



Natural Resources Commission

Final report

# **Local strategic plan implementation audit**

November 2019

Central Tablelands Local Land Services

## Enquiries

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## List of acronyms

IT	Information Technology
IRIS	Integrated Resource Information System
LHMS	Livestock Health Management System
LMDB	Land Management Data Base
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LLS	Local Land Services
MERI	Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement

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The Commission reserves the right to update this draft audit report upon completion of auditing the remaining LLS regions.

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## Executive summary

### Background

The Central Tablelands Local Land Services (LLS) region covers an area over 3.1 million hectares in central NSW. It includes the regional centres of Orange and Bathurst, and the major towns of Blayney, Cowra, Lithgow, Molong, Mudgee and Oberon. It is a leading agricultural production region that has experienced a prolonged drought.

The *Local Land Services Act 2013* requires local boards to prepare a local strategic plan and have it approved by the Minister. The purpose of a local strategic plan is to 'set the vision, priorities and strategy in respect of the delivery of local land services in the region, with a focus on appropriate economic, social and environmental outcomes.' The Central Tablelands LLS Local Strategic Plan (Central Tablelands plan) was approved by the Minister in 2016.

The Central Tablelands plan sets out the strategic direction for the five years between 2016 and 2021. It outlines how Central Tablelands LLS intends to deliver efficient and effective services and outcomes associated with the core functions of LLS; agricultural production, natural resource management, biosecurity and emergency management (see **Attachment 2**).

The Central Tablelands plan includes four state LLS goals, which are the outcomes that Central Tablelands LLS is working towards. For the purposes of the audit these goals are considered 'outcomes' of the plan. The Central Tablelands plan also includes 12 State LLS strategies, 37 regional success measures and 39 actions.

Central Tablelands LLS had a period of uncertainty between late 2016 and early 2017. During this time there were a number of key vacancies, including the General Manager position. The appointment of a new General Manager in 2017 brought a new focus and improved alignment of Central Tablelands LLS' activities with the Central Tablelands plan.

The objective of this audit was to assess Central Tablelands LLS' implementation of their local strategic plan and the extent to which stated outcomes have been achieved and reported on within set time frames (see **Attachments 4 and 5**). The audit report was informed by interviews with Central Tablelands LLS staff (see **Attachment 6**) and reviews of relevant documentation.

The Commission's audit approach was to look at the broad intent of the Central Tablelands plan, focussing on its stated outcomes. The assessment of whether the actions and projects aligned with this intent was the basis for making the judgement regarding the extent of implementation of the Central Tablelands plan.

### Findings

Overall, the Commission found that Central Tablelands LLS is likely to implement the Central Tablelands plan by 2021. There is currently progress towards all but one action contained in the Central Tablelands plan.

Projects that contribute to Central Tablelands plan outcomes are being implemented and their progress is being regularly reported in the annual business plan. However, oversight of and confidence in the organisation's strategic direction would be improved by shifting towards outcomes-focussed reporting. The board and senior management recognise that the lack of focus on outcomes has been a gap. Central Tablelands LLS is currently developing a new plan – the Core Services Plan 2019-22 – to partially address this.

## Areas going well

The Commission found the following areas of Central Tablelands plan implementation are going well:

- F1 Central Tablelands LLS showed progress in implementing all but one of the actions within the Central Tablelands plan.**
- F3 Project management and annual business planning processes have supported Central Tablelands LLS' delivery of Central Tablelands plan actions.**
- F4 Governance systems and processes support the implementation of the Central Tablelands plan.**
- F6 Quarterly reporting informs the board on progress against all projects under the annual business plan.**

## Key findings to be addressed

The Commission identified the following areas for improvement:

- F2 Progress towards Central Tablelands plan outcomes is not currently measured.**
- F5 The implementation model does not link operational activities to Central Tablelands plan outcomes.**
- F7 There is no explicit reporting on Central Tablelands plan outcomes.**

## Recommendations

To increase the likelihood that Central Tablelands LLS is able to implement its plan by 2021, the Commission recommends that Central Tablelands LLS:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>R1 Improve Central Tablelands LLS and board oversight of progress towards Central Tablelands plan outcomes by:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- assigning metrics to Central Tablelands plan regional success measures (or refined success measures in the new Core Services Plan 2019-22 as relevant)</li><li>- collecting and collating associated data.</li></ul></li><li><b>R2 Develop key indicators, be explicit about the assumptions linking outputs to outcomes, and link to a monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement framework that includes baselines and program logics.</b></li><li><b>R3 Include quantitative information regarding the cumulative achievement of Central Tablelands plan outcomes in board reports.</b></li></ul> |
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# 1 Achievement of local strategic plan outcomes

The Commission found that Central Tablelands LLS has progressed in implementing all but one of the 66 actions contained within the Central Tablelands plan. However, Central Tablelands LLS does not have a system in place to measure the achievement of Central Tablelands plan outcomes.

