

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

FOR THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN NORTHERN RIVERS ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS NOROC

PURPOSE

The councils involved in the Northern Rivers Organisation of Councils recognise that there are significant benefits to be gained through the development of a collaborative approach to addressing affordable housing issues in the region. This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlines the aims, objectives, principles and strategies that together form the basis of a Strategic Partnership Agreement. The partnership will establish effective collaborative ways of working together and with other agencies to provide affordable housing and to build and support resilient communities across the Northern Rivers area.

STATUS OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is a statement of intent only and not intended to operate as a binding legal document on the parties or to create legal relationships between them. Nothing in this document should be interpreted as a commitment from individual Councils to provide direct financial assistance.

AIM

The aim of the Strategic Partnership is to achieve improved housing opportunities for residents within Northern Rivers NSW. In participating in this partnership, a constructive working relationship between the seven local government areas will be established to enable sharing of information, assist the development of consistent and compatible policy and planning mechanisms, and encourage the provision of housing that is available, affordable, adaptable and appropriate for residents of the region.

Councils will gain an in-depth understanding of issues involved in creating affordable housing, learn from other councils, work through barriers, develop and strengthen partnerships. The MOU also seeks to facilitate collective advocacy to State & Federal Government and peak bodies regarding regional affordable housing issues.

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop an agreed approach to encouraging affordable housing opportunities in the seven local government areas of the Northern Rivers.
2. Share information, knowledge and resources.
3. Facilitate, in a timely manner, the provision of good quality and appropriately designed affordable housing through a coordinated approach to affordable housing proposals.
4. Develop and embed affordable housing planning policies in planning for the region; and
5. To support the delivery of the Northern Rivers Regional Affordable Housing Strategy (The Strategy)

PRINCIPLES OF THE PARTNERSHIP

The underlying principles that sustain the strategic partnership between the partners include:

- a) Executive leadership from Northern Rivers Regional Organisation of Councils;
- b) A long term view built upon a shared understanding of the issues;
- c) Interdependence that recognises the interests, rights and responsibilities of all parties in addressing the needs of their stakeholders;
- d) Openness that keep each other informed of the other's intentions, directions and approach;
- e) Development of trust through support mechanisms and adherence to agreed decisions;
- f) Confidentiality so that information on affordable housing developments and individual council deliberations revealed as a result of this agreement is not released to other parties without authorisation; and
- g) Flexibility to adapt to changes through dialogue and respond to the requirements of elected representatives and changes in local, State and Federal policies.

SCOPE OF THE WORK FOR STRATEGIC AREAS

- a) Develop a collaborative approach to facilitating affordable housing in Northern Rivers NSW;
- b) Identify and develop an appropriate role for Council in the provision of affordable housing;
- c) Identify potential affordable housing projects and partners;
- d) Embed affordable housing good practice in regional land use planning initiatives;
- e) Extend the range of technical skills available;
- f) Extend the knowledge of affordable housing issues; and
- g) Explore the potential for partnership in selected priority projects.

GOVERNANCE OF THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The partnership will be based on a working relationship between a nominated member of staff from each participating council to be part of an ongoing regional affordable housing steering group. This steering group will be convened by the Regional Housing Officer with regular reports to NOROC.

THE WORKING RELATIONSHIP

The working relationship will operate as follows:

A) Information provision and liaison

Participating councils will assist the Regional Housing Officer to achieve the objectives of the Northern Rivers Regional Affordable Housing Strategy and this MOU. The Regional Housing Officer will advance these objectives in a range of ways including:

Supporting the Regional Affordable Housing Steering Group, including the distribution of meeting minutes and agendas;

- The establishment of a project plan for the delivery of the Strategy objectives and actions;
- Regular reporting to the steering group and NOROC executive regarding progress in the delivery of the Strategy, including the maintenance and regular reporting on the project budget;
- Monitoring and reporting on the progress of proposed affordable housing developments and partnership proposals for the purpose of assessment and technical advice (restricted documents);
- The preparation of project documentation for steering group review prior to public release;
- Documenting coverage of Affordable Housing in the local media (public documents);
- Identifying and pursuing grant and funding opportunities to support the delivery of the Strategy; and
- Reviewing research being undertaken or research publications by other sources.

The nominated member of staff from the individual Councils will work to achieve the MOU objectives in a range of ways that may include:

- Participate in Regional Affordable Housing Steering Group meetings;
- Communication of project progress and outcomes to the respective constituent councils;
- Inform any affordable housing projects being conducted in other councils and states as well as overseas (public information); and
- Proactive provision of information on potential affordable housing opportunities, models or partners for the councils.

B) Meetings

The working relationship will be conducted primarily by email and telephone. Officers will aim to meet face to face at least four times a year.

C) Confidentiality

Each organisation will supply a copy of its confidentiality policy and confidential documents will be clearly identified. No information supplied by either party is to be provided to a third party without written agreement.

D) Monitoring and evaluation

Yearly monitoring of effectiveness of the steering group will involve participating steering group members providing their supervisors, and the group, with feedback on the partnership with respect to delivery of the Northern Rivers Regional Affordable Housing Strategy. The regional housing officer will provide updates and any recommendations from the steering group to NOROC for consideration.

E) Termination

All parties can terminate this agreement at any time on the understanding that any confidentiality agreement will last the duration of the relevant project or program.

Signed on behalf of the Northern Rivers Organisation of Councils' participating partners:

_____/_____/_____
Ballina Shire Council

_____/_____/_____
Byron Shire Council

_____/_____/_____
Clarence Valley Council

_____/_____/_____
Kyogle Council

_____/_____/_____
Lismore City Council

_____/_____/_____
Richmond Valley Council

_____/_____/_____
Tweed Shire Council