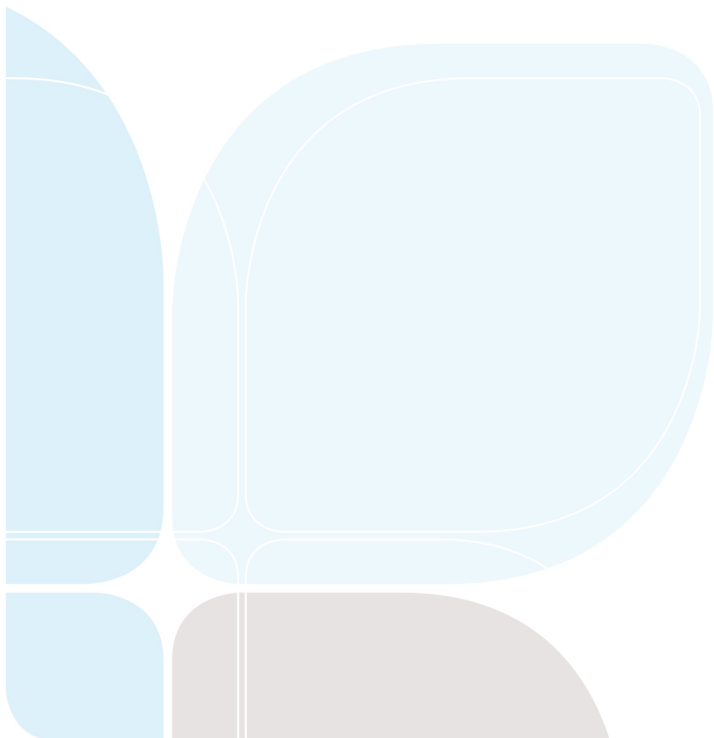




Local Land
Services
Hunter

Submission on draft Hunter Regional Plan

February 2016



Hunter Local Land Services (LLS) is pleased to make a submission on the Draft Hunter Regional Plan (the Plan). Hunter LLS works with land managers and the community to improve primary production within healthy landscapes and to assist rural and regional communities to be resilient, profitable and sustainable into the future.

Our interest in the Plan relates to its potential influence on Hunter LLS Local Strategic Plan's goals and priorities. There are several actions in the Plan which Hunter LLS could assist in implementing. The draft Hunter Local Strategic Plan 2016 – 2021 as submitted to the Minister is attached.

General Comments

Hunter LLS supports the vision and four goals of the Plan, and a strategic approach to land use policy and planning in the region.

- It would be helpful if the Plan described the interdependence of the goals – for example, a healthy environment underpins a healthy regional economy, which also underpins robust regional communities, and vice versa. These goals all work together and are not mutually exclusive.
- In general, the Plan's implementation and governance arrangements need strengthening. There are also a number of areas where clearer planning controls and mechanisms for translation into local planning instruments are required (for example Actions 2.1.3, 2.4.2).
- The Plan needs to make reference to other strategic planning initiatives either complete, or close to completion in the region, such as the Upper Hunter Strategic Assessment.

Specific Comments

Direction 2.1 Promote investment to grow regional rural and resource industries

Hunter LLS supports this direction, and makes the following comments:

- There is a much wider range of "important primary industries" in the region, beyond the stated viticulture, equine and oyster industries. In terms of value of production, employment and area occupied, the beef cattle, dairy and poultry industries are also important. Hunter LLS would expect to see these industries, and appropriate land use planning mechanisms to support them, identified at a minimum.
- We are concerned that the definitions of "important primary industries" and "strategic agricultural lands" are too limited. A more comprehensive and rigorous economic and biophysical assessment of important primary industries and the lands which support them is required. Hunter LLS is willing to work with DPI in their work to map important agricultural lands across the region (Action 2.1.3).
- Actions 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 regarding identification and support of important primary industries should be combined and restructured along the lines of Action 2.1.1 ("Identify energy and mineral resource lands to support sustainable growth of mining industries and diversification of NSW energy supplies"). Energy and mineral resource lands and agricultural lands need to be put on an equal and objective footing.
- The Plan should resolve problems where some land use policies in the region, such as minimum lot sizes, have caused rural lot sizes to decrease below a level where farming isn't viable. These policies can degrade the productive capacity of the land, and also increase biosecurity risks and risks from natural hazards, and therefore do not support Direction 2.1.
- Action 2.2.2 "Develop strategies for enhancing tourism infrastructure to increase national competitiveness" should also recognise internationally significant natural assets such as the band of wetlands on the western

fringe of Newcastle, and migratory shorebirds of the Hunter Estuary, that contribute to tourism industry opportunities and amenity.

Direction 2.4 Manage competing and conflicting interests in rural and resource areas to provide greater certainty for investment

Hunter LLS supports this direction, and makes the following comments:

- Agricultural and high environmental value land uses exist before and after mining. Water is required by agricultural and high environmental value land uses before and after mining. These points need to be recognised in the Plan.
- The Plan is virtually silent on planning for post-mining land use and rehabilitation. An action should be added to clarify how goals for post-mine land use and standards for rehabilitation will be determined.
- Cumulative impact assessment of mining activities also needs to consider cumulative impacts on biodiversity, as well as impacts on agricultural lands and water resources (as already stated).
- Action 2.4.3 on managing biosecurity risks through land use planning is positive. Hunter LLS would be willing to assist in implementation of this action.

Direction 3.1 Protect the natural environment and biodiversity

Hunter LLS supports this direction, and makes the following comments:

- More clarity is required on the criteria used to map high environmental value areas. In particular, riparian areas of major watercourses, biodiversity refuge areas, wetlands of international importance, and other high environmental value freshwater and marine ecosystems should be included.
- Hunter Local Land Services works with landholders and agencies in the region on actions to improve habitat connectivity. We would like to see land use planning instruments complement the voluntary efforts to establish connectivity, rather than work against it. As such, Action 3.1.2 should be strengthened. In addition, the Watagans to Stockton Corridor was recently identified as a priority project for the Hunter Estuary by estuary managers (refer Direction 6.1 Draft Plan for Growing Hunter City).
- Whilst maintaining or improving connectivity is important for some environmental outcomes, it should not be at the expense of other strategic environmental planning approaches including conserving critical habitat for threatened species, or improving land management for riverine health outcomes.
- We support Action 3.1.3 “Encourage greater participation in private conservation schemes to provide more flexibility and options for investment in conservation, including biodiversity offsets”. It is important that at least like-for-like offsets are secured, and that finance and contractual arrangements are sufficient for ensuring in-perpetuity management of the environmental values (including management of threats to those values such as invasive species). Offset management arrangements should allow continued agricultural land uses, such as grazing, where appropriate management practices will improve or maintain environmental outcomes. Where sourcing suitable offset areas is difficult, could the Department consider acquiring land for the purposes of habitat rehabilitation, for example around the M1 motorway extension and the airport expansion?

Direction 3.2 Secure the health of water resources and coastal landscapes

Hunter LLS supports this direction, and makes the following comments:

- Actions for protecting water supplies should be emphasised separately to other actions about water quality, estuaries and coastal lakes. Currently the water supply action lacks emphasis in the Plan given the challenges

that this region is likely to face over the next 20 years, and doesn't reference the interests of Hunter Water and MidCoast Water.

- Hunter LLS is currently developing a project in collaboration with other agencies and stakeholders in the Hunter Estuary to produce an annual Hunter Estuary Report Card, with water quality as one of a range of indicators. This may assist in monitoring implementation of this Plan.
- Action 3.2.2 – we are unaware of the risk-based decision-making framework for the NSW Water Quality Objectives. This framework should be referenced in the Endnotes.
- Action 3.2.3 – “develop regional boating plans” should also include “and mitigate impacts on sensitive aquatic environments and shorebird habitat”.
- Figure 14 is missing data on the 1 in 100 Flood Area, particularly in the Newcastle LGA.

Direction 4.3 Build the region's resilience to natural hazards

Hunter LLS has roles in the management of the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme, and also provides emergency management preparedness and response services for the agriculture sector. This is outlined in our Strategic Plan.

The Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme invests in structures that have a bearing on estuarine health as well as providing the flood mitigation services. Hunter LLS has been funded for a review of the scheme which will be undertaken by the Office of Environment and Heritage during 2016-2017. The results of this review will have a bearing on land use planning in areas adjacent to the Scheme.

- Action 4.3.2 – the review and update of local floodplain and coastal risk management plans need to:
 - acknowledge that increased urban development and stormwater will increase the severity of flood events and consequently flood damage
 - reserve high ground evacuation points for livestock and agricultural machinery adjacent to floodplain agricultural land
 - consider the outcomes of the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme review.

Direction 4.4 Strengthen the economic and cultural self-determination of Aboriginal communities

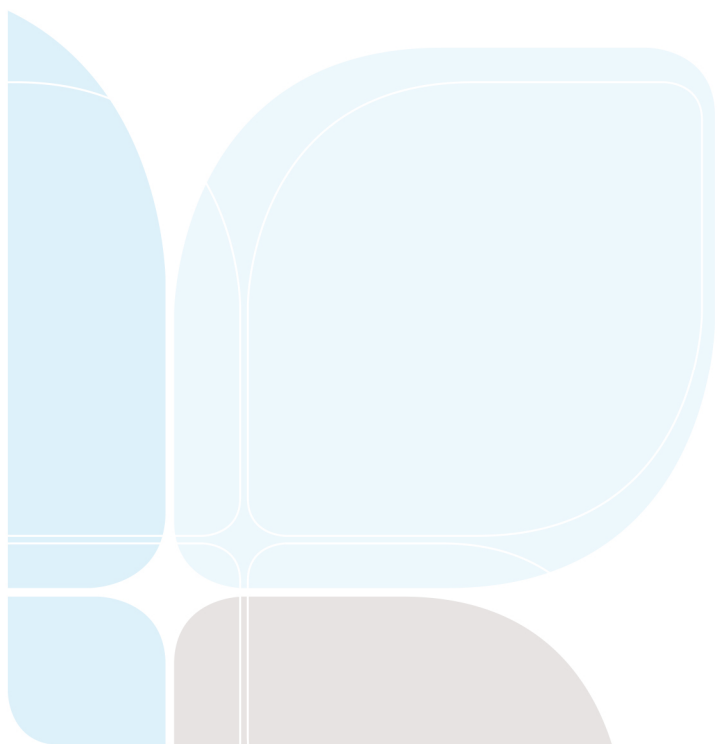
Hunter LLS supports Local Aboriginal Land Councils in land management training and identifying economic opportunities from the use of their land. This is outlined in our Strategic Plan. We may be able to assist the lead agency for implementation of Action 4.4.1.

Correct identification of land held by Local Aboriginal Land Councils

It has been identified by the Hunter LLS Aboriginal Community Advisory Group that many of the maps in the draft Plans identify the land held by Local Aboriginal Land Councils as 'National Park and Reserve'. In particular, Figure 11 of the draft Hunter Regional Plan showing areas of high environmental value identify the Biraban Local Aboriginal Land Councils landholdings at Morisset as 'National Park and Reserve'. Whilst many sites held by Local Aboriginal Land Councils may be vegetated and of high conservation value, they are not National Parks or reserves and the maps should be updated to more correctly identify Local Aboriginal Land Council holdings in the region as private land holdings.

More information

For further information on the points within this submission please contact Claire Parkes, Senior Strategic Land Services Officer (Planning) at claire.parkes@lls.nsw.gov.au





Local Land
Services
Hunter

Local Strategic Plan 2016-2021



Published by Hunter Local Land Services

Hunter Local Strategic Plan

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing February 2016. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of Local Land Services or the user's independent adviser.

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Acknowledgement of Country

Hunter Local Land Services would like to pay respect to and acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal custodians of the land within the Hunter and Manning Great Lakes region on which we undertake our operations. We also pay our respect to the Aboriginal Elders of the Hunter and Manning Great Lakes region both past and present and to our future Elders. We extend our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living within the Hunter and Manning Great Lakes region.





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Chair's foreword

Mrs. Susan Hooke **Chair of Hunter Local Land Services**

On behalf of my fellow board members and staff, it is with great pleasure that I present the first Hunter Local Strategic Plan.

We are fortunate to live in a region of NSW that is diverse in its landscapes, communities and industries. In our region, the sustainability and productivity of primary industries goes hand in hand with the health of the natural environment and the resilience of our communities. We cannot achieve any one of these goals without the others.

Our job is to protect and support our primary industries, ensure the health of our natural resources, and help communities prepare and respond to emergencies, such as flood and fire.

Since its creation Hunter Local Land Services has delivered valuable services for landholders including: providing early response and coordinating recovery from the April 2015 floods; more than 4,000 general vet and biosecurity consultations; increased budgets for the control of wild dogs and for our district veterinarians undertaking monitoring and testing to protect the region's agriculture; support of weed control projects over 497 hectares; sustainable grazing projects over 2,910 hectares; and native vegetation projects over 925 hectares.

This strategic plan outlines how we shall continue to work together with the community to improve the sustainable management of primary production, natural resource management, biosecurity and emergency management.

