

Council seeks to join Hunter group

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Mid-Western Regional Council will move to become part of the Hunter Regional Organisation of Councils (HROC).

Mayor Des Kennedy told councillors on Wednesday that it was “imperative” that Mid-Western Regional Council joined HROC as quickly as possible.

Cr Kennedy said that following a meeting with the Maitland mayor and HROC president Peter Blackmore recently, both he and general manager Warwick Bennett were impressed with group’s approach, particularly in regard to coal mining.

The eleven councils which were part of HROC also shared other common interests with Mid-Western Regional Council, including tourism and infrastructure, he said.

Cr Kennedy said by becoming part of HROC, Mid-Western Regional Council would be able to share services such as environmental consultancies.

Mr Bennett told the council that there was a great benefit in joining HROC, especially in terms of finding support in dealing with the effects of coal mining.

“They [HROC] are very keen work with the Department of Planning to ensure issues of coal mining are dealt with appropriately and in a better way than they have been in the past five years.”

Mid-Western Regional Council was formerly part of the Central Region Organisation of Councils (CentROC) but is now not part of any regional group.

No comment on meeting with Kelly:

Mid-Western Regional Council has declined to comment on the meeting between Mayor Des Kennedy, general manager Warwick Bennett and Minister for Planning Tony Kelly on Wednesday.

Cr Kennedy and Mr Bennett met with Mr Kelly to discuss coal companies contribution to regional infrastructure and services, and in particular the conditions of consent for the Ulan West project, which propose to defer a Voluntary Planning Agreement between Xstrata and Mid-Western Regional Council until the end of 2011.