The Central Tablelands plan includes four State LLS goals (outcomes) and 12 State LLS strategies. Goals 1 to 3 are aligned to strategies 1 to 9 and Goal 4 is aligned to strategies 10 to 12.

There are 33 regional priorities aligned to the four goals, which underpin the Central Tablelands plan actions.

The Central Tablelands plan comprises 66 actions, including:

- 39 actions, with between one and five actions assigned to each strategy
- eight foundational actions that are discrete items to be delivered between 2015 and 2016, which underpin the delivery of all actions
- 13 ongoing principle actions that support delivery across strategies 1 to 9
- six ongoing principle actions that support delivery across strategies 10 to 12.

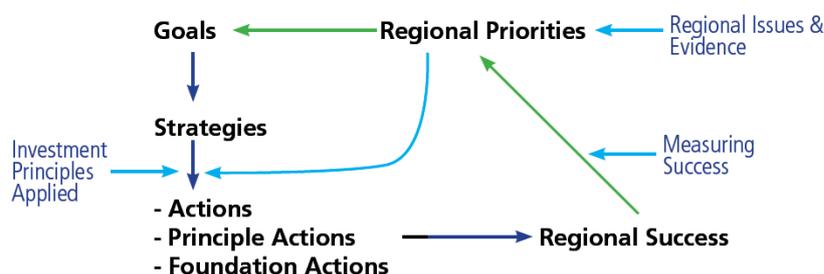
The Commission identified the following progress against these actions (see **Attachment 7**):

- Progress has been made on 38 of the 39 actions, where 20 actions were found to be 'partially achieved and ongoing' and 18 were found to be 'achieved and ongoing'.
- Three of the eight foundational actions are completed and there is progress made against the remaining five.
- Activity is established and ongoing against all 19 principle actions.

There has been no progress made against Action 12.4 to 'foster actions that minimise the organisation's environmental impacts through the development of an environmental impacts minimisation plan by June 2016'. While the organisation is conscious to minimise environmental impact where possible in line with the former Department of Industry standards, the specific action to develop a plan to address these impacts is no longer relevant in light of the maturity and development of other regional priorities since the Central Tablelands plan was written.

**Figure 1** shows the implementation model that links the key components of the Central Tablelands plan.

## Implementation Model



By implementing the Strategies and Actions of the Plan, the Central Tablelands will deliver on its Regional Success statements.

These Success statements align with Regional Priorities and will allow the link between Actions and Goals to be closed.

— Strategic flow  
— Guiding inputs  
— Feedback flow

Figure 1: Central Tablelands plan implementation model<sup>1</sup>

Success in the Central Tablelands plan is articulated through 37 regional success measures, which are aligned to the 12 State LLS strategies (between two and six per strategy) with varying degrees of specificity. However, Central Tablelands LLS decided not to assign resources to collect information that would enable reporting against all of these measures. Interviewees considered that there were too many measures and that they were not sufficiently targeted. They were also not able to identify consistent and meaningful key performance indicators (KPIs) or metrics to measure and track progress.

There is an expectation amongst staff that, by implementing the strategies and actions of the Central Tablelands plan, Central Tablelands LLS will deliver on the regional success measures and therefore the outcomes of the Central Tablelands plan. This assumption needs to be tested through appropriate monitoring of regional success measures. The Central Tablelands plan does not specify KPIs or metrics against Central Tablelands regional success measures to demonstrate progress towards Central Tablelands plan outcomes.

### 1.1 Areas going well

#### F1 Central Tablelands LLS showed progress in implementing all but one of the actions within the Central Tablelands plan

Central Tablelands LLS has implemented the Central Tablelands plan actions by delivering projects aligned to the 39 Central Tablelands plan actions embedded in its annual business plan. The annual business plan provides a clear line of sight between Central Tablelands LLS operational activities, the Central Tablelands plan and the Investment Priority Plan 2016-18. The annual business plan comprises six core service areas; biosecurity, agriculture, travelling stock reserves, natural resource management, emergency management, and business and governance.

The delivery of projects contributes to achieving actions in the Central Tablelands plan (see **Attachment 7**). Of the 138 projects that Central Tablelands LLS is delivering against the 2018-19 Annual Business Plan and Investment Priority Plan 2016-18:<sup>2</sup>

- One (less than 1 percent) was completed

<sup>1</sup> Central Tablelands LLS (2016) *Local Strategic Plan 2016-2021*. Available at: [https://centraltablelands.lls.nsw.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/619846/central-tablelands-local-strategic-plan.pdf](https://centraltablelands.lls.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/619846/central-tablelands-local-strategic-plan.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Based on Q2 quarterly reporting on the 2018-19 Annual Business Plan.

- Ninety-two (67 percent) were on track
- Forty-five (33 percent) were experiencing delays with minor issues but were still expected to be completed.