Our approach

Local people delivering high quality, integrated services for healthy, productive landscapes.

Our service delivery

Local Land Services puts primary producers and land managers at the core of its business. We will facilitate science-based extension and advisory services, provide assistance, and deliver programs for our customers and investors that are aimed at improving practices for social, economic and environmental outcomes. One of our key measures of performance will be achieving a high level of customer satisfaction.

Our link to the local community

The views of our community are very important to us. This plan was developed based on advice and feedback from representatives on our community advisory groups in the three districts of Upper Hunter, Lower Hunter and Manning Great Lakes, along with our regional Aboriginal Community Advisory Group. The public exhibition and consultation process also provided valuable feedback that helped us revise parts of the Plan and is informing our service delivery priorities. We will continue to seek the community's input as we implement and adapt our plan and develop partnerships with local industries and representative groups.

Our link to planning

Our plan aligns with the Local Land Services State Strategic Plan, and relevant state and federal policies and programs.

The Hunter Local Strategic Plan outlines our priorities, sets our direction and identifies our core values - values that we will be applying in all our actions.

I thank my fellow board members, staff and our community for their valuable contributions in preparing our plan.





Intent of the plan

Introduction

Local Land Services represents a change in service provision to land managers in agricultural advisory services, biosecurity, emergency management and natural resource management. These services will be delivered in an integrated way which builds and improves on previous arrangements.

The State Strategic Plan sets the vision and goals for Local Land Services for the next 10 years and outlines the strategies through which these goals will be achieved. A series of key performance indicators provides guidance on what success will look like and how investors and stakeholders will be able to measure performance.

Previous and future services

Local Land Services consolidates the operations of 27 formerly separate entities. While we respect the history of these organisations and their predecessors, which span over a hundred years, Local Land Services is about a change in customer focus, better and more integrated services and an improved structure and culture.

Reflecting this integrated approach, our strategic goals focus on improved and integrated outcomes for customers and land managers and for the communities and environments across NSW.

Local delivery and decision making

The strategy's foundations are built on the local focus of Local Land Services, underpinned by local decision making and accountability. Each of the 11 local regions is responsible for service delivery and local strategy. As part of strategic planning, these functions include community engagement, setting and delivering local priorities, and determining how the priorities for Local Land Services are best achieved at local level. These priorities are outlined in this plan.

Governance, transparency and reporting

Local Land Services is in the business of creating value for its customers, investors and stakeholders. A key component of the strategy is to increase our focus on customer service, and report to investors and stakeholders on performance and customer satisfaction more effectively. Transparent evaluation and reporting underpins the implementation of the strategy and is integral to how Local Land Services will work for and with its investors and customers.

In addition to our own reporting processes, our performance will be independently audited on a regular basis by the Natural Resources Commission through the Performance Standard for Local Land Services. Reports from this process are made public and this provides additional assurance that Local Land Services will deliver quality outcomes for investors, stakeholders, customers and communities.

Strategic direction

The State Strategic Plan has been developed consistent with the *Local Land Services Act 2013* which requires the development of a state strategic plan which sets the vision, priorities and overarching strategy for Local Land Services with a focus on appropriate economic, social and environmental outcomes.

The 11 Local Land Services regions are required to develop a local strategic plan which is closely aligned with the State Strategic Plan and which addresses a similar set of matters. State and local alignment is an essential part of the Local Land Services model, where strong, highly devolved, local delivery is balanced with the benefits and resources of being part of a single, larger organisation.

The state and local strategic plans also seek to draw out best practice strategic planning and delivery. For Local Land Services, this means the plans are simple, aspirational and evidence based while addressing investor preferences and the requirements of the Performance Standard for Local Land Services and putting the customer at the centre of the organisation.

This plan

The Hunter Local Strategic Plan prioritises and directs Hunter Local Land Services' customer services, partnerships and investment across the region for the next five years. It sets out the goals for Hunter Local Land Services, defines our organisational priorities, outlines the strategies through which these goals and priorities will be addressed, and describes how we will assess success. It provides the strategic framework for shorter-term business plans.

It is intended to:

- Demonstrate how the five-year strategies of Hunter Local Land Services will improve economic, social and environmental outcomes for the region and for NSW.
- Provide opportunities for our customers, community, stakeholders and investors to partner with Local Land Services to deliver efficient, timely and responsive activities that are important to building a resilient, productive region.
- Encourage our stakeholders, partners and investors to identify opportunities for leveraging investment through collaborative partnerships or direct investment.
- Show how services of Hunter Local Land Services integrate to provide value for money for our customers, stakeholders and investors.
- Demonstrate how the Hunter Local Strategic Plan contributes to the State Strategic Plan.

About Local Land Services

Local Land Services was established under the *Local Land Services Act 2013* to provide quality, customer-focused services to landholders and the community across New South Wales.

We work with land managers and the community to improve primary production within healthy landscapes and assist rural and regional communities to be profitable and sustainable into the future.

We provide primary production advice, biosecurity, natural resource management and emergency management functions through 11 local regions, around 800 staff and a budget of approximately \$175 million.

The State Strategic Plan sets the overarching strategy for the whole organisation.

Local Land Services is governed by the Board of Chairs, which has an independent chair and the chairs of the 11 local boards. The Board of Chairs is responsible for Local Land Services' strategy, governance and organisational oversight and reports directly to the Minister for Primary Industries.

Local regions are in charge of providing all front line services. Each region has a local board which is responsible for corporate governance, approval of regionally appropriate programs, development of a local strategic plan and budgets in line with local and state priorities, and communications and engagement with their local communities.

Regions vary in geographic and organisational size and approach their local priorities in different ways, which is why it is so important to be locally focused.

Local community advisory groups provide input into the development of plans, projects and services and are an integral link between Local Land Services and the community it serves.

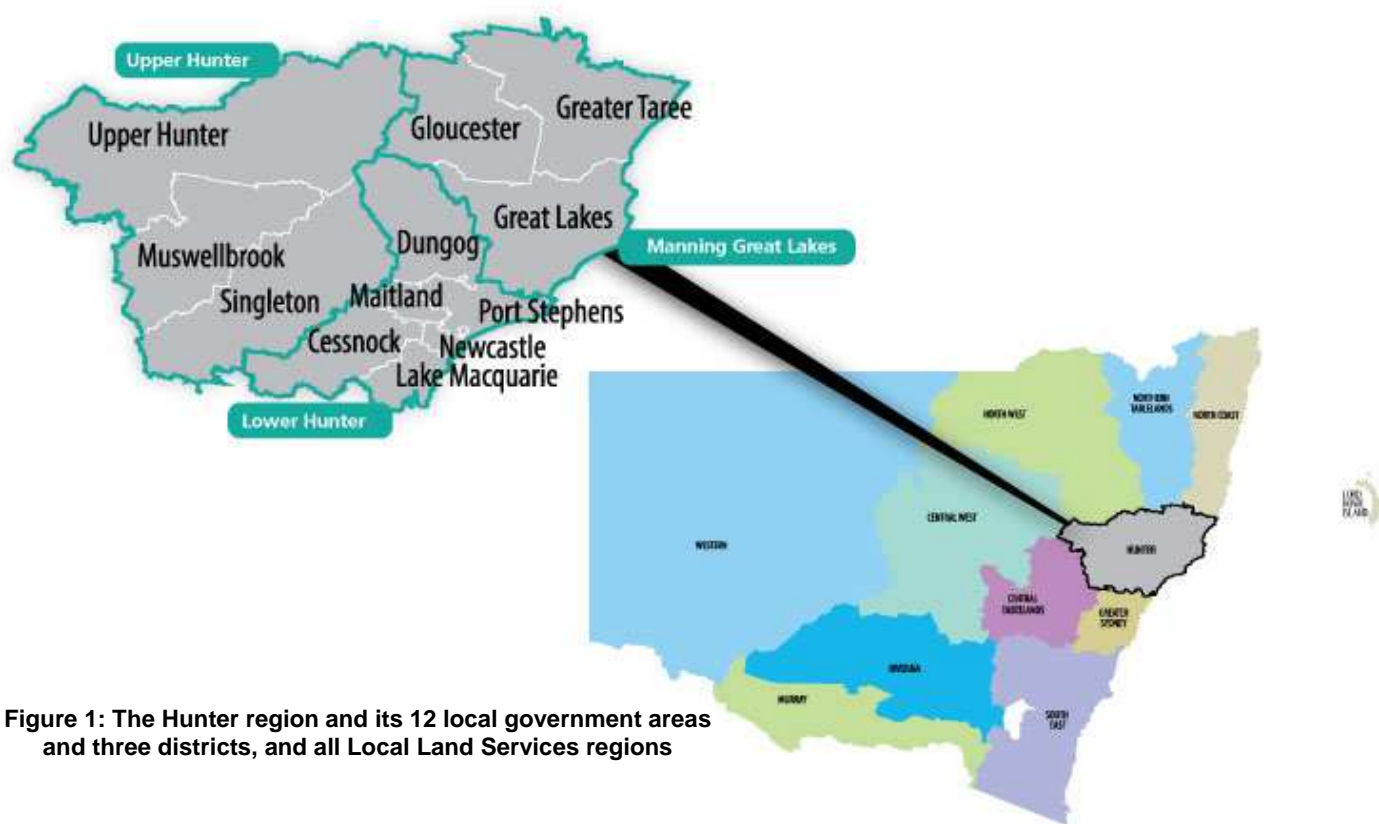


Figure 1: The Hunter region and its 12 local government areas and three districts, and all Local Land Services regions

What we do

Local Land Services works with our customers, stakeholders and investors to:

- **Enable.** We provide resources, incentives, training, information and advice to build the capacity of our customers and stakeholders.
- **Provide assurance.** We actively work to protect NSW from invasive animal and plant species, and livestock and plant diseases that may damage landscapes and production.
- **Manage natural resources.** We work with communities to better manage our water, land, soil, vegetation, biodiversity and cultural heritage. This includes managing travelling stock reserves and areas of significance to Aboriginal communities.
- **Broker relationships.** We are a bridging organisation, connecting people, organisations, funding and information and facilitating productive collaborations and partnerships.
- **Share knowledge.** We provide a hub for the latest scientific and other forms of knowledge about fully functioning and productive landscapes in NSW.
- **Play our part.** We work with other agencies to achieve whole of government results for the landscapes and people of NSW.

Customers, stakeholders and investors

Customers	Any land manager within the state, irrespective of whether they are private or public land managers, ratepayers or non-ratepayers.
Stakeholders	Organisations that collaborate and partner with Local Land Services directly to support customer service delivery.
Investors	Organisations and individuals who invest in Local Land Services and leverage outcomes from this investment. Appendix 1 summarises the preferences of our major investors.



Vision, mission and values

Vision

Resilient communities in
productive healthy landscapes

Mission

To be a customer-focused
business that enables
improved primary production
and better management of
natural resources

Values

Accountability
Collaboration
Innovation
Integrity
Performance
Service
Trust



The Local Land Services Strategy

The State Strategic Plan and this Hunter Local Strategic Plan will assist Local Land Services achieve its vision of resilient communities in productive healthy landscapes.

To achieve this vision, Local Land Services needs to align all of its work with its mission of being a customer-focused business that enables improved primary production and better management of natural resources.

This will see four goals pursued.

- Resilient, self-reliant and prepared local communities
- Biosecure, profitable, productive and sustainable primary industries
- Healthy diverse and connected natural environments
- Board members and staff who are collaborative, innovative and commercially focused.

This strategic approach is designed to deliver products and services that achieve triple bottom line results at the property, community, landscape and industry scales through the improved management of biosecurity, natural resources, agricultural productivity and emergency management. These products and services will be tailored to meet local needs.

It also gives Hunter Local Land Services the agility and responsiveness to meet the needs of external investors and other stakeholders and address state and national priorities. This includes the development and implementation of a range of partnerships with key organisations at state and local level.

Local Land Services will continue to work to develop a values-based culture with people who are engaged, accountable and add value to our customers. In line with the organisation's commitment to build on the past and implement the Performance Standard for Local Land Services, our strategy will be reinforced by continuous improvement processes which will improve our strategies, culture, products, services, processes and outcomes over time.

