Memorandum of Understanding

between

Eurobodalla Shire Council

and

Bega Valley Shire Council

1. Statement of understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is made between the following partner organisations:

- Eurobodalla Shire Council of 89 Vulcan St, Moruya NSW (ESC)
- Bega Valley Shire Council of Zingel Place, Bega NSW (BVSC)

This MoU sets out the objectives and management arrangements of the partnership between ESC and BVSC. It is not a legal document although it outlines the partnership’s governance structure and source of authority. The parties agree to work together in good faith.

This document is a statement of understanding and is not intended to create binding or legal obligations on either party.

2. Authorisation

The signing of this MoU is not a formal undertaking. It implies that the signatories will strive to reach the objectives stated in the MoU, to the best of their ability.

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<th>Eurobodalla Shire Council</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Bega Valley Shire Council</th>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Lindsay Brown</td>
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<td>Michael Britten</td>
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<td>Title</td>
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3. Rationale/Scope

The intention of this MoU is to strengthen the current partnership between Bega Valley Shire Council and Eurobodalla Shire Council, by implementing a more formal level of cooperation between the two councils. This strategic partnership will achieve cooperative arrangements and establish a framework to deliver greater efficiencies and progress strategies for both Councils and the communities they represent.

It should be noted that both Councils have been determined Fit for the Future by IPART and will continue as independent organisations supporting and servicing their communities.

Eurobodalla Shire Council and Bega Valley Shire Council have successfully collaborated in a number of areas including joint tendering and program delivery, sharing policies and other documentation, regular management meetings and economic planning for key facilities (e.g. Moruya and Merimbula airports). This MoU will build on the current productive outcomes.

During the Fit for the Future process, both Eurobodalla Shire Council and Bega Valley Shire Council identified the importance of being an active participant in the establishment of a joint organisation, as a key strategy to achieving long term financial sustainability. While the model and boundaries of the South East Joint Organisations are yet to be finalised by the NSW Government, there is an opportunity to work collaboratively now.

4. Preamble

This MoU recognises the importance of the continued development of strong, resilient, unique communities in the far south coast region. The MoU outlines how both Eurobodalla and Bega Valley Shire Councils can continue to operate and serve their respective communities, whilst working together to achieve improved operational outcomes, improved services and financial results, and improved advocacy.

Key to achieving outcomes will be a commitment to the following objectives:
- Identifying and responding to issues that are of a regional nature i.e. the partnership will offer opportunity for regional South Coast advocacy, strategic planning and implementation.
- Building a dynamic relationship between our population centres.
- Working within the NSW Government framework for building Joint Organisations of councils.
- Building on current partnership and collaboration arrangements.
- Inter-governmental collaboration.

In order to develop a meaningful partnership, time needs to be dedicated to developing a model that works for both Councils and their communities and ensures key outcomes are achieved.
5. Goals and objectives

The Partnership will assist and contribute to the:

- delivery of enhanced and value for money community services
- planning for long term community and transport infrastructure
- advocating on significant community issues
- planning for a more sustainable future.

6. Approach and Operational Framework

The Partnership will:

- Identify opportunities for joint initiatives and cooperation focused on long term sustainability, managing community assets and infrastructure, and delivery of community services.
- Focus on delivering services more efficiently in the face of increasing costs, community expectations and other challenges.
- Review and develop opportunities to reduce expenditure and operate more efficiently and effectively.
- Implement projects through effective collaboration and resource sharing to optimise opportunities and improve outcomes for the community.
- Strengthen strategic collaboration and develop cooperative arrangements in areas such as procurement, policy development, service reviews, regional planning, corporate training, tourism, economic development, benchmarking, advocacy and asset management.
- Stimulate innovation and pursue opportunities for greater efficiencies.
- Examine areas for economic growth (tourism, business development, related infrastructure).

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Each council is responsible for ensuring resource allocation to agreed projects.

The Partnership group is accountable for:

- fostering collaboration
- successful delivery of agreed projects
- maintaining at all times the focus of the Partnership on the agreed scope, outcomes and benefits
- monitoring and managing the factors outside the Partnership’s control that are critical to its success.
The membership of the Partnership will commit to:

- attending scheduled Partnership meetings
- championing the Partnership
- sharing relevant communications and information between the Partnership
- making timely decisions and taking action so as to not hold up agreed projects
- notifying members of the Partnership, as soon as practical, if any matter arises which may be deemed to affect the development of the Partnership.

Members of the Partnership agree:

- that each member will be provided with complete, accurate and meaningful information in a timely manner
- to be given reasonable time to make key decisions
- to be informed of potential risks and issues that could impact on an agreed project, as they arise
- to open and honest discussions
- to ongoing ‘health checks’ to verify the overall status and ‘health’ of the Partnership
- to jointly seek external funding opportunities where appropriate.

8. Decision making, Governance structure and reporting

a. Decision making – all oversight and direction setting will sit with the Councils of the two Shires. Senior staff from both organisations will scope a preliminary map of potential projects and develop a mechanism to prioritise these for reporting to the Councils. All non-operational projects will be reported to the Councils for formal resolution. All projects to be implemented will be developed as a schedule attached to this MoU.

b. Communication – regular communiques on projects underway, progress and outcomes will be jointly issued by the two Councils through reports to Council

c. Reporting – a formal report on all activity will be presented to each Council by the respective General Manager on a six monthly basis.

d. Dealing with unresolved issues – any issues where formal agreement cannot be reached will be presented to Council noting the areas of unique focus or priority for each Council. It is acknowledged that there will be issues of both and operational and non-operational nature that it will not be practicable to progress through this process.

e. Operational matters - Issues of an operational nature will be progressed and managed by officers under the current structure of delegated authority.
The membership of the Operational Partnership will be:

- Executive Leadership Team at Eurobodalla Shire Council and other staff as determined.
- Leadership and Executive Group at Bega Valley Shire Council and other staff as determined.

9. Meetings

Council to Council meetings

- In the initial stages of the MoU items relating to key non-operational matters will be workshopped with the Councillor representatives of both Councils prior to the Operational Teams commencing working on the matters.
- Emerging issues will be workshopped with Councillor representatives of both Councils and individually by both Councils prior to referral to the Operational Team for consideration.

Operational Team meetings

- All meetings will be chaired by the General Manager on a rotating basis.
- Decisions will be made by consensus.
- Meeting agendas and minutes will be provided by the General Manager who is chairing the meeting. They will:
  - prepare agendas and supporting papers
  - prepare meeting notes and information.
- Meetings will be held as determined, with location of meetings on a rotating basis.
- If required, subgroup meetings will be arranged outside of these times at a time convenient to subgroup members.

10. Review and evaluation

The General Managers will provide a report to Council detailing the outcomes of the Partnership every six months.