range of skills and expertise
- **Effectively market the region** - assist existing industries and businesses to access broader markets through collaborative promotion; raise the profile of the Mid North Coast as a business investment destination; communicate the region's economic development needs to Governments
- **Enhance regional planning and coordination** - improve decision-making through the provision of credible economic advice; advance a regional strategy that is widely accepted as a blueprint for integrated regional development.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The Board has adopted a range of strategies that provide practical and realistic ways of advancing economic development priorities. These include:

- **Establish collaborative industry networks** - support the formation of mutual interest industry networks (typically as not-for-profit incorporated associations or cooperatives). Industry networks are particularly important in a regional economy dominated by small businesses, where individual businesses lack the resources and critical mass to gain adequate access to consumers and markets

Industry network benefits can include initiating cost-effective collaborative marketing; sharing information and expertise, and raising skill levels and awareness of new technologies; realising clustering opportunities; implementing industry development plans; undertaking collective bargaining; leveraging additional resources; and lobbying and gaining Government recognition of the value of the industry sector

- **Sponsor the formulation of industry development plans** – a natural progression from the establishment of industry networks is the formation and implementation of industry development plans. Such plans can identify opportunities for industry growth and provide a framework for ongoing cooperation and coordination and the achievement of mutually beneficial objectives (eg building shared facilities/infrastructure, value adding, meeting minimum volume requirements, penetrating new markets etc)
- **Provide credible information to reduce investor uncertainty** – it is apparent that one of the obstacles to private investment in many industries and areas is uncertainty. The Board is strongly committed to the publication and dissemination of credible information that assists potential investors to evaluate potential risks and returns. This is also the rationale for the Board's sponsorship of research on the drivers of, and trends in, the region's economy
- **Convene and support regional stakeholder networks** – to facilitate information sharing, improve coordination and build support for regional initiatives, the Board and its Federal counterpart, the Area Consultative Committee, have established a regional development network that meets quarterly to progress regional initiatives
- **Sponsor pilot projects** – the Board initiates a variety of pilot projects to demonstrate how innovative collaborative solutions can increase the commercial viability of specific industry sectors
- **Advocacy** – the Board has a responsibility to advise Government on a range of issues that may be contrary to the region's economic development interests.

## **BOARD PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS 2005-2006**

### **OVERVIEW**

Despite resource constraints the Board strives to remain responsive to new economic development opportunities, and to achieve a balance between managing specific industry development projects and advancing a broader regional economic development agenda. While the Board's project activity is important in supporting sustainable industries to grow and is more likely to result in immediate and quantifiable outcomes, some of the most significant outcomes are achieved indirectly through "strategic influence".

One of the Board's key goals is to attract public and private sector investment to the Mid North Coast. During the 2005/06 year the Board was successful in obtaining funding for a number of regional development initiatives, including:

- ensuring almost \$120,000 in expenditure on production-related activities in the region through a Board-managed regional film program
- negotiating corporate sponsorship of \$60,000 for the regional film program, continuing the important investment/production attraction and screen industry development activities initiated by the Board in 2005
- attracting participation by 34 outstanding local businesses in a regional marketing and investment attraction initiative involving the production of a booklet titled "World Class Business on the NSW Mid North Coast". The booklet was launched in May 2006 by the Acting Prime Minister and is being distributed nationally and overseas
- securing a State Government contribution of \$50,000 towards the development of a Regional Industry and Economic Plan (and with strong prospects of matching Federal funding). The plan will provide prospective investors (in existing and new businesses) with credible and contemporary information on the industry sectors in the Mid North Coast offering growth prospects and a competitive advantage.

Most significantly in terms of contributing to substantial investment and employment outcomes for the region, economic research commissioned by the Board (with its key partners) has provided valuable input in determining the priorities for a (Federal) Sustainable Regions program. The Mid North Coast Area Consultative Committee estimates the \$12m program will result in the creation of over 900 jobs by supporting a diverse range of enterprises.

Given the Board's predominantly facilitation role, effective partnerships with diverse stakeholders in the public and private sectors are at the heart of collaborative regional development outcomes. The Board has a particularly productive relationship with its Federal counterpart, the Mid North Coast Area Consultative Committee. Both bodies share a common vision for the region, and a strong commitment to building a regional economic development capability able to address the serious social and economic challenges confronting the Mid North Coast.