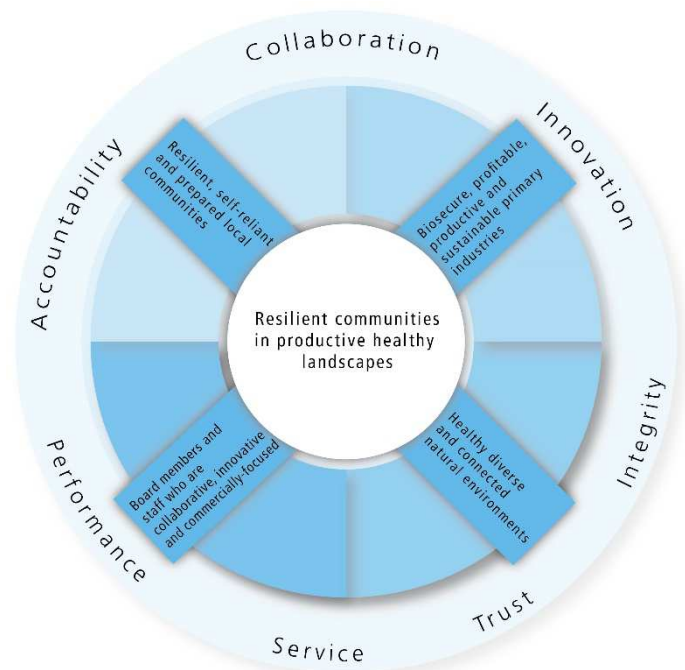


Figure 2: An overview of Local Land Services' vision, goals and values

The Hunter region

The Hunter region covers an area of 33,000 square kilometres east of the Great Dividing Range, from the dramatic sandstone escarpments and gorges of the Goulburn River, to the rich alluvial floodplains of the Hunter and Williams Rivers. Along the coast the region extends from Lake Macquarie in the south to Taree in the north.

People

There are around 670,000 people currently living in the region. The major population centres are in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie local government areas. Along with Maitland and Cessnock, these areas have experienced significant increases in population in recent years, while the population of rural areas has been in decline. Other major urban centres include Nelson Bay, Raymond Terrace, Dungog, Singleton, Muswellbrook, Scone, Taree, Gloucester, Foster and Tuncurry.

Although there are significant physical and climatic differences between east and west, issues identified within our communities are often similar. The need to control weeds and pests, prepare for emergencies, better manage the natural environment, improve the sustainability of primary industries, and strengthen community networks are consistent across the region. For example, our recent survey of ratepayers showed that weeds, pest animals, bushfire risk, pasture management, and decrease in farm viability/profitability were the top five issues for respondents (Hunter Local Land Services, 2015).

Natural resources

The region is home to the Barrington Tops and Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Areas, and Wollemi, Yengo, Goulburn River, Hunter Wetlands, Wallarah, Myall Lakes and Crowdy Bay National Parks.

The Hunter Estuary and Myall Lakes systems are Ramsar listed as nationally and internationally significant wetland sites for migratory and resident shorebirds, while Port Stephens Great Lakes Marine Park has significant soft coral and sponge gardens, which provide important habitat for many marine species.

The major waterways are the Manning, Karuah, Wallamba, Myall, Hunter, Williams, Goulburn and Pages rivers and Wallis Lake, Myall Lakes, Port Stephens, and Lake Macquarie. Groundwater aquifers in the region support town water supplies and agriculture, as well as several groundwater-dependent ecosystems.

The region has a large, unique mix of vegetation - ranging from estuarine wetlands and mangrove forests, rainforests and freshwater wetlands, to open grasslands, woodlands and eucalypt forests. There are around 320 listed threatened species, populations and ecological communities in the region.

Cultural heritage

Our region has a rich cultural heritage and its landscapes and natural resources traditionally sustained a significant Aboriginal population. There are many important cultural sites and landscapes throughout the catchment that are of state, national and international significance, and these continue to be managed by local communities. There are 15 Local Aboriginal Land Councils in the Hunter region.

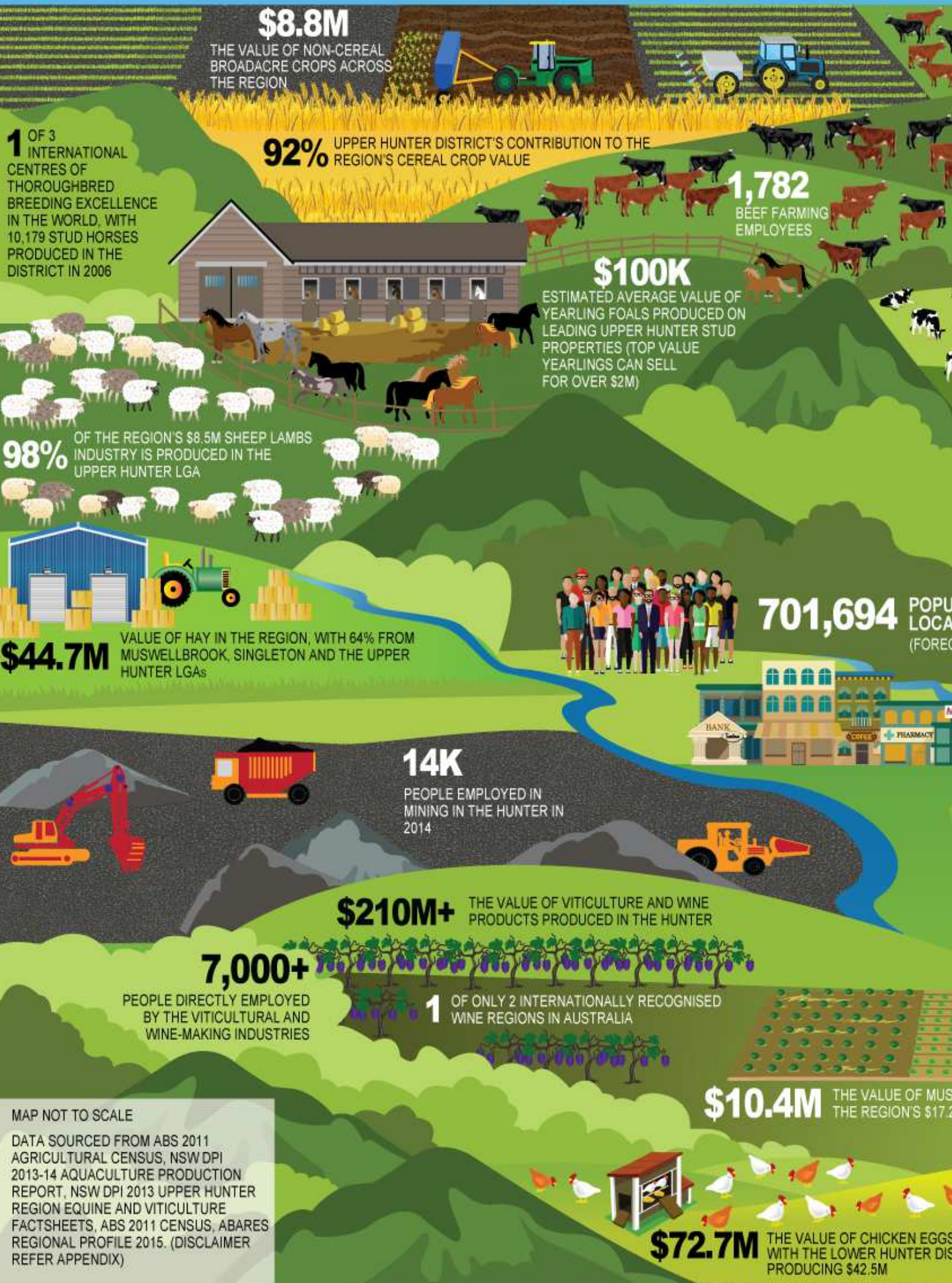
Industries

The natural resources of the Hunter region have enabled the development of a wide range of industries, including tourism, agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries, coal mining, power generation, and recreation. Residential and commercial development dominates the coastal fringe.

Grazing of beef cattle is the major agricultural activity in terms of land use and economic value. Other major industries are poultry production, dairying, grazing of sheep, cropping, and intensive horticulture. The region is internationally known for its thoroughbred horse industry and vineyards. The estuaries and coastal waters support high value production of oysters and other fish and crustaceans. Figure 3 below provides some interesting statistics on primary industries within the Hunter region economy.

See Appendix 2 for land uses of the region, and Appendix 3 for key industry statistics.

Figure 3 Snapshot of the Hunter Region's Primary Industries



MAP NOT TO SCALE

DATA SOURCED FROM ABS 2011 AGRICULTURAL CENSUS, NSW DPI 2013-14 AQUACULTURE PRODUCTION REPORT, NSW DPI 2013 UPPER HUNTER REGION EQUINE AND VITICULTURE FACTSHEETS, ABS 2011 CENSUS, ABARES REGIONAL PROFILE 2015. (DISCLAIMER REFER APPENDIX)



↑ **\$374.3M**

BEEF FARMING IS THE HIGHEST
VALUE INDUSTRY IN
THE REGION, GROWING BY
\$17.4M ANNUALLY SINCE 2005

AVERAGED ANNUAL SPEND ON
OVERNIGHT AND DOMESTIC DAYTRIP
TOURISM IN THE GREATER TAREE LGA
\$159M

\$33.6M

VALUE OF OYSTERS
PRODUCED IN MANNING
RIVER, WALLIS LAKE AND
PORT STEPHENS ESTUARIES

769

PEOPLE WERE
EMPLOYED BY THE DAIRY
CATTLE INDUSTRY IN 2011

↑ **\$227.7M**

DAIRY CATTLE PRODUCTION
HAS INCREASED BY 16.5%
SINCE 2005

\$17.9M

THE VALUE OF THE CULTIVATED
TURF INDUSTRY

ATION FOR HUNTER
LAND SERVICES REGION
(ASTED BY ABS OCTOBER 2014)

66%

THE PRODUCTION
VALUE OF OLIVES TO
THE FRUIT INDUSTRY
(EXCLUDES GRAPES)

\$20M

THE APPROXIMATE RECREATIONAL
FISHING CONTRIBUTION TO PORT
STEPHENS' ECONOMY

ROOMS, WHICH IS 60% OF
M VEGETABLE INDUSTRY

\$272.6M

THE INDUSTRY VALUE
FOR CHICKEN MEAT

NEWCASTLE AGRI TERMINAL - FOR EXPORTATION OF
GRAIN PRODUCED IN THE HUNTER REGION AND BEYOND

Strategic direction

Local Land Services statewide goals and strategies overview

GOAL 1: Resilient, self-reliant and prepared local communities.	GOAL 2: Biosecure, profitable, productive and sustainable primary industries.	GOAL 3: Healthy, diverse and connected natural environments.	GOAL 4: Board members and staff who are collaborative, innovative and commercially-focused.
STRATEGY 1: Provide data, information and knowledge that supports and enables land managers, customers and government to improve decision making.			STRATEGY 10: Develop engaged and accountable people with a strong customer and stakeholder focus.
STRATEGY 2: Provide products and advisory services that support and enable customers to implement improved practices.			
STRATEGY 3: Provide products and services that support and enable customers, land managers and the community to prevent, prepare, respond and recover from biosecurity and natural disaster events.			
STRATEGY 4: Collaborate with investors, stakeholders and external organisations to deliver improved products and services to customers.			
STRATEGY 5: Ensure local people participate in decision making.			
STRATEGY 6: Connect research and development with advisory services to address priority data, information and knowledge gaps and barriers to improved practice.			
STRATEGY 7: Deliver services that support Aboriginal people to care for Country and share traditional land management knowledge.			
STRATEGY 8: Deliver consent and compliance services that educate and protect communities, landscapes and industries.			
STRATEGY 9: Manage Crown Land vested in Local Land Services for environmental, social, and economic outcomes.			STRATEGY 11: Foster a values-based culture which emphasises collaboration, innovation and continual improvement.
			STRATEGY 12: Ensure a safe, efficient, effective and sustainable organisation.

Hunter Local Land Services' approach

Local people, delivering high quality, integrated services
for healthy productive landscapes

Hunter Local Land Services' goals and priorities

The Hunter Local Land Services' goals describe the outcomes we are aiming for. These goals require an integrated approach to service delivery, delivering actions that underpin positive and sustainable outcomes at the property, landscape, industry and community level. To achieve these goals, Hunter Local Land Services will support its Board members and staff to be both collaborative and innovative with a focus on best practice business management.

Our priorities are where we will direct most of our effort. They have been determined through an assessment of:

- the priorities of our investors (Appendix 1 outlines current investor preferences)
- best available science (see Appendix 5 for a description of data sources for mapped priorities)
- feedback from industry groups, agencies, and individuals on the draft Hunter Local Strategic Plan during October/November 2015 (a report on the results of our consultations will be made available on our website)
- input from our community advisory groups and service delivery survey (Hunter Local Land Services, 2015)
- priorities from the former catchment action plan (Hunter Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority, 2013)
- reality checking by our staff experts.

In some cases priority issues are able to be mapped where they occur across the region. Indicative natural resource priorities are depicted in Figure 4.

We will be doing immediate further work to refine our priorities, this is explained in the *Implementation* section of this Plan.



COMMUNITIES

Resilient, self-reliant and prepared local communities

1

GOAL

The priorities for Hunter Local Land Services are:

- Preparing industries and communities for, effectively responding to, and helping to recover from biosecurity incidents, emergencies and natural disasters to minimise impacts to agriculture and animals.
- Preparing the community for floods and improving the effectiveness of the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme in managing the impacts of river flooding.
- Supporting Aboriginal communities in caring for Country in particular through employment and training opportunities in land management.
- Supporting the community to adapt to climate risks – across the region increasing climate variability, rising temperatures, changed fire regimes and more extreme weather events are likely. Coastal areas will also become vulnerable to sea level rise, storm surges and erosion.
- Building the capacity of the community to engage in improving primary production and natural resource management and participate in decision-making.



NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

Healthy, diverse, connected natural environments



The priorities for Hunter Local Land Services are:

- Improving the water quality and condition of priority rivers (see Figure 4), estuaries, and nationally and internationally important wetlands such as the Myall Lakes and Hunter estuary wetland Ramsar sites.
- Improving native vegetation connectivity for resilience – key focus areas for connectivity are lands connecting the Greater Blue Mountains and Barrington Tops World Heritage Areas and across to coastal reserved areas, and the Liverpool Ranges (see Figure 4) – and maintaining or improving native vegetation for a range of natural resource management outcomes.
- Implementing landscape-scale approaches to deal with threats to the natural environment – in particular, supporting land managers to rehabilitate degraded habitat, manage weeds and pests, and contributing to the recovery of high priority and iconic species and listed threatened ecological communities.
- Working with stakeholders and land managers on surface and groundwater resource availability that sustains productive agriculture and natural assets.

GOAL

3

GOAL

2



INDUSTRIES

Biosecure, profitable, productive and sustainable primary industries

The priorities for Hunter Local Land Services are:

- Encouraging and promoting sustainable agricultural practices, increasing the productivity of primary production, and identifying areas of highly productive agricultural land across the region.
- Supporting land managers and producers to manage existing weeds such as pasture weeds and environmental woody weeds, and prevent the spread of new and emerging weeds, along with improving coordination of weed management in the region.
- Supporting land managers and producers to manage existing pest animals such as wild dogs (a high priority across much of the region) and pigs, and to respond to new and emerging pest animals such as deer, which impact on the productivity and profitability of agriculture.
- Responding to and managing animal biosecurity and welfare issues, including livestock health surveillance and certification; and responding to and managing plant biosecurity issues.
- Managing land to deal with the impacts of soil degradation – almost all soils in the region are at high risk of some form of soil degradation, and some high value soils are at risk of irreversibly losing soil health and function (see Figure 4).
- Continuously improving the skills, resources and knowledge of producers, in particular in whole of property and business management planning that delivers profitable and sustainable agricultural, biosecurity, natural resource management and emergency management outcomes.



OUR ORGANISATION

Innovative, commercially focused and collaborative people delivering best practice business management and reducing red tape

The priorities for Hunter Local Land Services are:

- Being responsive and accountable to a diverse range of customers, investors and stakeholders, including maintaining highly skilled and capable staff that are responsive to customers' needs.
- Developing partnerships with a wide range of other service delivery organisations including industry groups and associations, local government, Landcare.
- Involving communities in planning and decision-making through community advisory groups.
- Providing customers with efficient and effective processes when dealing with Local Land Services.
- Ensuring investment decision-making is transparent and objective.
- Ensuring best available knowledge is accessible and that staff incorporate it into service delivery.
- Responding to a complex and changing legislative and policy environment – in particular, native vegetation and biodiversity reforms and biosecurity reforms.

GOAL

4






Figure 4: Hunter region indicative natural resource priorities

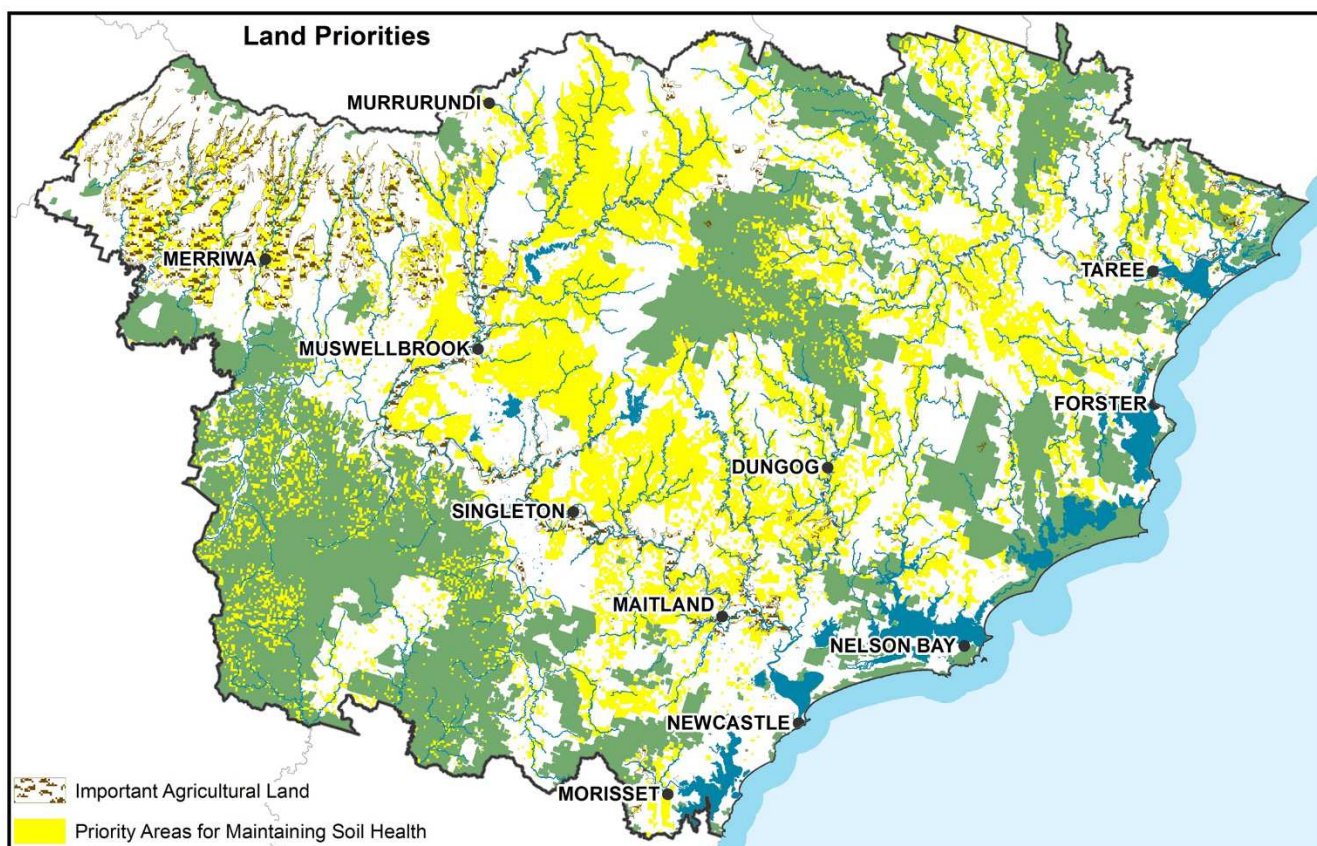
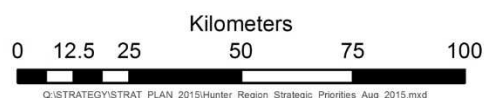
These maps depict regional priorities for Hunter Local Land Services for soils, agricultural land, wetlands, rivers and native vegetation connectivity. Not all Hunter LLS priorities were able to be mapped. These indicative regional priorities will be used to inform business planning at the district level and further refined with additional data inputs at that scale. Hunter LLS is working on mapping for biosecurity risk, invasive pests and weeds.

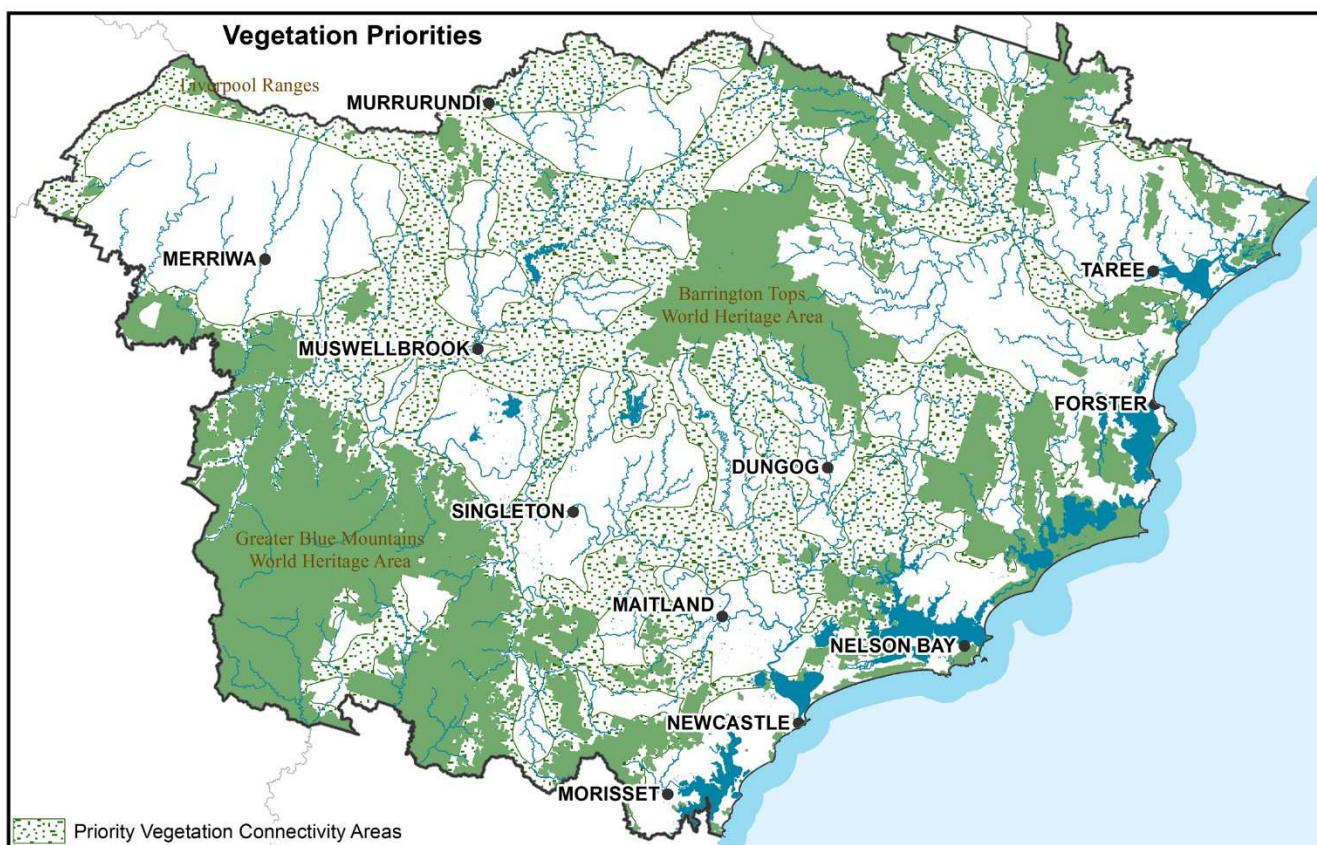
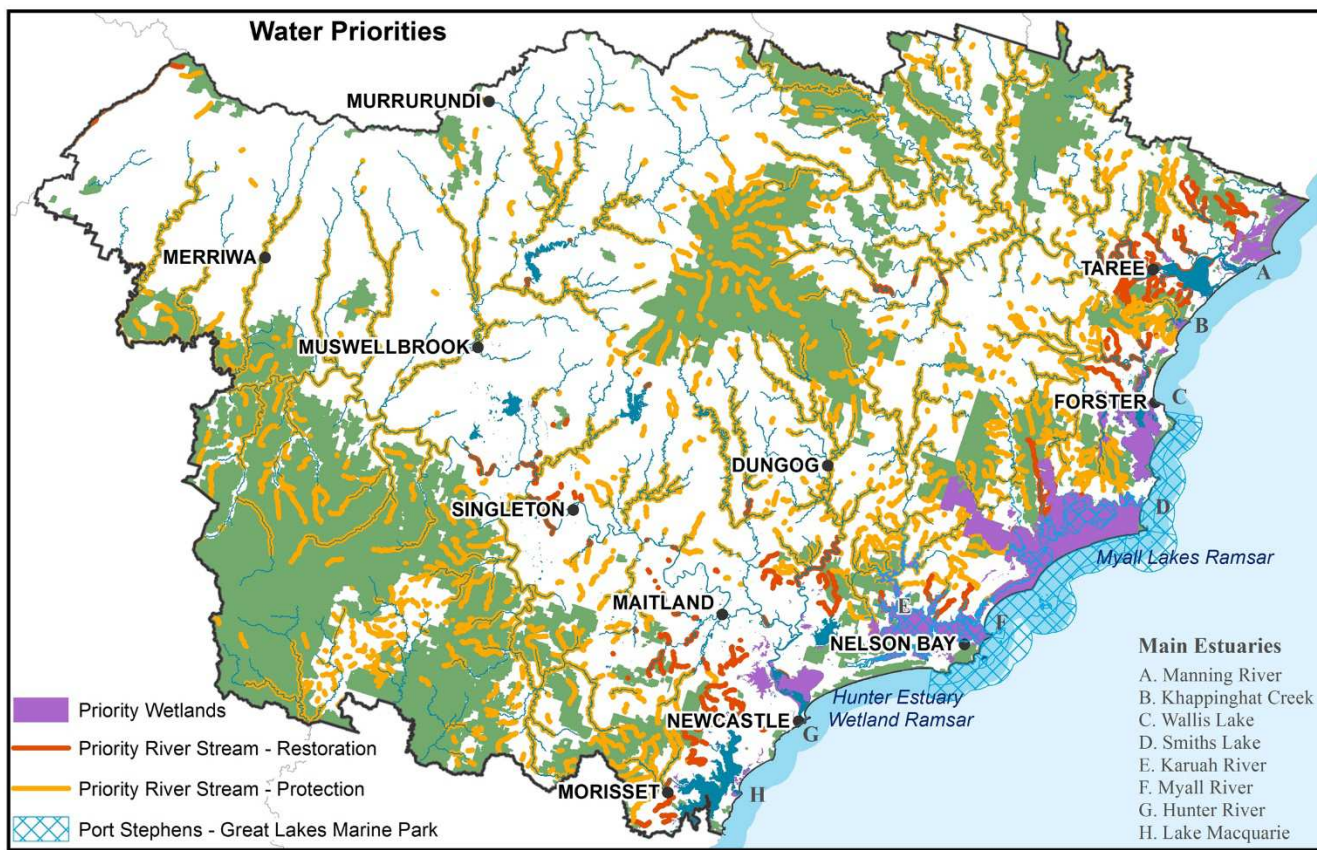
Appendix 5 contains information on data sources and decision rules for these priorities.