Projects experiencing minor delays were expected to be implemented and therefore are not expected to impact on Central Tablelands plan outcomes.<sup>3</sup> Core service delivery areas where the most projects were delayed were in business and governance, followed by biosecurity. Business and governance projects experiencing minor delays included:

- the development of regional Aboriginal participation and stakeholder engagement plans, as these are dependent on the completion of the Core Services Plan 2019-22, which is under development<sup>4</sup>
- delays in landholder data management in a range of areas, including processing of property identification code applications, stock ID applications, and land and stock returns, due to the recruitment of new staff who require training.<sup>5</sup>

Biosecurity projects experiencing minor delays included:

- pest engagement workshops which were delayed pending additional funding<sup>6</sup>
- the Weeds Action Program, due to a delay in partnering councils' receiving funding<sup>7</sup>
- the training of Authorised Control Officers, due to the recruitment of new biosecurity staff.

Core service delivery areas that are performing well and contributing towards Central Tablelands plan outcomes include:

- agriculture, specifically agricultural advice, drought support and the sustainable agriculture program
- biosecurity, specifically biosecurity planning, surveillance and control activities.

Agricultural advice and drought support has been a major focus for the region. In the previous 12 months, Central Tablelands LLS provided agricultural advice in all locations across the region, focussing on locations experiencing drought conditions.

Activities included workshops and customer service support related to animal welfare, nutrition in dry times and grazing management to retain ground cover. Between July 2017 and November 2018, a total of 1,137 farmers participated in various Central Tablelands LLS-led activities, including farmer group meetings, seasonal conditions workshops, fodder information sessions, farm walks and drought updates.

Central Tablelands LLS experienced an increase in customer demand for services related to drought. In response, agricultural advisory services were formalised into a project, which produced the Central Tablelands Drought Response Plan. This plan identified objectives, clear and consistent messaging, and key actions in order to allow proactive management of this issue.

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<sup>3</sup> Central Tablelands LLS (2019) *Board paper for noting, Agenda item 42 6.1 - Update on the 2018-19 Annual Business Plan Traffic Light Report*. Internal document provided by Central Tablelands LLS to the Commission.

<sup>4</sup> Contributes to Priority Action 4.2 - 'Delivery of public value on investment'.

<sup>5</sup> Contributes to Priority Action 4.1 - 'Delivery of accountable financial and project management systems'.

<sup>6</sup> Contributes to Priority Action 2.7 - 'Management of pest plant and animal impacts on production and natural ecosystems'.

<sup>7</sup> Contributes to Priority Action 2.8 - 'Capacity of landholders to manage pest animals and plants'.

Customers and members of the Community Advisory Group provided positive feedback on Central Tablelands LLS staff and the quality of drought support.<sup>8</sup>

The impact of activities related to drought response has been evaluated to some extent. For example, the impact of incentive funding provided to landholders to establish controlled stock management areas to help maintain groundcover during successive poor seasonal conditions was assessed in 2018. Central Tablelands LLS officers visited 60 percent of controlled stock management project sites and interviewed landholders about their practices. They also undertook rapid site assessments to measure groundcover outcomes.

More than half of landholders interviewed (60 percent) had adopted new practices, including rotational grazing, early weaning and using feeders. Two thirds of landholders had retained or attained the target groundcover level of 70 percent or more (the remaining one third had between 65 to 69 percent cover). These outcomes were reported as part of a broader evaluation of the outcomes of sustainable agriculture and biodiversity projects funded under the National Landcare Program 2015-2018.<sup>9</sup>

Landholders participated in farm planning, which combines practical and theory sessions on a range of topics, including pasture management, weeds and pest animals, soil health and erosion, and on-property biosecurity. This course and other activities are delivered through the Sustainable Agriculture Program. Landholder training opportunities held over the past two and a half years included soil and pastures workshops, stock planning days and grazing management workshops. These were attended by 193 landholders in 2016-17, 169 landholders in 2017-18 and 211 landholders in 2018-19.<sup>10</sup>

Central Tablelands LLS implemented a range of activities supporting biosecurity outcomes:

- The NSW Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Plan 2018-19 (with oversight by the former Department of Primary Industries (DPI)) is being implemented by district vets who report quarterly to DPI. Delivery of all KPIs in this area were on track.<sup>11</sup>
- Operational staff are becoming more systematic in their livestock disease surveillance approaches, which underpin market access. Interviewees noted that this could be due to their efforts to engage with a wide range of landholders.<sup>12</sup>
- Staff are conducting pest animal activities in partnership with community, Landcare (new pest co-ordinators) and other authorities, including DPI and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. These activities include providing advice on best practice management,

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<sup>8</sup> Relates to Goals 2 and 3; Central Tablelands plan actions 2.1 ('work with customers to better understand / plan the management of natural resources and production systems') and 5.1 ('work with landholders to better manage and understand their natural resources, production systems, biosecurity and emergency responsibilities').