Finally, in terms of the Board's responsibility to provide informed advice to the Minister and Government on important regional development issues, the Board made submissions to a NSW Legislative Council Inquiry into Skills Shortages in Rural and Regional NSW, and to a NSW Legislative Assembly Inquiry into Infrastructure Provision in Coastal Growth Areas. Both reports recommend policy changes to address systemic weaknesses in existing programs and processes.

## **GROWING THE PRIVATE FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

Since 2000 the Board has managed one of a national network of Federal/State funded Private Forestry Development Committees (PFDC). The PFDC in this region is called the Forestry Investment Program (FIP) Advisory Committee. The FIP Advisory Committee comprises representatives from a range of public and private sector organisations. The Board employs a part-time project officer to support the program.

Acknowledging the limited opportunities in this region for large scale private plantations and the significance of the timber resource available in private native forest, the focus of the program's activities over recent years has been support for a local farm forestry network. The FIP had identified the network as the most direct conduit to timber growing landholders whose support is vital to industry expansion. A primary aim has been to strengthen the value chain (and benefits to local economies) by increasing the commercial return to timber growers. In late 2004 the FIP funded a strategic review of the local timber industry, leading to the publication of a strategic action plan.

In mid-2005 State responsibility for funding PFDCs transferred from the NSW Department of State and Regional Development to the NSW Department of Primary Industry. Pending resolution of the future role of the PFDC program the FIP has continued to progress a number of practical initiatives to support local timber growers, including a regional audit of timber resources; assessment of the viability of a timber aggregation centre; and specialist training for farm foresters.

## **SUPPORTING THE LOCAL SCREEN MEDIA INDUSTRY**

A program to attract film productions into the area was originally initiated by Port Macquarie-Hastings Council in 2001. The program subsequently evolved into a regional film program involving a partnership between a number of Local, State and Federal agencies. In mid-2004 the Board assumed responsibility for managing the program following the Minister for Regional Development's announcement of a further three years funding support for regional film programs across NSW.

Film Mid North Coast Armidale commenced in March 2005 with twelve months funding support from six Local Government Areas and DSRD. Ms Christina Hyde, a highly experienced film professional, was appointed as the project officer, and the objectives of the original program were extended beyond production attraction to include a greater emphasis on local industry support and development.

Film Mid North Coast Armidale program highlights during the 2005/2006 period include:

- ensuring almost \$120,000 in expenditure on production-related activities in the region
- facilitating and supporting a number of significant productions in the region, including an Indian/Pakistani feature film
- the conduct of industry networking functions in each of the LGAs, and the formation of informal alliances of complementary services
- the production and wide distribution of a CD Rom containing over 850 potential filming locations across the region
- the production of an on-line resource directory of local screen industry skills and services, and circulation of a regular industry e-newsletter.

In mid 2006 the Board successfully negotiated a further twelve months corporate sponsorship for the program, ensuring a continuation of the investment and production attraction and screen industry development activities initiated by the Board in 2005. As part of this new funding arrangement responsibility for management of the program and employment of Ms Hyde will transfer to the Enterprise and Training Company (ETC) in July 2006, and the program will be renamed ScreenLinks.

## **ADDRESSING ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS**

The role of infrastructure in supporting or constraining economic development has been the subject of considerable public discussion over recent years. Much of the discussion has centred on the central role of high speed internet access (broadband) in providing opportunities for improved efficiencies in businesses and to support the establishment of new enterprises.

The Board has repeatedly expressed concern about the adequacy of community and business access to cost-effective high-speed Internet services in areas outside the major urban centres. The Board has actively supported LGA-based proposals to trial wireless broadband systems as an answer to the limited reach and availability of existing technologies.

In late 2004 the Board sought the in-principle support of the Mid North Coast Group of Councils to commence scoping work on a Regional Infrastructure Master Plan. The Board suspended this scoping work when the NSW Government announced an inquiry into infrastructure provision in coastal growth areas. The Legislative Assembly inquiry report was published in November 2005, and includes a number of important recommendations relating to the need for an infrastructure audit and the inclusion of specific infrastructure requirements in regional development plans.