Disclaimer (refer appendix)

Legend

-  HLLS boundary
-  Main towns
-  Streams (order 5 and above)
-  Waterways and water bodies
-  National parks and state forests





Hunter Local Land Services' strategies and actions

Hunter Local Land Services has developed a set of strategies and actions for the next five years that will enable us to pursue our goals and address our priorities.

For each strategy we have nominated the outcome we wish to achieve, that we believe is within our scope to influence.

Each strategy contains a set of actions. Some are actions we will undertake immediately or in the short-term, over the next one to two years (S). Some are actions to be undertaken in the medium-term, over the next two to five years (M), and others are ongoing actions. Each strategy also names our priority stakeholders – those who we consider priority clients or those we consider important potential partners.

To keep us on track we have outlined the indicators we intend to measure to assess our success, and the symbols depict the goals that each strategy is aimed towards (see pages 18 and 19).

1

PROVIDE INFORMATION



Outcome 1

By 2020, customers are able to access useful information to support their decisions in relation to biosecurity, natural resource management, agricultural production, and emergency management.

Actions

- 1.1 Improve systems for communication with customers (S)
- 1.2 Review information needs of Local Land Services customers and stakeholders (S)
- 1.3 Develop Communications and Engagement Implementation Strategy (S)
- 1.4 Deliver communication services tailored to meet local needs (Ongoing)
- 1.5 Develop and make available information that is evidence-based and adaptive to existing and emerging risks (M)
- 1.6 Provide information to priority stakeholders on biosecurity obligations, in collaboration with Department of Primary Industries (M)
- 1.7 Identify and empower local leaders, experts and champions to provide information and inspire others (M)

Priority stakeholders

- Primary producers
- Hunter Local Land Services ratepayers
- Rural residential community and absentee landholders
- Private and public land managers
- Community members

Indicators of success

- ▶ Number of times communication platforms accessed (A)
- ▶ Degree of customer satisfaction with information and knowledge provided (Su)
- ▶ Extent to which information and knowledge services support customers to make informed decisions (Su)

Reporting

Actions: Ongoing monitoring; annual reporting

Indicators: as per state Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) strategy

KEY: (S) – short-term actions (M) – medium-term actions (A) – as measured by activity reporting (Su) – as measured by survey

2

DELIVER INTEGRATED SERVICES



Outcome 2

By 2020, integrated services have helped primary producers and land managers in priority industries or landscapes implement improved practices for economic, social and environmental outcomes.

Actions

- 2.1 Work with priority stakeholders to understand their needs across our biosecurity, natural resource management, agricultural production, and emergency management services (S)
- 2.2 Deliver services to primary producers and land managers using a whole-of-property and triple bottom line approach (Ongoing).
Service delivery approaches will generally include:
 - a) facilitating group extension activities,
 - b) providing individual advice (where appropriate),
 - c) providing financial and other direct assistance (where appropriate), and/or
 - d) implementing programs with partners and clients.
 Service delivery will be aimed at achieving practice change that:
 - a) reduces impacts from emerging and established priority pests, weeds, and animal and plant pest and disease issues,
 - b) improves the productivity and sustainability of primary production, and
 - c) improves native vegetation management, biodiversity and threatened species conservation, waterway management and land management.
- 2.3 Develop implementation strategies for Biosecurity & Invasive Species, Natural Resource Management, and Agriculture Advisory/Extension Services that clearly define the specific outcomes we are pursuing and the specific service delivery approaches we will implement (S)

Priority stakeholders

- Beef industry
- Dairy industry
- Poultry industry
- Oyster industry
- Viticulture and other horticulture industry
- Sheep meat and wool industry
- Cropping
- Private and public land managers, groups and associations
- Department of Primary Industries, and other service providers

Indicators of success

- ▶ Number of service delivery engagements or events conducted that are delivering integrated services (A)
- ▶ Degree of customer satisfaction with advisory/extension-service delivery (Su)
- ▶ Extent to which customers report that advisory/extension services have assisted with practice improvement (including the proportion that are from our priority stakeholder groups) (Su)
- ▶ Extent to which biosecurity issues are being better managed (as a result of LLS actions) (Su)
- ▶ Extent to which natural resources are being better managed (as a result of LLS actions) (Su)

Reporting

Actions: Ongoing monitoring; annual reporting

Indicators: as per state MER strategy

KEY: (S) – short-term actions (M) – medium-term actions (A) – as measured by activity reporting (Su) – as measured by survey

3

DELIVER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES



Outcome 3

By 2020, the capacity of industries and communities to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from biosecurity and natural disaster emergencies has improved.

A number of organisations have responsibilities in emergency management. Local Land Services is responsible for the first response to any natural disaster or biosecurity emergency impacting on agriculture or animals.

Actions

- 3.1 Provide information to primary producers and communities on key contacts, responsibilities and processes in emergency management, in collaboration with Department of Primary Industries (S)
- 3.2 Train Hunter Local Land Services staff in the range of emergency management functions (S)
- 3.3 Conduct surveillance and monitoring of animal pests, diseases and welfare , and plant pests and diseases (Ongoing)
- 3.4 Review preparedness of industries and communities for biosecurity, natural disaster and other emergencies, in collaboration with Department of Primary Industries (S)
- 3.5 Develop Hunter Emergency Management Operational Plan (S)
- 3.6 Provide advisory/extension and support services to assist industries and communities to prevent, and prepare for, biosecurity incidents and natural disaster emergencies, including support to incorporate emergency management in property plans (Ongoing)
- 3.7 Participate in local and regional emergency management committees (Ongoing)
- 3.8 Respond to emergencies in accordance with agreed procedures, and assist in recoveries (As needed)
- 3.9 Provide support to the effective operation of the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme including the review of the Scheme (M)

Priority stakeholders

- Primary producers and communities
- Local government emergency management committees
- Government agencies involved in emergency response

Indicators of success

- ▶ Number of assessments of preparedness completed (A)
- ▶ Degree to which emergency management services have increased community preparedness for biosecurity and natural disaster emergencies (Su)
- ▶ Degree to which coordination of, and response to, any emergencies has improved (Su)

Reporting

Actions: Ongoing monitoring; annual reporting

Indicators: as per state MER strategy

KEY: (S) – short-term actions (M) – medium-term actions

(A) – as measured by activity reporting (Su) – as measured by survey

4

COLLABORATE WITH STAKEHOLDERS



Outcome 4

By 2020, Hunter Local Land Services is working in effective partnerships with stakeholders with similar goals and priorities to add value to service delivery.

Actions

- 4.1 Identify priorities for industry, community and government partnerships (S)
- 4.2 Develop and support priority groups to engage in effective strategic partnerships with Hunter Local Land Services (Ongoing)
- 4.3 Deliver a Landcare Support Program with farmers, fishers, and land managers to achieve priority landcare outcomes (Ongoing)
- 4.4 Collaborate with Department of Primary Industries to implement the new *Biosecurity Act 2015* (M)
- 4.5 Collaborate with Office of Environment & Heritage on biodiversity policy reforms to deliver native vegetation management that achieves social, economic and environmental outcomes, and cultural heritage reforms that are informed by the views of the Hunter Aboriginal community (S)
- 4.6 Collaborate with weeds authorities and land managers to deliver effective weed management, and develop Regional Weeds Strategy (Ongoing)
- 4.7 Facilitate the development of a Hunter River Management Strategy (M)
- 4.8 Collaborate with water managers on water quality and water resource availability (M)
- 4.9 Support the delivery of the National Landcare Program, Catchment Action NSW, the Green Army Program, and other government programs (Ongoing)
- 4.10 Respond to any other regional planning initiatives that are likely to have impacts on the productivity of agriculture or the natural environment (M)

Priority stakeholders

- Industry groups
- Landcare, land managers and community groups, non-government organisations
- Federal, state and local government agencies
- Water authorities and corporate sector
- Investors
- Other Local Land Services regions

Indicators of success

- ▶ Number of partnerships established (A)
- ▶ Degree of partner satisfaction with Hunter Local Land Services partnerships (Su)
- ▶ Extent to which partnerships are adding value to Local Land Services' services (Su)

Reporting

Actions: Ongoing monitoring; annual reporting

Indicators: as per state MER strategy

KEY: (S) – short-term actions (M) – medium-term actions (A) – as measured by activity reporting (Su) – as measured by

5

ENABLE PARTICIPATION



Outcome 5

By 2020, local people, partners and stakeholders are participating effectively in Local Land Services decision-making.

Actions

- 5.1 Develop and maintain effective advisory groups that provide input to, and feedback on, Local Land Services priorities and service delivery (Ongoing)
- 5.2 Identify opportunities for ongoing customer and stakeholder participation in decision-making, and integrate into Communications and Engagement Strategy and our strategic partnership approach (S)
- 5.3 Utilise appropriate tools for participation and ensure transparency in Local Land Services decisions (Ongoing)

Priority stakeholders

- Community advisory groups
- Industry groups
- Landcare, land managers & community groups, non-government organisations
- Local government
- Other committees

Indicators of success

- ▶ Number of opportunities to participate in planning and decision-making (A)
- ▶ Number of inputs into key Local Land Services plans (A)
- ▶ Degree to which community and Aboriginal community advisory groups are satisfied with contributions to Local Land Services decision-making (Su)

Reporting

Actions: Ongoing monitoring; annual reporting
Indicators: as per state MER strategy

6

FOSTER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT



Outcome 6

By 2020, Hunter Local Land Services has facilitated partnerships to fill knowledge gaps through research and development.

Actions

- 6.1 Work with research organisations and industry groups to identify knowledge gaps and prioritise research and development projects (S)
- 6.2 Support primary producers and community groups to undertake applied research and development trials to improve practices (M)
- 6.3 Disseminate research and development outcomes through advisory, extension and information services to facilitate on-ground practice change (Ongoing)

Priority stakeholders

- Industry groups
- Department of Primary Industries
- Research and development organisations
- Tertiary institutions
- Citizen science groups

Indicators of success

- ▶ Number of partnerships between research and industry groups to identify and address knowledge gaps to improve the adoption of sustainable practices (A)
- ▶ Number of times outcomes from research have been incorporated in extension and advisory services (Su)

Reporting

Actions: Ongoing monitoring; annual reporting
Indicators: as per state MER strategy

KEY: (S) – short-term actions (M) – medium-term actions (A) – as measured by activity reporting (Su) – as measured by survey

7

SUPPORT AND PARTNER ABORIGINAL CULTURE



Outcome 7

By 2020, support for Aboriginal people to care for Country and practice traditional land management has increased.

Actions

- 7.1 Work with the Aboriginal Community Advisory Group to set priorities and develop a program of activities for improving training opportunities (S)
- 7.2 Develop a Regional Aboriginal Engagement and Employment Program (S)
- 7.3 Facilitate and assist in negotiations between the Aboriginal community and other stakeholders to develop employment opportunities and training projects (Ongoing)
- 7.4 Develop rapport with the Aboriginal community by understanding and promoting Aboriginal cultural competency (Ongoing)
- 7.5 Provide capacity building, financial incentives and assistance in land and sea management (Ongoing)
- 7.6 Promote best practice cultural heritage management on LLS-managed land (Ongoing)

Priority stakeholders

- Aboriginal Community Advisory Group
- Local Aboriginal Land Councils
- Traditional owners and Elders
- Other Aboriginal support services and funding organisations
- Public land managers

Indicators of success

- ▶ Number of employment and training opportunities identified and implemented (A)
- ▶ Degree to which Aboriginal Community Advisory Group is satisfied with contributions to Local Land Services decision-making (Su)
- ▶ Number of partnerships between Aboriginal groups and other stakeholders facilitated by Local Land Services (A)

Reporting

Actions: Ongoing monitoring; annual reporting

Indicators: as per state MER strategy

8

DELIVER CONSENT AND COMPLIANCE SERVICES



Outcome 8

By 2016, landholders understand and are complying with statutory and industry requirements to manage livestock, land and native vegetation.