<sup>9</sup> Clear Horizon (2018) *Central Tablelands National Landcare Program Regional Program 2015-18: Final evaluation Report*.

<sup>10</sup> Relates to Goal 3; Central Tablelands plan actions 3.1 ('foster activities that educate landholders and communities about biosecurity, emergency management and natural resource management responsibilities, 3.2 Facilitate the development of individual property biosecurity plans across the region'), 8.1 ('foster the development of individual property biosecurity plans across the region'), 8.3 ('educate landholders and communities about natural resource management responsibilities through awareness raising) and 8.4 ('delivery of biosecurity, emergency management and Property Vegetation Plan services and activities').

<sup>11</sup> NSW Animal Biosecurity and Welfare reporting spreadsheet October to December 2018. Internal document provided by Central Tablelands LLS to the Commission.

<sup>12</sup> Relates to Goals 2 and 3; Central Tablelands plan action 5.1 ('work with landholders to better manage and understand their natural resources, production systems, biosecurity and emergency responsibilities').

developing plans and assisting with the coordination of landholders and local pest groups.

- Scientific studies are supporting planning and decision making, and there are trials of new technologies, including thermal imaging for wild dog, pig and deer management.
- A recent wild dog baiting campaign saw 185 private and public land holdings baited, including 770 kilometres of transects in inaccessible country. This was in partnership with eight wild dog community groups, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Forestry Corporation of NSW.<sup>13</sup>

## 1.2 Key findings to be addressed

### F2 Progress towards Central Tablelands plan outcomes is not currently measured

The Commission found that Central Tablelands LLS tracks progress at the project-level and records outputs for program areas such as biosecurity. However, insufficient meaningful information on the impact of these activities is collected.

While there are outcomes-focussed regional success measures identified for each of the 12 state strategies in the Central Tablelands plan, a decision was made that resources would not be assigned to consistently collect information that could enable reporting against these measures.

Interviewees considered that there were too many measures and that they were not sufficiently targeted. They were also not able to identify consistent and meaningful KPIs in the timeframes required.

Central Tablelands LLS staff reported that they were in the process of collecting project-specific data on changes in practices and landholder knowledge that could be attributed (at least in part) to projects delivered under the agriculture and natural resource management functional areas. If linked to the Central Tablelands plan key success measures, these data would strengthen the measurement of outcomes for the Central Tablelands plan going forward.

An evaluation of the outcomes of Central Tablelands LLS' sustainable agriculture and biodiversity projects, which are funded under the National Landcare Program 2015-18, found that landholders had adopted practice changes but the extent of that change could not be quantified. Participation in sustainable natural resource management events had been high and there was evidence that the projects had contributed to increased ground cover and some restoration and rehabilitation of the natural environment, noting that the approaches being used to measure improved biodiversity values were still being developed.<sup>14</sup>

The measurement of outcomes is a challenge in most organisations. It is often considered more straightforward and important to focus on what is being delivered on-ground and at the activity-level to satisfy stakeholders and investors, rather than on what outcomes resulted from the activities. Measuring outcomes can be resource intensive, which is challenging in light of reduced funding and staffing levels.

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<sup>13</sup> This relates to Goal 2 and Central Tablelands plan actions 5.1 ('work with landholders to better manage and understand their natural resources, production systems, biosecurity and emergency responsibilities, foster and support community action for integrated pest management through the establishment of a minimum of two vertebrate pest animal campaigns per annum') and 3.1 ('foster activities that educate landholders and communities about biosecurity, emergency management and natural resource management responsibilities').

<sup>14</sup> Clear Horizon (2018) *Central Tablelands National Landcare Program regional program 2015-18: Final evaluation report*.

Measuring the outcomes resulting from activities:

- provides a shared understanding of progress and what still needs to be achieved
- provides a basis for effective oversight, strategic decision-making and reporting on performance
- is a powerful tool to inform future investment and adaptive management decisions
- demonstrates value to investors, customers, partners and other stakeholders
- provides a basis for sharing learnings and a robust platform to celebrate success and communicate externally.

More data should be collected to support the measurement of the Central Tablelands plan outcomes. Without this it will be difficult to evaluate the achievement of outcomes by 2021.

For example, Central Tablelands LLS should devote some resources to further validate the positive feedback on Central Tablelands LLS officers' efforts in drought response and determine the extent of on-ground practice change and increased landholder knowledge, and determine whether landholders consider they are better prepared for drought and will make different decisions in the future. This could build on follow-up interviews and site inspections of controlled stock management areas that were conducted in 2018.

Metrics should be assigned to key Central Tablelands plan regional success measures and data should be collected and collated as needed to inform progress towards Central Tablelands plan outcomes.