Finally, during the reporting period Board representatives participated in a Better Roads Panel convened by the National Roads and Motorists Association (NRMA). The NRMA undertook research on progress in upgrading essential transport routes, and produced a report that engendered considerable community interest.

## **ENHANCING BUSINESS ACCESS TO SKILLS AND MENTORS**

With the constant influx of new settlers into our region the Board has recognised a need to assist people who are not necessarily seeking conventional employment but would like to continue to make an active contribution to their local communities. Many members of our communities possess valuable and unique skills that are often unknown and under utilised.

In late 2004 the Board launched a public access database that aims to match Mid North Coast residents' skills and experience with community groups and businesses needing these skills. The community skills register at [www.skillsregister.org.au](http://www.skillsregister.org.au) provides residents with the opportunity to list their skills on a free public database, and to offer their services in either a voluntary or paid capacity.

In late 2005 the Department of State and Regional Development agreed to fund a marketing program to increase local community and business awareness of the resources available through the database. The program involved a three month media campaign, resulting in a doubling of the registrations on the database (to over 300) and an increase in weekly inquiries to the site to over 60. A survey of a random sample of persons registered on the database will be undertaken to determine whether the site has been effective in establishing links between individuals and businesses.

## **MARKETING THE REGION AND ATTRACTING BUSINESS INVESTMENT**

The Board has a number of objectives that require the development of a clear, distinctive and widely accepted and recognised regional identity. One objective is the external marketing of the region as a dynamic and viable business investment destination. Another is assisting industries and businesses to access broader markets through cost-effective collaborative marketing. A third is gaining Government recognition for the distinctive economic development needs and challenges of this region.

The name Mid North Coast appears to be most widely and consistently used in the community and the media to refer to the region that extends north beyond the Hunter to the start of the Northern Rivers, and the Board has actively encouraged use of this name and a standard regional logo.

In terms of projecting the region as a viable business location, in early 2005 the Board secured funding of \$8,000 from the NSW Department of State and Regional Development in order to produce 10,000 copies of an A5 booklet titled "World Class Business on the NSW Mid North Coast".

Following an extensive media campaign 34 exceptional businesses were selected to feature in the booklet that demonstrates the diversity and innovation of private sector enterprises in this region. The booklet was officially launched at a regional innovation showcase in May 2006 by the Acting Prime Minister, and copies have since been distributed nationally and overseas through Austrade. A copy of the booklet is available on the Board's web site at [www.betterbusiness.nsw.gov.au/wcb.htm](http://www.betterbusiness.nsw.gov.au/wcb.htm).

## **REGIONAL PLANNING AND COORDINATION**

The Board remains strongly committed to the development of a comprehensive, contemporary, research-based regional plan that will provide a sound foundation for consensus on and a coordinated response to the region's major economic development challenges and opportunities. An inclusive regional planning process can provide a collaborative framework to progress sustainable economic and social development by identifying specific priorities, delineating roles and relationships and underpinning implementation. A plan can underpin a coherent and persuasive case for merit-based funding support.

In 2004 the Board (in partnership with its Federal counterpart, the Mid North Coast Area Consultative Committee, and TAFE NSW North Coast Institute) commissioned the Hunter Valley Research Foundation to undertake research into the dynamics and drivers of the Mid North Coast economy, predominantly using existing information sources. A discussion paper titled "Growing jobs on the Mid North Coast" was published in January 2005 and widely circulated to a broad range of economic development stakeholders. The discussion paper identifies a number of key issues that have the potential to impact on future economic growth in this region. The discussion paper also identifies a number of potential regional development opportunities that could be realized through a planned collaborative approach.

In early 2006 the NSW Department of Planning announced it would be preparing a Regional Strategy for the Mid North Coast, and generously offered the Board funding of \$50,000 to enable the commissioning of a Regional Economic Profile as a precursor to the development of a Mid North Coast Regional Industry and Economic Plan (RIEP). Matching Federal funding has been sought, and it is expected that public expressions of interest in undertaking the research and planning consultancies will be sought in early 2007.