Actions

- 8.1 Provide native vegetation clearing consent and assist landholders to understand and comply with native vegetation clearing approval requirements (S)
- 8.2 Provide best practice native vegetation management advice as part of a triple bottom line whole of property and enterprise approach (S)
- 8.3 Provide information and education services to assist landholders comply with weed, pest, disease and animal health and welfare requirements (S)
- 8.4 Undertake compliance action where information and support programs are not effective and conduct enforcement action as a last resort (S)

Priority stakeholders

- Hunter Local Land Services ratepayers
- Saleyards and stock agents
- Private land managers
- Local government

Indicators of success

- ▶ Number of information products/advisory engagements (A)
- ▶ Extent to which customers understand statutory and industry requirements for native vegetation management, biosecurity surveillance (Su)
- ▶ (A low) number of compliance or enforcement actions in the region (A)

Reporting

Actions: Ongoing monitoring; annual reporting

Indicators: as per state MER strategy

KEY: (S) – short-term actions (M) – medium-term actions (A) – as measured by activity reporting (Su) – as measured by survey

9

MANAGE CROWN LANDS



Outcome 9

By 2020, Local Land Services-managed Crown lands, particularly travelling stock reserves, are managed consistent with best practice.

Actions

- 9.1 Collaborate with identified stakeholders to develop and implement the Hunter Regional Plan of Management for travelling stock reserves and other Crown Lands (S)
- 9.2 In collaboration with stakeholders, undertake survey and assessment of all Local Land Services-managed Crown lands to determine their values and capabilities to enable appropriate management (M)
- 9.3 Provide information to users of Crown land as to their biosecurity and natural resource management responsibilities (M)
- 9.4 Manage our Crown land in accordance with best practice grazing management, pest and weed control, and its environmental, cultural and recreational values (Ongoing)

Priority stakeholders

- Travelling stock reserves users and permit holders
- Community and adjoining landholders
- Government agencies

Indicators of success

- ▶ Extent to which travelling stock reserves are being managed in accordance with the Plan of Management (Su)
- ▶ Extent to which key stakeholders are satisfied with management of Local Land Services-managed Crown Lands (Su)

Reporting

Actions: Ongoing monitoring; annual reporting

Indicators: as per state MER strategy

10

DEVELOP LOCAL LAND SERVICES STAFF



Outcome 10

Between 2015 and 2020, Board members and staff are appropriately skilled and focused on delivering results and quality customer service.

Actions

- 10.1 Implement Professional Development Plans for all staff and invest in development and training (S)
- 10.2 Promote a unified staff culture through a Culture Development Program (S)
- 10.3 Develop and implement a Customer Service Charter (S)
- 10.4 Put customer and staff feedback mechanisms in place to continually improve local service delivery (S)
- 10.5 Foster, retain and empower a skilled and experienced workforce with capacity for customer service and advisory/extension services (M)

Priority stakeholders

- Hunter Local Land Services staff
- Hunter Local Land Services Board members
- Hunter Local Land Services customers

Indicators of success

- ▶ Level of staff and Board satisfaction as measured by Employee Matters survey and Board surveys (Su)
- ▶ Degree of customer satisfaction with Local Land Services Board and staff (Su)

Reporting

Actions: Ongoing monitoring; annual reporting

Indicators: as per state MER strategy

KEY: (S) – short-term actions (M) – medium-term actions (A) – as measured by activity reporting (Su) – as measured by survey

11

CREATE AN INNOVATIVE ORGANISATION



Outcome 11

Between 2015 and 2020, Hunter Local Land Services implements best practice business management and reduces red tape.

Actions

- 11.1 Review and reduce red tape and transaction costs to customers and staff (Ongoing)
- 11.2 Review changes in the operating environment of Local Land Services, particularly related to biodiversity and biosecurity legislation, and ensure customers and staff are informed (S)
- 11.3 Review and utilise a Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) framework that drives continuous improvement, usefully contributes to strategic planning and business efficiency, and ensures long term/enduring outcomes are achieved (S)
- 11.4 Develop and implement a Business Improvement Program (S)
- 11.5 Review and reduce duplication of systems and activities (M)
- 11.6 Provide reliable and functional information and communications technologies to continually improve Local Land Services staff and customer interactions (M)
- 11.7 Evaluate our service delivery and major programs against *NSW Performance Standard for Local Land Services* on an annual basis (Ongoing)
- 11.8 Establish a culture of identifying and implementing innovative practices with staff and customers (M)
- 11.9 Provide transparency in LLS processes through publicly reporting on Board and community advisory group meetings (Ongoing)

Priority stakeholders

- Hunter Local Land Services customers
- Hunter Local Land Services staff

Indicators of success

- ▶ Number of internal continuous improvement activities incorporated into business processes (A)
- ▶ Degree to which MERI framework is useful (Su)

Reporting

Actions: Ongoing monitoring; annual reporting

Indicators: as per state MER strategy

12

VALUE SAFETY AND SUSTAINABILITY



Outcome 12

Between 2015 and 2020, Hunter Local Land Services has a safe and sustainable organisation.

Actions

- 12.1 Implement an effective work, health and safety system across the organisation (S)
- 12.2 Undertake best practice budget and financial management to ensure a financially viable business (M)
- 12.3 Develop and implement financial and corporate governance procedures that facilitate local, consistent and transparent decision making that meets government requirements (M)

Priority stakeholders

- Hunter Local Land Services staff
- Hunter Local Land Services Board
- Financial auditors

Indicators of success

- ▶ Number of work, health and safety near misses (A)
- ▶ Level of staff and Board satisfaction as measured by Employee Matters survey and Board surveys (Su)
- ▶ Level of investor satisfaction (Su)

Reporting

Actions: Ongoing monitoring; annual reporting

Indicators: as per state MER strategy

KEY: (S) – short-term actions (M) – medium-term actions (A) – as measured by activity reporting (Su) – as measured by survey

Implementation

Effective implementation of the Hunter Local Strategic Plan will require consistent internal alignment and a robust approach to performance monitoring, evaluating and reporting.

Service delivery and investment prioritisation

The Hunter Local Strategic Plan, and the services and programs we deliver, are relevant to all land managers and primary producers within the Hunter region including public and private land managers: ratepayers and non-ratepayers. Yet with limited resources, we need to target and prioritise how, who and where we deliver our services and programs.

In targeting **how** we deliver services and programs we will:

- Provide technical information and expertise to all customers via the website, e-newsletter, publicly available publications and the media
- Provide general monitoring, technical support and advisory services to individual landholders, with further access to specialist services on a case-by-case basis
- Provide specialist monitoring, advisory, extension and response services, and capacity building, to groups, networks and landholders
- Implement on-ground change through specialist advisory services and innovative practices, designed to protect, manage, support and improve priorities and their viability
- Facilitate strategic industry, community and government partnerships to address regional priorities.

The service delivery model (Figure 5) shows how services are provided at various scales.

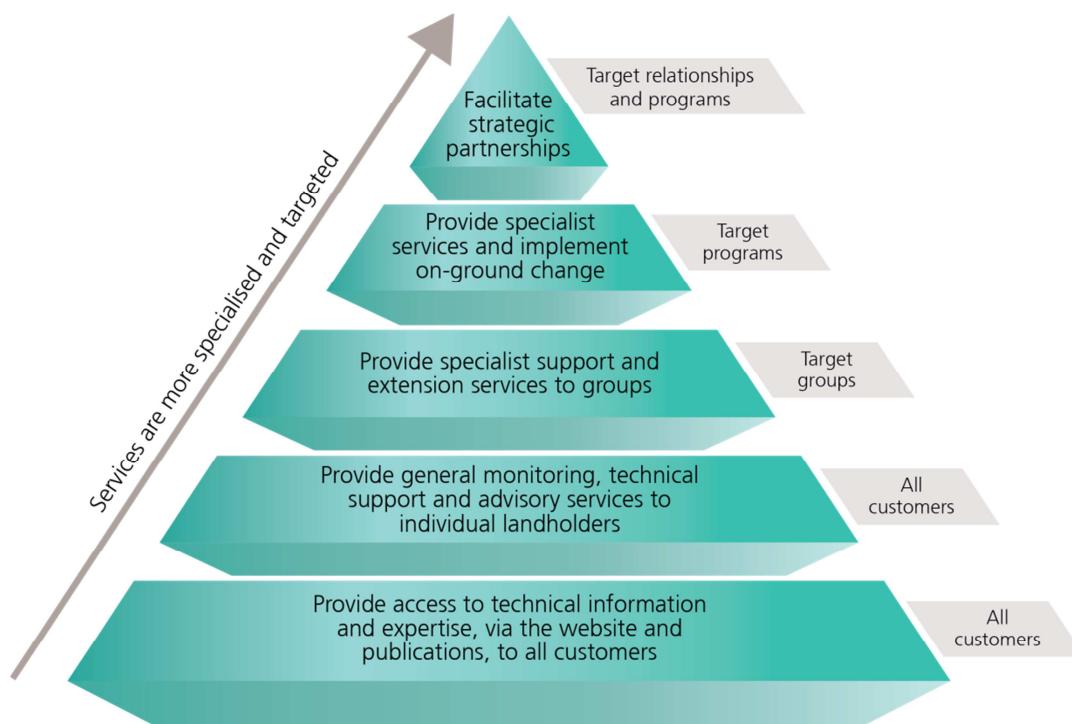


Figure 5: Hunter Local Land Services delivery model

In targeting **who**, we will prioritise industry sectors and land managers on the basis of:

- Opportunities to work with us – those that have expressed interest in our services, and those that have the capacity to work with us successfully
- Opportunities for improvement – those industries or land managers that have the greatest scope for improvement as a result of our services, in terms of social, economic or environmental outcomes
- Risks they face or impacts they have – in terms of either agricultural productivity and sustainability; the health of the natural environment; biosecurity; or emergency preparedness and responsiveness.

In targeting **where**, we will prioritise areas on the basis of:

- Locations with greatest potential to improve social, economic or environmental outcomes
- Locations with the greatest potential to deliver value for investors
- Locations with existing cohesive groups or with a concentration of producers from the same industry.

The Hunter Local Strategic Plan identifies regional priorities. Our implementation strategies and district business plans, being developed during 2016, will identify priorities for different services or issues.

Planning framework

The State Strategic Plan is designed to guide local strategic plans, which in turn guide business plans and then personal workplans. The personal workplans align with and contribute to results outlined in each of the planning documents. This provides internal alignment and focus and a single line of sight from day-to-day delivery to strategy.

Hunter Local Land Services business plans are comprised of:

Implementation strategies which will drive implementation of strategies and actions in the Hunter Local Strategic Plan for our key service delivery areas – Biosecurity and Invasive Species, Agricultural Extension, Natural Resource Management, Emergency Management and Communications and Engagement. They will clearly define the specific outcomes we are pursuing and the specific service delivery approaches we will implement. They will consider information from investor preferences, spatial priorities and community feedback. They have been flagged as short-term priority actions throughout this Plan and will be developed during 2016. We will seek input from our community advisory groups in developing these strategies.

District business and service delivery plans will detail the priorities, programs and projects to be delivered in each of the districts on an annual basis. They will contain information about the budget and resources dedicated to each service, and will be completed by June of each year.

The State Strategic Plan and Hunter Local Strategic Plan exist as part of an overall framework that links NSW, Australian and Local Government plans and initiatives through all levels of its operations. See legislation and guiding influences on page 35.