To increase the likelihood that the region achieves outcomes within the Central Tablelands plan timeframes – and that there is evidence to support this achievement – the Commission recommends that Central Tablelands LLS:

**R1 Improve Central Tablelands LLS and board oversight of progress towards Central Tablelands plan outcomes by:**

- assigning metrics to Central Tablelands plan regional success measures (or refined success measures in the new Core Services Plan 2019-22 as relevant)
- collecting and collating associated data.

## 2 Systems and processes supporting implementation

The Commission found that Central Tablelands LLS has developed effective planning and governance processes and has adequate information technology (IT) systems.

### 2.1 Areas going well

#### F3 Project management and annual business planning processes have supported Central Tablelands LLS' delivery of Central Tablelands plan actions

The following operating systems and processes are relatively new and correspond with the appointment of a new General Manager in 2017:

- The Investment Priority Plan (2016-18) was developed in consultation with the board, Landcare and the natural resource management and agriculture community advisory groups. The Investment Priority Plan prioritises investment at the operational level across the four pillars of the LLS business (biosecurity, agricultural production, natural resource management and emergency management) and relates these back to the 33 higher level strategic priorities, which drive regional actions in the Central Tablelands plan.
- Annual business plans are prepared in a format that provides a clear line of sight for Central Tablelands LLS' delivery of activities and their links to the priorities and actions in the Central Tablelands plan and the Investment Priority Plan. A combined annual business plan document forms the basis for more detailed program or project plans.<sup>15</sup>
- Annual project plans are developed under the project management framework and align with the Central Tablelands plan actions and the Investment Priority Plan.
- A project review process is used to track and document the implementation of planned activities.
- The project management framework guides delivery and ensures standard and consistent processes are in place to manage all projects. It comprises several key elements:
  - Four standard phases for every project, including initiation, planning, implementation and management, acquittal and review.
  - The Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS) system, which is used to store output data, record customer service enquiries and manage programs, projects, and contracts.
  - The Land Management Data Base (LMDB) is used to spatially record on-ground agriculture and natural resource management project sites of investment and attribution of activities. It is integrated with IRIS, which allows for accurate reporting of on-ground works.
  - Lessons learned from six-monthly project reviews are recorded in the adaptive management tab in IRIS. This provides an opportunity to inform planning of future projects and improvement to business systems and processes. In addition, project review reports are prepared within MERIT for projects funded by the National Landcare Program, which outline what worked and did not work well and why, as well as proposed interventions.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Annual local business plans are prepared for six core service delivery areas: travelling stock reserves, agricultural production, natural resource management, biosecurity, emergency management, business and governance.

<sup>16</sup> MERIT is the Monitoring evaluation reporting & improvement tool used by recipients of all Australian Government-funded National Landcare Program projects.

- An annual planning workshop is held to communicate the intent of the Central Tablelands plan, annual business plan and organisational priorities to all staff.

These systems provide a strong framework to implement the Central Tablelands plan and the planning framework gives a line of sight back to the Central Tablelands plan.

#### **F4 Governance systems and processes support the implementation of the Central Tablelands plan**

The local board is the key decision-making body and is responsible for setting the policies and strategy for Central Tablelands LLS. The board comprises a chair, and three appointed and three elected members.

There are eight board meetings each year, supported by good governance practices such as a board decision register (including each subject, decision and by whom) and regular joint board meetings with neighbouring Central West LLS to improve collaboration and strategy. There are two sub-committees, which provide financial governance and oversight in the following areas:

- audit, risk and governance
- finance, asset and program strategy.

Each board member also holds a specialist portfolio that links them directly into planning and strategy for each function.

Currently there are three community advisory groups, which each have a terms of reference and meet three to four times each year. They are the:

- Natural Resource Management Community Advisory Group
- Aboriginal Community Advisory Group
- Agriculture Community Advisory Group.

There is also the interagency and community Regional Weeds Committee and the Regional Pest Animal Committee, which are board-appointed to develop and implement strategic plans for pest animal and weed management.

These governance arrangements enable the board to perform its oversight and monitoring functions of the Central Tablelands plan.

## **2.2 Key findings to be addressed**

### **F5 The implementation model does not link operational activities to Central Tablelands plan outcomes**

The Commission found that planning processes are improving in their alignment of projects and outputs with Central Tablelands plan outcomes. However, there is not a solid basis from which to assess whether Central Tablelands plan outcomes are likely to be met.

The planning process should drive data collection, reporting and achievement of outcomes for all activities undertaken by Central Tablelands LLS. There should be a clear line of sight back to the Central Tablelands plan and to reporting processes. Where these linkages are insufficient, it is challenging to determine the contribution of programs and projects to Central Tablelands plan outcomes.

A new Core Services Plan is intended to replace the Investment Priority Plan and will need to be more outcomes focussed. This plan is intended to sit between the Central Tablelands plan and business plans, and guide the final years of delivery of the Central Tablelands plan.