## **BOARD ADMINISTRATION**

The current Board was appointed by the NSW Minister for Regional Development in September 2005. The Board meets at different venues throughout the region every two months, and at these meetings considers ways in which it can make a significant and effective contribution towards regional economic development. The Board also met on other occasions to undertake training and strategic planning, and Board Subcommittees met when required.

The Board usually meets with local Councils, Council-sponsored economic advisory committees and local business representatives at the same time as it conducts its bi-monthly meetings.

During the 2005/2006 financial year the Board met at:

- Taree in July 2005
- Coffs Harbour in September 2005
- Macksville in November 2005 (including the Annual General Meeting)
- Kempsey in January 2006
- Port Macquarie in March 2006
- South West Rocks in May 2006.

Bill Calcutt (PSM) is the Board's Executive Officer, and has been in this role since 2000. After a distinguished career in the Federal public service in research, planning, policy and human resource management roles in Sydney and Melbourne, Bill moved into the private sector (and into the Mid North Coast) as a small business operator in 1997. Bill is married with a son and lives in the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA.

David Ledgerwood is the Board's part-time Administrative Assistant and coordinates the Forestry project. After a career in journalism and public relations he established several retail businesses in Queensland before returning to NSW to assist in the transition of several business arms of the Department of Land and Water Conservation to customer ownership. David has been involved in enterprise and regional development for many years. He is also a part time business facilitator for the Mid North Coast Business Advisory Service.

## **BOARD FINANCES**

Regional Development Boards are provided with an annual (financial year) grant of \$135,000 by the NSW Department of State and Regional Development in order to maintain an administrative/functional capability independent of the Department. This funding enables the employment of staff and the operation of the Board. DSRD also assist by providing (gratis) office facilities at Port Macquarie for Board staff and some administrative support.

During the 2005/2006 financial year the Board employed two full-time and one part-time staff on fixed-term contracts. The Board did not employ any consultants on contract during the reporting period.

The Board seeks funding from DSRD and other bodies to undertake or participate in specific regional development projects. During this financial year the Board received funding of \$31,250 from the Department of Primary Industry for the continuation of the Forestry Investment Program.

The Board also received total funding of \$118,000 from DSRD and the Local Government Areas of Greater Taree, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Kempsey, Bellingen, Coffs Harbour and Armidale Dumaresq in order to undertake a regional film program. Management and funding of the program will be transferred to the Enterprise and Training Company in July 2006.

The Board also received funding of \$9,945 from DSRD in order to market a Community Skills Register and raise community and business awareness of the resources available on the database.

The Board also received funding of \$8,000 from DSRD to produce and widely distribute 10,000 copies of a booklet titled "World Class Business on the NSW Mid North Coast" that showcases 34 of the outstanding businesses in this region. The A5 booklet was published in early 2006.

The Board also secured funding of \$50,000 from the NSW Department of Planning to enable the commissioning of a Regional Economic Profile and a Regional Industry and Economic Plan. Matching Federal funding has been sought.

During June 2006 the Board's administration and financial management were comprehensively audited by the Independent Audit Bureau (IAB). The IAB report concluded that "many of the financial and administrative activities carried out on behalf of the Board are being handled in a satisfactory manner. Issues identified [in the audit report] are of moderate to low risk in nature."

A copy of an audit of the Board's finances for the 2005/2006 financial year by Potts Davis Duncombe is available on request.

## BOARD MEMBERS' PROFILES

**Mr Mark Livermore (Acting Chair)** has worked at senior levels in both the public and private sectors, contributing to the development and implementation of national policies and guidelines for a major agricultural industry, as well as leading the expansion of a major regional manufacturing operation into national and international markets. Mark is the director of a consultancy business working in the fields of strategic planning, change management, mentoring, business development, community liaison, food safety auditing and the development of quality systems. Mark has an extensive background building networks and relationships that benefit all parties and sustain their future.

As Acting Chair Mark is committed to the economic, social and environmental growth of the region through the development of a clear strategic approach to the challenges and opportunities facing regional Australia. Mark lives in the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA.

