



Office of the
Cross-Border Commissioner
Department of Regional NSW

Strategic Plan

2020-2025





2024
CROSS-BORDER

INTRODUCTION	1
OUR STORY	2
OUR TEAM	2
CROSS-BORDER COMMUNITIES	3
OFFICE OF THE NSW CROSS-BORDER COMMISSIONER	4
OUR VISION	4
OUR VALUES AND COMMITMENT	4
OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	5
RESOLVING LONG-TERM BARRIERS FOR CROSS-BORDER COMMUNITIES	6
CROSS BORDER 5 BY '25	6
HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS	8
IN THE SHORT TERM...	8
IN THE LONGER TERM...	8

INTRODUCTION

The NSW Cross-Border Commissioner is the advocate in NSW for the resolution of cross-border issues. The NSW Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner works with, and on behalf of cross-border communities, businesses and organisations, and the NSW Government to identify, analyse and resolve cross-border issues. We work closely with local stakeholders, and state and territory government agencies in NSW and neighbouring jurisdictions to address these complex and often long-standing issues.

Our history

The Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner was established by the NSW Government in 2012. The current Commissioner, James McTavish, was appointed in 2014.

In April 2017, the Office of the NSW Cross-Border Commissioner moved from the NSW Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development to the Regional NSW Group of the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet. Following the March 2019 NSW Election, the Office moved to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment within the Regions, Industry, Agriculture and Resources Division.

The Office of the NSW Cross-Border Commissioner is now positioned within the Department of Regional NSW, created in March 2020, and reports directly to the Secretary of the Department and to the Minister for Regional New South Wales.

Our team

The Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner operates across NSW, within the Department of Regional NSW. The Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner is led by the NSW Cross-Border Commissioner, James McTavish.

2023 Update: In January 2022, as the final state border regions reopened, the Office has the opportunity to return to strategic objectives set pre-pandemic. At this time, the team expanded significantly, to 14 FTE to increase focus on engagement, policy responsiveness, and advocacy on many longstanding issues. Secure funding in the 2022-2023 Budget has enabled the team expand to 19.2 FTE.