Both the Investment Priority Plan and the new Core Services Plan represent a blending of existing plans and strategies (for example, animal biosecurity and welfare, invasive species plans, and Catchment Action business plans), with priorities from these plans tailored to the Central Tablelands LLS region.

The new Core Services Plan is intended to align LLS projects under six core service delivery areas<sup>17</sup> and two Central Tablelands plan goals and associated strategic actions over the next three years. The Core Services Plan has been designed using the state service delivery strategy framework, focussing on the Central Tablelands LLS-adopted LLS state Goals 2 and 3 (Central Tablelands plan outcomes).<sup>18</sup>

The new Core Services Plan is due to be endorsed by the local board in July 2019. The Core Services Plan is intended to:

- reflect the LLS state-wide strategic framework of goals, strategies and core services
- link delivery activities to the Central Tablelands plan under six core service delivery areas; animal biosecurity and welfare, plant biosecurity, invasive species, emergency management, travelling stock reserves, natural resource management and agricultural production<sup>19</sup>
- identify the planned delivery for the next three years, which will cascade into each annual business plan
- identify and explain regional priorities (which are more specific than those in the Central Tablelands plan) that can't be addressed and future projects that Central Tablelands LLS would like to deliver if or when funding is available.

The new Core Services Plan identifies a rationalised set of success measures linked to the Central Tablelands plan success measures to focus monitoring efforts on achieving the relevant Central Tablelands plan outcomes (Goals 2 and 3). Twenty-two success measures have been identified in the new Core Services Plan and have been reworked and streamlined down from 37 in the Central Tablelands plan. Some measures have remained the same, others have been combined and some Central Tablelands plan regional success measures have not been carried through to the Core Services Plan because they specifically relate to Goals 1 and 4.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> These are: Goal 2, which includes the service delivery areas of animal biosecurity and welfare, plant biosecurity, invasive species and emergency management; and Goal 3, which includes the service delivery areas of travelling stock reserves, conservation and restoration of natural and cultural resources, and productive, profitable and sustainable agriculture.

<sup>18</sup> Goal 2 is for 'biosecure, profitable, productive and sustainable primary industries' and Goal 3 is for 'healthy, diverse and connected natural environments'.

<sup>19</sup> The core service delivery area of 'business and governance' under the earlier Investment Priority Plan is not covered under this plan.

<sup>20</sup> An example of an identical measure is: SM1.2 and RSM 2.1 for 'successful agricultural systems'. An example of rationalised measure is: RSM 2.3 for 'weeds and pest animal impacts minimised' and RSM3.3 for 'weeds and pest animal impacts reduced, have been combined as SM3.1 Weeds and pest animals reduced or minimised'.

An example of where measures have not been carried through: one measure out of four on Aboriginal engagement has been carried through to the Core Services Plan (RSM7.2 as SM6.4 for 'Aboriginal people with stronger connections to traditional land management and cultural practices).

There are approximately 10 success measures that do not relate to Goals 2 and 3, noting some overlap.

Central Tablelands LLS intends to prepare similar plans for its Central Tablelands plan outcomes that equate to State LLS Goals 1 and 4. However, as these goals cut across all the service delivery areas, it is intended that this will be contained in a separate plan. Central Tablelands LLS staff indicated that the key elements to support a plan covering Goal 1 already exist.<sup>21</sup>

The new Core Services Plan is currently not intended to include program logics that detail links between activities and Central Tablelands plan outcomes. Clear thinking and documentation about detailed assumptions on which the program logic is based will support monitoring activities that test the validity of those assumptions. It will also explain the cause and effect relationships that link activities and outputs with desired outcomes.

The metrics currently identified in the new Core Services Plan meet the State LLS reporting requirements on outputs (for example, area in hectares of travelling stock reserves actively managed and the area of vertebrate pest control). While outcome-focussed success measures are identified for each of the six core service delivery areas, linked KPIs have not been identified in the Core Services Plan, so the success measures are currently not directly measurable. For example, one proposed success measure for the plant biosecurity cores services area is to achieve a 'community with increased skills and knowledge, actively prepared and participating in biosecurity management'. Without a metric it will be difficult to assess performance against this success measure. The new Core Services Plan should include several KPIs that could be used to monitor progress towards the outcome-focussed success measures (which are reframed Central Tablelands plan regional success measures) identified for each of the seven core service areas (see **Attachment 3**).

The development of a Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting and Improvement (MERI) framework that specifies metrics and data collection would support the achievement and assessment of cumulative progress towards outcomes in the Core Services Plan. Interviewees reported that a regional MERI plan is being developed for the agriculture and natural resource management core service areas that should better align reporting to outcomes and the implementation of the Central Tablelands plan. Strategy and MERI staff are currently working with the Sustainable Farms Program at the Australian National University to develop methods to measure practice change in landholders. This includes using data collection and retrieval tools such as 'sense making' platforms (for example, Social Suite, Narrafirma and Sensemaker) to collect quantitative information from storytelling and measures to collect baseline information for their region. This will support the measurement and reporting on outcomes in two core services areas in the developing Core Services Plan.