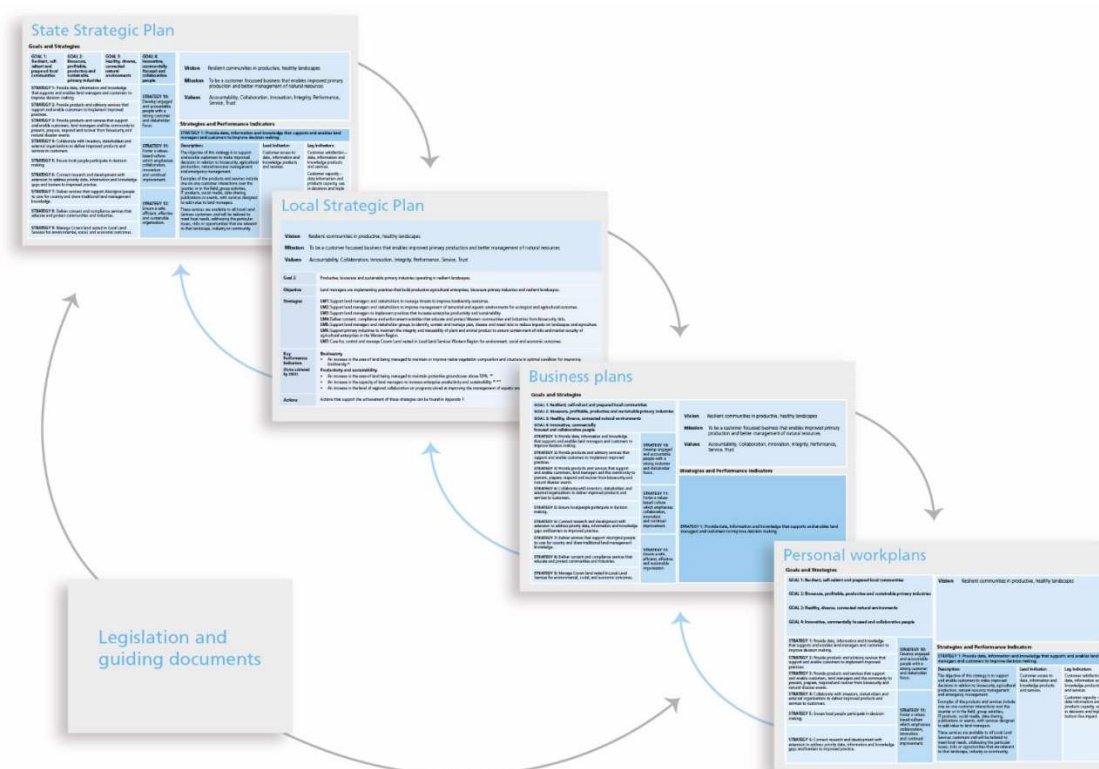


Figure 6: Overview of planning framework from the State Strategic Plan to personal work plans and back again

Measuring success

Local Land Services has a responsibility to demonstrate to its customers, investors and stakeholders that its strategies are sound and effective. All strategies, programs and systems will be required to monitor, evaluate and report on performance.

Measuring and reporting on progress against key performance indicators is particularly important, as are practices that promote reflection and learning to inform decision making.

Indicators of success in this plan have been developed to measure the short term (1-2 years) and moderate term (2- 5 years) effectiveness of the implementation of actions. The indicators will be used to monitor, evaluate and report results and successes achieved against customer service delivery, outcomes and priorities both at a regional and state level.

Local Land Services uses the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement framework for assessing the state and trend of asset conditions and allows a comparison of results against planned immediate, intermediate and long-term outcomes. This enables a systematic and objective assessment of the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of policies, projects and programs.

Specifically, we are collecting data on:

- service delivery priorities of our customers
- actions implemented and services delivered
- outcomes achieved as a result of, and performance feedback from participants on, events and advisory/extension services
- customer satisfaction.

The data collected and the results of evaluations are necessary tools for Local Land Services to make informed decisions about our priorities and investment decisions. The data and information collected will be integrated into statewide data sets where possible; will be fully accessible through open government; and will contribute to whole-of-NSW reporting on the state and trend of asset conditions.

Local Land Services is working with the Natural Resources Commission to develop a method of performance evaluation that drives a consistent approach across and between regions. It will rely on a consistent set of metrics to guide internal business performance, direction setting, adaptation and meet multiple investor needs, and promote innovative and commercially-driven transformation over time.

Key components of the framework include:

- a core set of state-wide key performance indicators, metrics and outcome statements
- a performance evaluation framework, including indicative tools, systems and practices
- an overview of opportunities to innovate and transform over time
- a roadmap to implement the framework.

Local Land Services will be reporting publicly on progress against this performance framework, which will be in place by 1 July 2016. Public reporting is in line with legislative requirements under the *Local Land Services Act 2013*.

Learning and development

Hunter Local Land Services fosters adaptive management and continual improvement across the organisation. In its simplest form, adaptive management is about a three step continuous improvement cycle: 'plan–do–learn'. This is achieved through strategic planning, implementation and knowledge management and then adapting plans based on key learnings. Each step in the adaptive management cycle is linked, to ensure continuous improvement over time.

A triple loop learning approach is applied to evaluate for adaptive management and drive continuous improvement at different scales of planning: annual plans, business plans, strategic plans and governance.

The first loop of evaluation and learning occurs frequently, at least annually, and involves regular monitoring, auditing, evaluating and reporting of actions. This level of learning leads to incremental changes in projects and actions. The second loop of learning focuses on challenging, and potentially reframing, strategies and objectives, as well as examining evidence and assumptions that underpin our strategic approaches, regional objectives and the projects that underpin them. The third loop of evaluation and learning focuses on challenging, and potentially transforming governance arrangements, value systems, vision and mission, and other high level processes. This level of learning can lead to changes in our direction and goals (e.g. transforming our business to accommodate climate change adaptation needs).

While learning at the second and third loops typically occurs at longer intervals than at first loop, learning at all levels will occur when the need arises.

Each loop entails progressing to more specific levels of questioning. This approach allows us to review our efforts and strategies on a number of scales by asking key questions and making decisions using best available evidence at each point.

This approach will result in Local Land Services continually improving the way in which it delivers services to its customers, stakeholders and investors.

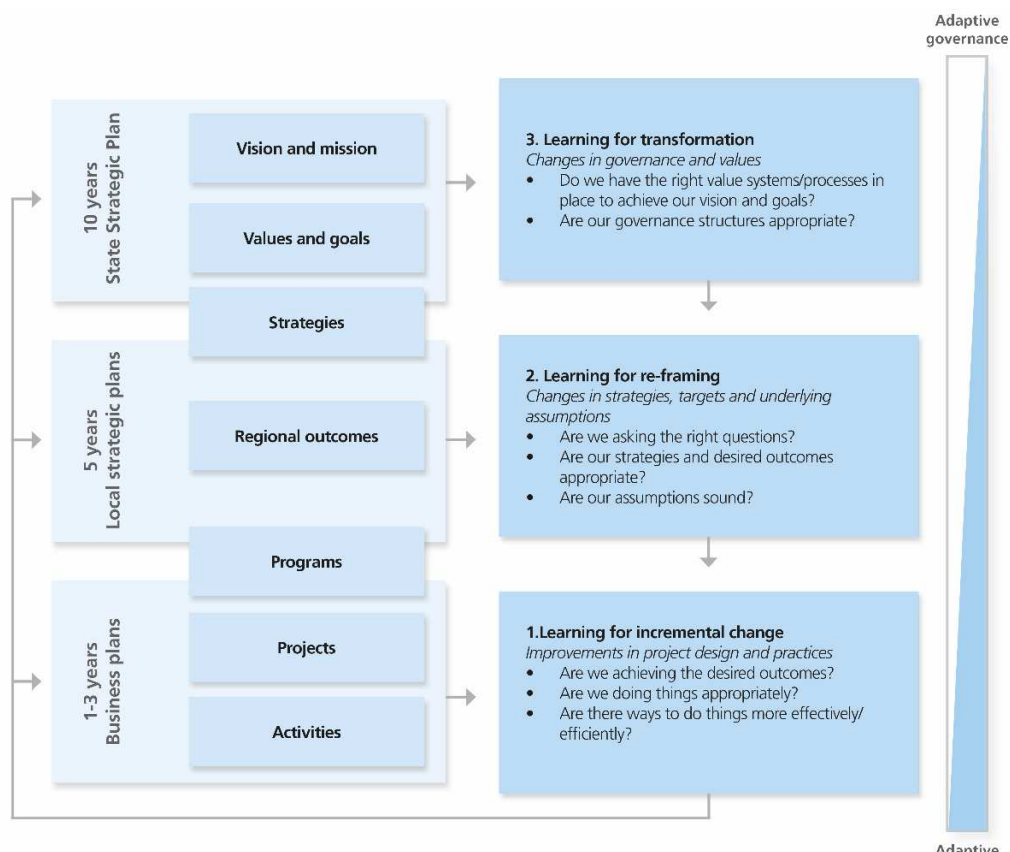


Figure 7: Triple loop learning applied to the Local Land Services planning framework (adapted from Murray Catchment Management Authority, 2013)

Legislation and guiding influences

The Hunter Local Strategic Plan exists as part of an overall framework that seeks to link a range of NSW, Australian and Local Government plans and initiatives through all levels of its operations.

As a NSW Government entity, Local Land Services is responsible for contributing to the NSW Premier's and State Priorities as well as other plans such as the Agricultural Industry Action Plan, the NSW Biosecurity Strategy and the OCHRE: Aboriginal Affairs Plan. Local Land Services also contributes to the strategic objectives and outcomes of the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme.

In addition, a range of NSW and Australian Government legislation, policies and plans have influenced the development of the strategic plan.

When combined, these plans, policies and strategies lay out the overarching goals for NSW and Australia. The actions that contribute to these overarching goals are appropriately reflected at state and local level in the state and local strategic plans and their goals, strategies, objectives, actions and key performance indicators.

National

Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Quarantine Act 1908

Water Act 2007

Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

Republic of Korea-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030

Australian Weeds Strategy 2007

Close the Gap 2014

National Plant Biosecurity Strategy 2010

Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper 2015

National Landcare Programme

National Livestock Identification Scheme

National Animal Health Programs

Plan for Growing Hunter City (once approved)

Draft Hunter Regional Plan (once approved)

State

NSW making it happen: Premier's Priorities and State Priorities
Portfolio commitments and priorities

Local Land Services Act 2013

Local Land Services Regulation 2014

Local Land Services State Strategic Plan 2016-2026

Native Vegetation Act 2003

Noxious Weeds Act 1993

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 including
environmental planning instruments

Water Management Act 2000 including water sharing plans in
the Hunter region

NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2013-2021

NSW Biosecurity Act 2015

NSW Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Strategic Plan 2015-18

NSW Invasive Species Plan 2008 -2015

NSW Wild Dog Strategy 2012 – 2015

NSW State Emergency Management Plan 2012

Department of Planning and Environment Regional Plans
State Agriculture and Animal Services Functional Area
Supporting Plan 2011

Agricultural Industry Action Plan 2014

Ochre Strategy 2013

NSW State of the Environment 2012

NSW Wetland Policy 2010

Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995

Government Sector Employment Act 2013

Performance Standard for Local Land Services – Natural
Resources Commission 2015

Catchment Action Plans

Glossary

Aboriginal cultural heritage: Aboriginal cultural heritage consists of places and items that are of significance to Aboriginal people because of their traditions, observances, lore, customs, beliefs and history. It provides evidence of the lives and existence of Aboriginal people before European settlement through to the present. Aboriginal cultural heritage is dynamic and may comprise physical (tangible) or non-physical (intangible) elements.

Adaptive management: A management approach based on the science of learning by doing. It involves testing the response of a system then applying this understanding to future decisions.

Advisory services: Providing technical knowledge and support for the management of an issue or resource.

Biosecurity: Means the protection of the economy, environment and community from the negative impact of pests, diseases and weeds.

Capacity building: A process which allows individuals, groups and organisations to develop their understanding and abilities (skills, resources, knowledge and time) to take action.

Collaboration: Working together to develop an understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions for joint decision making.

Customer: Any land manager within the state or region, irrespective of whether they are private or public land managers, ratepayers or non-ratepayers.

Customer service: Local Land Services exists to create value for its stakeholders and customers. A key component of our strategy is an increased focus on customer services and a preparedness to measure performance and customer satisfaction.

Connectivity: The capacity of landscapes or aquatic environments to allow ecological movement and function. The broad concept has several main elements: landscape connectivity—the physical connection between areas with vegetation cover across a landscape; habitat connectivity—the connection between patches of habitat suitable to a particular species; ecological connectivity—the ecological processes that underpin the function of landscapes; and evolutionary connectivity—populations of species are able to interact naturally, sharing genes and adapting to changing environmental conditions

Extension services: Developing landholder skills through formal training, workshops and field days to implement practices on their land.

Habitat: A place suitable for survival and/or reproduction of a particular plant or animal.

Investor: Those organisations and individuals that invest in Local Land Services and leverage outcomes from this investment.


Landscapes: For the purpose of this publication, the term landscape refers to any section of land or coast and its natural features, including rivers and other water bodies.

Peri-urban: Land less than 10 hectares.

Resilient: The capacity of a system (or community or person) to absorb disturbance and still retain its basic structure and function.

Stakeholder: Those organisations that collaborate and partner with Local Land Services to deliver services to customers.

Sustainable agriculture/primary production: Agriculture/primary production that: responds to consumer needs for food and fibre products that are healthy and of high quality; takes full account of the costs of production, including environmental costs, and ensures its pricing reflects these costs; protects and restores the natural resource base on which it depends; prevents adverse on-site and off-site impacts on the environment and any other sector of the



community; is flexible in order to accommodate regional differences and changing economic, environmental and social circumstances; is financially viable (NSW Agriculture, 1998).

Travelling stock reserve: means

- a) any route or camping place reserved for travelling stock route or camping place under the *Crown Lands Act 1989*
- b) any reserve for travelling stock, water reserve, reserve for access or crossing (where the reserve is for the purpose of providing travelling stock with access to or a crossing of water, whether expressly notified for that purpose or not), or
- c) any stock watering place.

Triple bottom line: refers to the economic, social (including cultural) and environmental impact and outcomes of policies and programs.

Triple loop learning: learning that redefines organisational actions, systems and processes as a basis for changes in governance at a range of scales.