**Ms Carmel Hong (Deputy Chair)** was formerly Director, Educational Programs, TAFE NSW North Coast Institute, Coffs Harbour Education Campus. In addition to her varied vocational, educational and training roles, Ms Hong has had extensive strategic planning experience on committees at local, regional and state levels, contributing to the social and economic development of communities across the region. Ms Hong is currently a member of the Nambucca Shire Council's Structure Plan Shirewide Reference Group, a member of the Coffs Coast Business Womens Network and a member of the Australian Institute of Management. Ms Hong has a Masters Degree in Educational Studies and is a Bachelor of Commerce. This is Carmel's second term on the Board. Ms Hong lives in the Nambucca LGA.

**Mr Peter Clark** has a Masters degree in Science and a Post Graduate Certificate in Marketing. He has been employed in the pharmaceutical industry for 17 years. During this time, he has experience in a variety of sales and marketing roles, including Director of Marketing for Australia and New Zealand for a company with sales of \$250M. He also spent 3 years in the United States completing roles in Global Marketing and Corporate Strategy and Business Development. He has lived on the Mid North Coast for three years where he is employed as a Business Development and Professional Services Manager. He is married and has 3 children. This is Peter's first term on the Board, and he lives in the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA.

**Ms Janet Hayes JP** has a substantial record of involvement in community and Local Government, with a particular interest in environmental and educational issues. Janet has been a Councillor with Kempsey Shire Council for eight years, four of which as Mayor. Her participation in Local Government has seen her elected to the Executive of the Shires Association of NSW, and she sits on their Planning and Environment and Finance and Economic Development Committees. Janet is one of two Councillors who represent NSW on the Executive of the National Seachange Taskforce. She has been appointed to the Department of Correctional Services' Community

Consultative Committee for a correctional facility in Kempsey, and acts as Official Visitor at the centre. Janet chairs the Board of Community Housing Mid North Coast and was recently elected chair of Macleay Options Inc, a disability support organisation. This is Janet's second term on the Board.

**Mr Richard Kelloway** OBE has Masters Degrees in Business Administration and International Politics, is a Certified Management Consultant, and a Member of the Society of Organisational Learning. He is the principal of a private consultancy practice that specialises in integrated social and economic development with a focus on Australia's Indigenous communities, and has participatory development experience in the Pacific region. His practice has also over a decade's experience consulting firms in the manufacturing, agriculture and services sectors. Mr Kelloway previously worked in a range of senior Defence and public sector roles in Australia and overseas. He brings wide experience in a range of knowledge and innovation-based development activities to regional development. He lives in the Coffs Harbour LGA.

**Ms Kay Morrison** has been involved in business, primarily in the services industries, over a number of years. She has had considerable experience on natural resource management Boards. Kay has a particular interest in women's issues, and is currently the National President of Business and Professional Women Australia. This is Kay's first term on the Board, and she lives in the Coffs Harbour LGA.

**Mr Michael Mowle** is a partner in Hopkins Consultants in Port Macquarie. He was raised on the Macleay River, then spent sixteen years as an officer of the Royal Australian Engineers. His work with the Australian Army included involvement in a number of major overseas aid projects. Mr Mowle lives in the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA.

**Mr Paul Sekfy** operates his own consulting business in the security industry. He has been active in regional economic and social development policy, projects, management, research and training for over twenty years. He has worked for or been an active member of several regional organisations and Boards including health, social development and Local Government covering the Mid North Coast. This is Paul's fifth term on the Board. Mr Sekfy lives in the Nambucca LGA.

**Ms Jan Strom** currently works for the Office of Regional Engagement at Southern Cross University, and describes herself as a "speaker, facilitator and catalyst". She has a Master of Professional Management and is undertaking a PhD in regional community engagement at Southern Cross University.

Jan regularly presents at various forums, seminars and events as well as at regional and national conferences. She is an active contributor to regional development, was Deputy Mayor of Coffs Harbour City Council (2000-04), and is Chair of the Enterprise & Training Company Ltd (ETC) Coffs Harbour. Jan previously operated her own fitness businesses, and since 1995 has been the principal of a consultancy business specialising in communications (personal and business), events management, marketing and local government. This is Jan's second term on the Board and she lives in the Coffs Harbour LGA.