The Commission recognizes that the development of the Core Services Plan might inform the next iteration of the Central Tablelands plan. However, in lieu of a formal amendment, the Commission is testing the implementation of the Central Tablelands plan.

To increase the likelihood that the region delivers outcomes within the timeframes in the Central Tablelands plan and improves its strategic performance, the Commission recommends that Central Tablelands LLS:

**R2 Develop key indicators, be explicit about the assumptions linking outputs to outcomes, and link to a monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement framework that includes baselines and program logics.**

<sup>21</sup> These include communication plans and stakeholder engagement strategies.

### 3 Reporting on local strategic plan implementation

The Commission found that quarterly board reporting against the Central Tablelands plan relates mostly to projects and activities being conducted within each core service area. Refocussing reporting towards the impact of these activities, using newly defined metrics (R2) relating to the Central Tableland plan success measures, as well as those in the Core Services Plan, would enable the board to better oversee and monitor the implementation of the Central Tablelands plan and intervene in matters regarding strategic direction.

#### 3.1 Areas going well

##### F6 Quarterly reporting informs the board on progress against all projects under the annual business plans

Project monitoring and reporting, including the assurance framework, provides regular and detailed qualitative information on the activity level within each of the core service areas in the Central Tablelands Annual Business Plan. Projects and services are reported for biosecurity, agriculture, travelling stock reserves, natural resource management, emergency management or business and governance.<sup>22</sup>

Central Tablelands LLS management is tracking activity within projects against annual business plans. The board is provided with a quarterly delivery report that details 138 projects across the core service areas. These are monitored in terms of deliverables, schedule and budget. Progress against the Annual Business Plan is recorded using a traffic light system. The quarterly report also includes information on activities that are not on target.

Achievement reporting (by way of standard outputs, service delivery metrics and state KPIs) is automated from within IRIS and semi-automated from other systems used by Central Tablelands LLS, such as the Livestock Health Management System (LHMS). Output reports from IRIS are mapped to relevant targets or outcomes and objectives and reported either against the Central Tablelands plan (for example, as State LLS annual report figures), to individual investors such as Catchment Action NSW and the National Landcare Program or against KPIs, such as those in the Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Business Plan (using a traffic light approach), which is overseen by DPI.

There is also a monthly risk review report to the board – or ‘assurance reporting’ – focussed on business and governance against 56 activities using a traffic light system. The activities relate to delivery processes, workplace health and safety, customer service, approvals and licences, staff training and development, board and community advisory group processes, and strategy. They contribute to Goal 4 and relevant actions beneath strategies 10, 11 and 12 of the Central Tablelands plan.<sup>23</sup> Performance for April 2019 was reported as 10 percent completed, one third on track, 42 percent delayed and 14 percent with major delays. The process is overseen by the Audit, Risk and Governance Subcommittee of the board and all items assessed as overdue are assigned a revised due date, with reasons noted.

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<sup>22</sup> The reporting framework includes both projects and services. Central Tablelands LLS refer to these collectively as ‘projects’.

<sup>23</sup> Goal 4, Central Tablelands plan actions, for example, 10.1 - ‘invest in staff training and personal development’; 11.1 - ‘maintain an active risk and governance committee which meets quarterly’ and 12.1 - ‘foster a culture of safe work practices and act to prevent lost work time due to injury’.

Central Tablelands LLS keeps a workplace health and safety training register and has developed the Work Health and Safety Regional Action Plan, which includes annual operational work plans that are reported on quarterly.

The reporting processes outlined above provide reassurance to staff and the board that Central Tablelands LLS is meeting its legislative obligations, and delivering against the Annual Business Plan and Investment Priority Plan 2016-2018.

## 3.2 Key findings to be addressed

### F7 There is no explicit reporting on Central Tablelands plan outcomes

Current reporting is focussed on the delivery of projects and services, and the Annual Business Plan and Investment Priority Plan 2016-2018. However, there is no reporting on Central Tablelands plan implementation directly or the achievement of Central Tablelands plan outcomes in terms of overall progress.

The board and senior management recognise this gap and a new Core Services Plan is being developed to address it. They consider that, as a brand new organisation, it was a priority for the organisation to be first able to demonstrate that they can effectively deliver projects before focussing on strategic outcomes.

The Commission recommends that board reporting should now focus on where the gaps are in Central Tablelands plan delivery and the impact of LLS activities on achieving Central Tablelands plan outcomes.

It is the board's responsibility to oversee and monitor the implementation of Central Tablelands plan and knowing the level of progress at the outcome level is critical to performing their role effectively.<sup>24</sup>

Future board reporting could be improved by establishing a small number of measurable indicators for each core services delivery area and reporting against these annually.