List of abbreviations

CMA	Catchment Management Authority
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DIWA	Directory of Important Wetlands Australia
DPI	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Ha	hectares
KPIs	Key performance indicators
LGA	Local government area
LHPA	Livestock Health & Pest Authority
LSP	Local Strategic Plan
MERI	Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
NRC	Natural Resources Commission
NRM	Natural resource management
NLIS	National Livestock Identification Scheme
R&D	Research and development
RD&E	Research, development and extension
SEPP14	State Environmental Planning Policy No14 – Coastal Wetlands
TSR	Travelling stock reserve
WH&S	Workplace health and safety

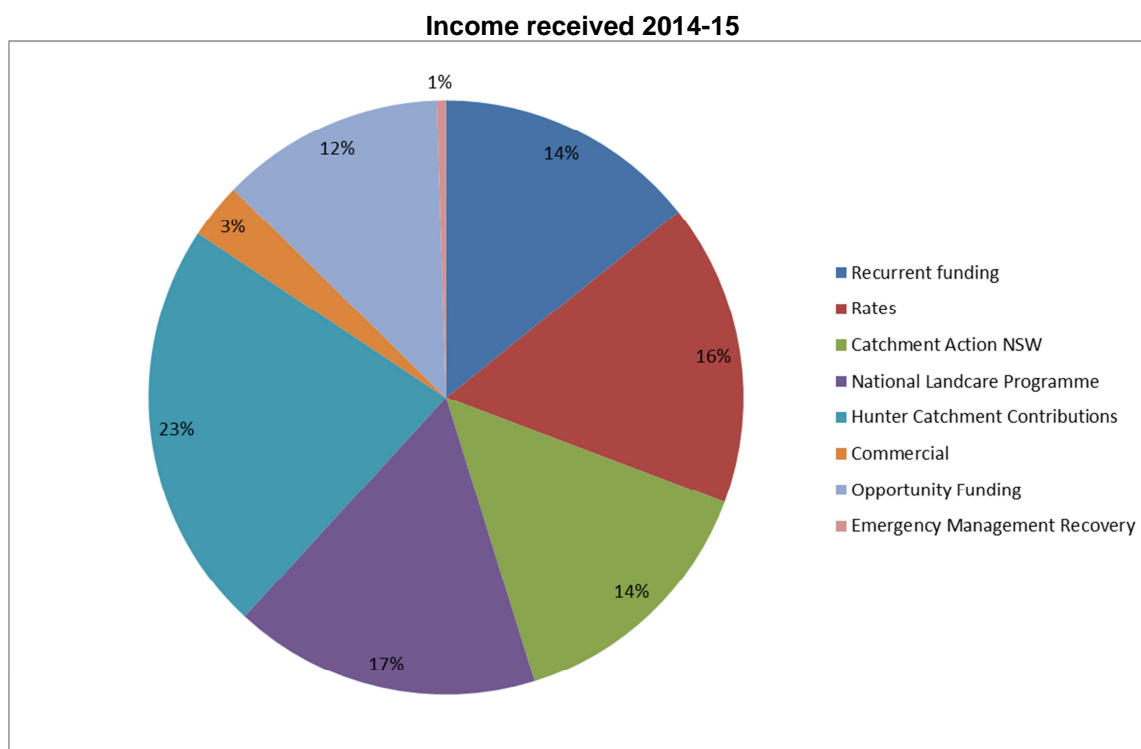
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Appendix 1

Our revenue streams and investor preferences

Delivery of our services and programs are supported through a diverse range of revenue streams, as depicted below.



Our current major investors support investment in the following priorities:

Hunter Catchment Contribution

The *Local Land Services Regulation 2014* authorises Local Land Services to levy Catchment Contributions in the Hunter River Catchment. This levy has been in place since 1956, and is raised in the Hunter Catchment only, and not over the whole Hunter Local Land Services region. The Hunter River catchment includes part of the local government areas of Upper Hunter, Muswellbrook, Mid-Western and Singleton in the Upper Hunter District and Cessnock, Dungog, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Newcastle and Port Stephens, in the Lower Hunter District.

The Hunter Catchment Contributions are the basis for funding flood mitigation responsibilities under the *Water Management Act 2000*, the Condition of Approval for Hexham Swamp Rehabilitation Project under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, and delivering the Hunter Catchment Contribution objectives.

The objectives of the Hunter Catchment Contribution are being reviewed to align with Local Land Services goals and strategies as well as expectations of the Upper Hunter and Lower Hunter community. The current draft objectives are to:

1. Contribute to the effective maintenance and management of the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme
2. Increase the resilience of the Hunter Valley community to prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disasters such as floods.
3. Work with private and public land managers to improve the management of rivers, estuaries and biodiversity.
4. Support landholders to manage soils, vegetation, invasive pests and priority weeds.

Of the total levy 46% is allocated to the effective maintenance and management of the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme (draft objective 1), the remaining levy is allocated to projects that meet draft objectives 2,3 and 4.

Catchment Action NSW

Of the total Catchment Action NSW funding:

- 40 per cent for native vegetation outcomes (including pests and weeds)
- 30 per cent for biodiversity conservation outcomes
- 20 per cent for threatened species outcomes
- 10 per cent for Aboriginal cultural heritage outcomes.

Australian Government National Landcare Programme

Strategic Objectives	Strategic Outcomes
Strategic Objective 1: Communities are managing landscapes to sustain long-term economic and social benefits from their environment.	Maintain and improve ecosystem services through sustainable management of local and regional landscapes.
Strategic Objective 2: Farmers and fishers are increasing their long term returns through better management of the natural resource base.	Increase in the number of farmers and fishers adopting practices that improve the quality of the natural resource base, and the area of land over which those practices are applied.
Strategic Objective 3: Communities are involved in caring for their environment.	Increase engagement and participation of the community, including landcare, farmers and Indigenous people, in sustainable natural resource management.
Strategic Objective 4: Communities are protecting species and natural assets.	Increase restoration and rehabilitation of the natural environment, including protecting and conserving nationally and internationally significant species, ecosystems, ecological communities, places and values.

Source: <http://www.nrm.gov.au/national-landcare-programme>

Land Use in the Hunter Local Land Services Region

Central West Local Land Services

North West Local Land Services

Northern Tablelands Local Land Services

North Coast Local Land Services

MURRUMBIDGEE

MERRIWA

MUSWELLBROOK

SINGLETON

DUNOG

MAITLAND

NEWCASTLE

MORISSET

NELSON BAY

FORSTER

TAREE

Central Tablelands Local Land Services

Greater Sydney Local Land Services

Legend

- Hunter LLS Region
- Highways
- Major rivers
- Waterways & water bodies
- Marine Park
- Conservation & natural environment
- Grazing
- Forestry
- Cropping
- Horticulture
- Land in transition
- Intensive animal
- Urban
- Rural residential & farm infrastructure
- Defence
- Power generation & utilities
- Mining & waste

Kilometers

0 10 20 40 60 80

Data sources and disclaimer (refer appendix)

Appendix 3

Hunter region industry statistics

	Lower Hunter District	Upper Hunter District	Manning Great Lakes District
Local Government Areas	Dungog, Maitland, Cessnock, Port Stephens, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie	Upper Hunter, Muswellbrook, Singleton	Gloucester, Greater Taree, Great Lakes
Value of agricultural commodities produced (2011)	\$168.7 million	\$185.6 million	\$157.9 million
Value of oyster production (2013/14)	\$5.1 million	-	\$8.4 million

Source: NSW Department of Primary Industries, Value of Agricultural Production Data 2006-2011. Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011a and Department of Primary Industries NSW, 2015, Aquaculture Production Report 2013-2014.

Note: This data estimates the wholesale value of unprocessed products. These figures do not capture the flow on contribution to other businesses in NSW.

Appendix 4

Infographic information

Data sources for Figure 3 include:

NSW Department of Primary Industries:

- Value of Agricultural Production Data 2006-2011
- Aquaculture Production Report 2013-2014
- Upper Hunter Region Equine Profile, Factsheet No.6, June 2013
- Department of Primary Industries, Upper Hunter Region Viticulture Profile, June 2013

Australian Government Department of Agriculture, ABARES:

- About My Region, Agriculture and Fisheries in the Hunter Valley excluding Newcastle region of New South Wales, 2015
- Tourism Hunter, Hunter Visitor Economy - Draft Destination Management Plan, July 2013
- Hunter Mining Show, Singleton Chamber of Commerce and Industry, "How Large is the Hunter Mining Industry?"
- NSW Mining, Economic Impact Assessment 2013/14

Destination NSW LGA Profiles, September 2014

- Greater Taree
- Great Lakes

Production values in Figure 3 have been multiplied to capture the flow on contribution of agriculture and fisheries/aquaculture to other business in NSW. ABS data estimates the wholesale value of unprocessed agricultural products. An estimate of the overall contribution of agriculture to the NSW economy is obtained by multiplying the wholesale value of agriculture by the standard ABS multiplier for agriculture production which is 2.178. An estimate of the overall contribution of fisheries to the NSW economy is obtained by multiplying the wholesale value of fisheries by the standard ABS multiplier for fisheries which is 2.485 (Industry & Investment NSW, 2011).

Appendix 5

Maps information

Maps created by Hunter Local Land Services. Base information courtesy of the NSW Land and Property Management Authority, Bathurst, NSW.

The coordinate system on these maps is the Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994 (GDA94) using Lambert conformal conic projection. Some published topographic maps still use the map datum AGD66. Coordinates on this map (GDA94) will be in a different location on a published AGD66 topographic map.

Data has been extracted from digitised field information. The State of NSW, Hunter Local Land Services and its employees, officers, agents or servants accepts no responsibility for the result of any actions taken or the decisions made on the basis of the information, or for any errors, omissions or inaccuracies contained in this map.

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Data sources for maps include:

- Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
- Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics and Science
- NSW Department of Lands - Cadastre, Contours, Drainage and Aerial Photography
- NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure
- NSW Department of Primary Industries
- NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
- NSW Office of Water (NOW)
- University of New England (soil health)
- NSW Natural Resource Commission (NRC)

Priorities map (Figure 4)

The following table outlines the decision-making criteria for inclusion of data as a priority:

Mapped Priorities	Data source	Decision rule
Priority River Streams	NRC (2014) Funding Allocation Review, based on NSW Office of Water's river action priorities analysis and mapping (2012)	River streams were mapped as priorities if they had Restoration Priorities (very high, high or medium) or Protection Priorities (very high, high or medium)
Priority Wetlands	Directory of Important Wetlands Australia (DIWA)	Wetlands were mapped as priorities if they were present on the list
	State environmental planning policy no. 14 – Coastal wetlands (SEPP 14)	Wetlands were mapped as priorities if they were present on the list
	Ramsar wetlands	Wetlands were mapped as priorities if they were present

Mapped Priorities	Data source	Decision rule
		on the list
Priority Vegetation Connectivity Areas	NRC (2014) Funding Allocation Review, based on OEH's Native Vegetation Management Benefits analysis and mapping (2012)	Key Focus Areas were mapped as areas where conservation of existing veg, condition improvement of degraded veg, or rehab of cleared areas are most likely to contribute to maintaining and enhancing connectivity across a region
Priority Areas for Maintaining Soil Health	NRC (2014) Funding Allocation Review, based on UNE's Evidence-based Soil Health (2013) Investment Prioritisation for NSW	Areas were mapped where they were identified as Very High Management Priority (with high data confidence) - for land management actions to maintain soil health and function, and avoiding irreversible biophysical tipping points
Important Agricultural Land	Department of Planning's Strategic Regional Land Use Plan - Upper Hunter (2012)	Important agricultural land is land with a rare combination of natural resources highly suitable for agriculture. These lands intrinsically have the best quality landforms, soil and water resources which are naturally capable of sustaining high levels of productivity and require minimal management practices to maintain this high quality See Table 1 of report http://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/initiatives/upperhunderslup_sd_v01.pdf

Land use map (Appendix 2)

The mapped data is from land use mapping conducted over the period 2000-2007.

Data for the land use map was sourced from Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Science, under the Collaborative Land Use Mapping Program, 2015 update. Categories are as follows:

Hunter Local Land Services land use category	Collaborative Land Use Mapping Program categories
Conservation & natural environments	Nature conservation; managed resource protection; other minimal use
Forestry	Production forestry; plantation forestry; irrigated plantation forestry
Grazing	Grazing native vegetation; grazing modified pastures; grazing irrigated modified pastures
Cropping	Cropping; irrigated cropping
Horticulture	Perennial horticulture; seasonal horticulture; irrigated perennial horticulture; irrigated seasonal horticulture; intensive horticulture
Intensive animal	Intensive animal husbandry
Rural residential & farm infrastructure	Rural residential (with and without agriculture); remote communities; farm buildings and infrastructure
Urban residential & industrial	Urban residential; manufacturing and industrial; services
Mining & waste	Mining; waste treatment and disposal
Land in transition	Irrigate and non-irrigated land in transition (eg. Degraded land, abandoned land, land under rehabilitation)



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