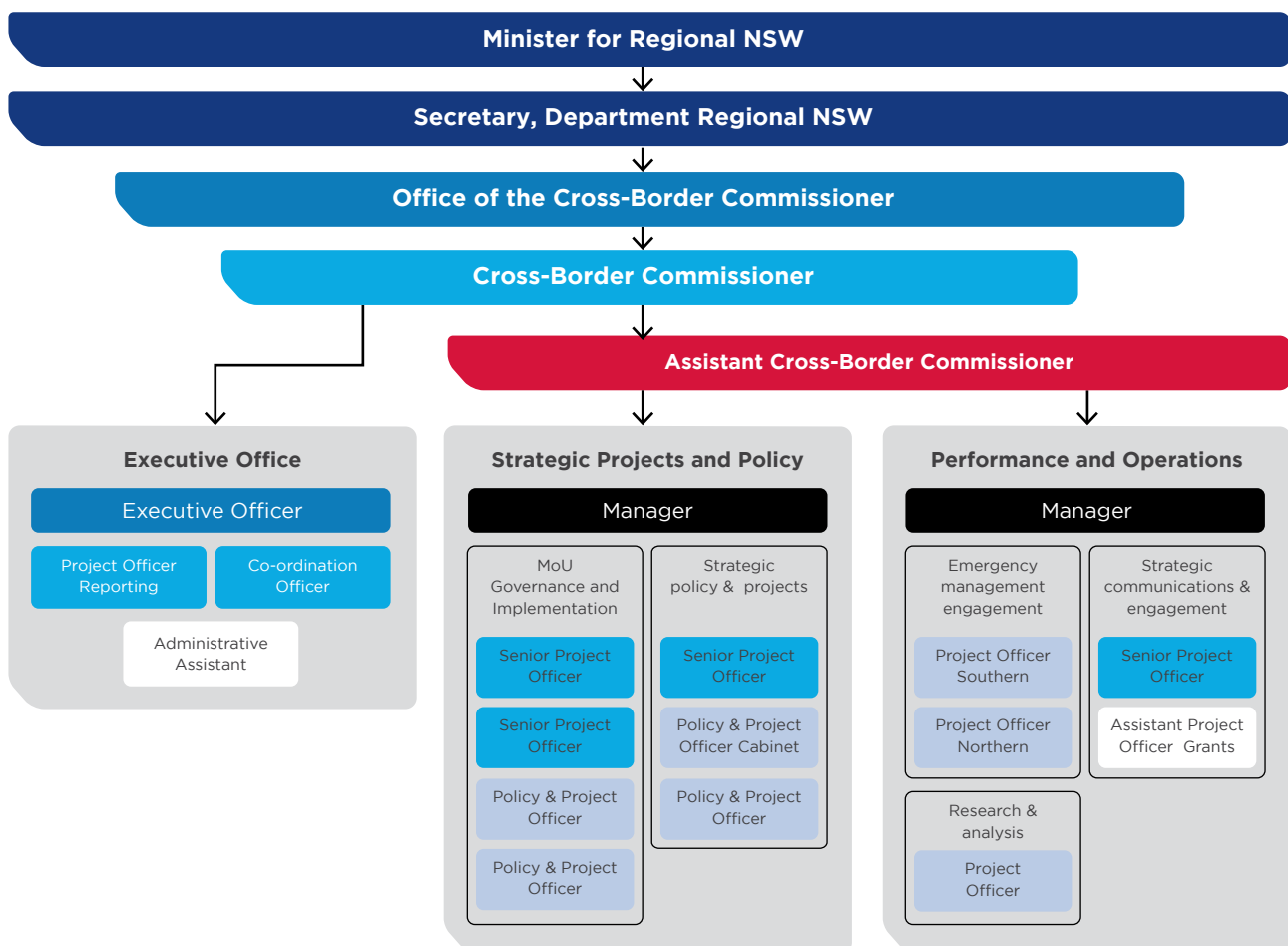


Figure 1: Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner Organisation Chart.

OUR VISION AND VALUES

Our vision

Equitable access and opportunities, and seamless service delivery for people and businesses in cross-border communities.

Our values and commitment

We are committed to being a trusted advocate for cross-border communities and adviser to the NSW Government, championing better cross-border outcomes for people, businesses, and government agencies. Anyone may contact our office to raise an issue including community members, businesses, local governments and representatives of cross-border communities.



Trusted, Transparent and Fair



- We are trustworthy, fair and honest in all our dealings.
- We are transparent and accountable about what we do and the results of our advocacy regardless of the outcome.
- We are factual and clear about the outcomes we seek.

Responsive



- We act on issues as they arise.
- We communicate the progress of issues and the outcome.

Persistent



- We are persistent and determined in our efforts to resolve and challenge cross border issues.

Accessible and Engaged



- We are accessible to communities.
- We make it easy to work with us.
- We are collaborative and inclusive to better understand the issues that impact communities.

Knowledgeable



- We seek information and engage with people to stay informed about the issues facing cross-border communities.

Our strategic priorities



1. Advocacy for and engagement with cross-border communities

- We are recognised and trusted by cross-border communities as champions and advocates on cross-border issues.
- We are recognised by cross-border communities as engaged, accessible and effective in addressing cross-border issues with them.



2. Improving outcomes for cross-border communities

- We are recognised and valued by government as informed advocates providing trusted advice.
- We will raise awareness of cross-border needs within government to improve policy, process and decision making.
- We will work with government to influence and proactively improve policy, regulations, process, services and decision making



3. Investing in cross-border communities

- We will encourage investment in business and economic opportunity in cross-border regions.
- We will support development and implementation of policy frameworks and programs that recognise the unique circumstances of border communities.

RESOLVING LONG-TERM BARRIERS FOR CROSS-BORDER COMMUNITIES

People and businesses in border communities can face longstanding issues due to the regulatory, legislative and policy gaps and duplication that occurs because of different approaches to policy and service delivery between neighbouring jurisdictions.

The Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner works with key stakeholders and decision makers to identify and resolve intractable cross-border issues and has been successful in developing positive pathways. This has included the establishment of cross-border collaborative agreements with the ACT, Queensland and Victorian Governments and the \$20 million Cross-Border Commissioner's Infrastructure Fund.

In addition to these initiatives, over the next five years, the Office of the Cross Border Commissioner will focus on work with NSW Government agencies and border Governments to resolve the following long-term cross border issues, our Cross-Border 5 by '25.



Cross-Border

5 by '25



1. Create opportunities and remove regulatory burdens for people and businesses

Cross-border communities share their services with people, business and organisations across borders. This represents a unique regulatory and investment environment for government. Programs, policies and investments by government should account for the unique status of cross-border communities – including in payroll tax, business reporting and investment assessment processes.



2. Recognising skills across borders

The attraction, retention and development of a skilled workforce is critical to cross-border communities. Enabling labour mobility by improving mutual recognition of occupational licenses that allows skilled workers to operate on both sides of the border is an important step to improve job opportunities and reduce red-tape for people and businesses in cross-border communities.



3. Connecting communities with transport services and infrastructure

Investment in transport services and infrastructure connects communities socially and economically. Public transport infrastructure helps cross-border communities' access vital services. New services in the private transport market allows for more choice in meeting transport needs and there is an opportunity to improve the integration of timetabled cross-border bus services, enhance the efficiency of interstate freight networks and operationalise the alignment of services and licensing for taxi, rideshare and bus services.



4. Safe, healthy and resilient cross-border communities

State borders should not be an impediment to keeping our community safe and healthy. There is still more to do to in responding to emergencies, in planning health services, keeping communities safe and protecting the most vulnerable. There are opportunities to better share information and coordinate activity during emergency situations, to plan for and deliver local health services and to align information sharing, procedures, policies and legislation in policing, justice services and the protection of children and victims of abuse.



5. Access to education and training services

Investing in education and training in cross-border communities is an important commitment to the social and economic future of cross-border communities. People in these communities share education resources and with improved information sharing we can achieve more equitable access to education and care for pre-school, school and vocational education students in cross-border communities. This includes sharing student data, school and transport options for students, support for special needs students, student travel schemes and agreements between vocational education schemes.

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

To evaluate performance against the Strategic Plan we will measure and report:

In the short term...

- 1. Stakeholder sentiment and satisfaction on effort, trust, responsiveness and knowledge.**
Monitor stakeholder sentiment through our Stakeholder Survey, conducted every 18 months.
- 2. Relationship with the NSW Government.**
Monitor perceptions of us, our role and performance and awareness of cross-border issues amongst the NSW Public Service, every 18 months.
- 3. Stakeholder engagement and our reach into the community.**
Assess the effectiveness of our engagement through media reach and impact of our public messages.
- 4. The quantity and nature of issues we engage with and the outcomes for people.**
Report annually on the matters we engage with and the outcomes we can achieve.
- 5. Annual progress against established cross-border agreements.**
Annual reporting on progress against the work lists and strategic priorities developed for cross-border agreements with neighbouring jurisdictions.

In the longer term...

- 1. Assessment of the economic and social cost of cross-border anomalies.**
Study the economic and social costs of dual-regulatory regimes and policies to cross-border communities.
- 2. Continue reform on long-term legislative, regulatory and policy measures that create barriers for cross-border communities.**
The Cross-Border 5 by 25 identifies five priority and long-standing cross-border issues to resolve.
- 3. Reform the policy frameworks that foster equitable investment in border communities.**
Influence cost-benefit methodologies used by NSW Government and the inclusion of Functional Economic Regions in the evaluation of project proposals.





Contact

The Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner assists with a wide variety of concerns related to living or working near the NSW border. If there is a cross-border issue affecting your ability to live, work and operate, please contact the team.

Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner

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