To increase the likelihood that the region delivers the outcomes in the Central Tablelands plan by 2021 and improves its strategic performance, the Commission recommends the following:

**R3 Include quantitative information regarding the cumulative achievement of Central Tablelands plan outcomes in board reports.**

<sup>24</sup> The *Local Land Services Act 2013*, Section 29(1)(b) states that the functions of a local board for a region include 'to monitor the performance of Local Land Services in the region, including by reference to the local strategic plan'.

## Attachment 1 – Overview of the Central Tablelands LLS region

The Central Tablelands LLS region covers an area over 3.1 million hectares in central NSW and includes the regional centres of Orange and Bathurst and the major towns of Blayney, Cowra, Lithgow, Molong, Mudgee and Oberon (**Figure 1**). It is a leading agricultural production region that has experienced a prolonged drought.



**Figure 1: Central Tablelands LLS region**

Agriculturally, the Central Tablelands LLS region is highly diverse, contributing just over four per cent of annual gross value of agricultural production in NSW. Livestock grazing is the dominant land use and, with rainfall spread between summer and winter, it also supports a very productive rain-fed broadacre cropping system. There is some irrigated farming, including broadacre crops and horticultural enterprises including viticulture and fruit and vegetable growing. Irrigation supplies are sourced from surface and groundwater sources.

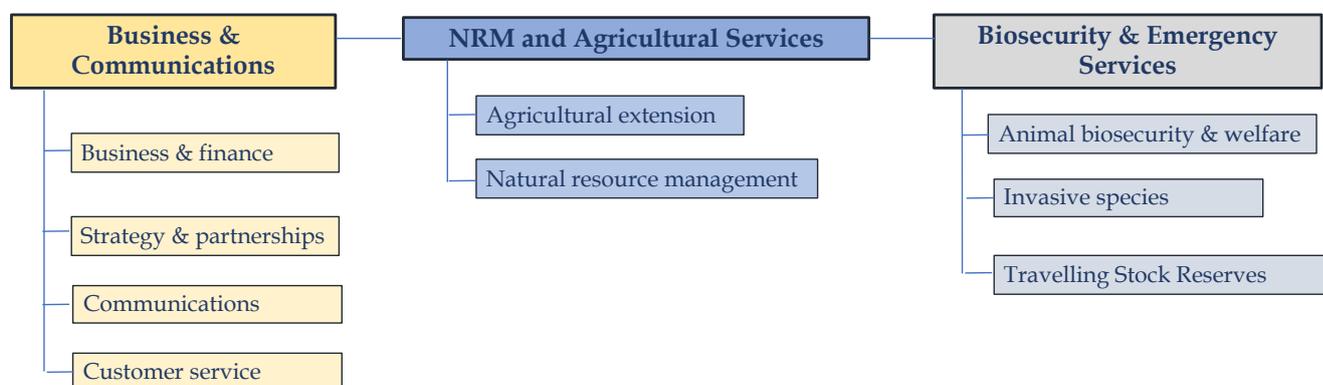
The region's natural assets include national parks and culturally significant areas. The majority of Central Tablelands is Wiradjuri Aboriginal Country. The region includes the headwaters of

the Macquarie, Lachlan and Cudgegong rivers and high value aquatic assets such as nationally-recognised wetlands.

The main challenges and threats facing the region include:

- agricultural viability, influenced by a range of factors including farm and industry profitability (debt-to-income-to-equity ratios), market access, resource security, climate variability, and the capacity and knowledge of land managers
- potential emergency and biosecurity hazards impacting broadacre livestock, which can threaten market access
- threats to productivity and profitability from drought and longer-term climate change, with associated variable or unreliable feed and water availability
- invasive species (pest animals and weeds) and other threats to natural values
- native vegetation management in the context of removal, fragmentation, total grazing pressure, farming practices, and insufficient resources to invest at a large enough scale to improve the condition of natural landscapes
- riverine and wetland condition threatened by bed and bank disturbance, point-source pollution and changes to flows.

Central Tablelands LLS provides advice to primary producers, biosecurity and emergency management services, manage natural resources, broker relationships and share knowledge. Operationally, Central Tablelands LLS comprises three business units, each with its own scope and responsibilities (see **Figure 2**). Governance and oversight is provided by a board and the senior management team.



**Figure 2: Central Tablelands Region LLS business units**

Annual business plans for each core service area specify the direction and focus for program delivery. Beneath these planning documents, which are written at a relatively high level, detailed annual project plans are developed and approved. LLS Central Tablelands' priorities for 2018/19 were established to deliver on outcomes outlined in key strategies and management plans for each of the main programs:

- Central Tablelands Investment Priority Plan.
- Central Tablelands Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plan.
- Central Tablelands Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan.
- NSW Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Business Plan.
- Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Strategic Plan.

- Central Tablelands LLS Biodiversity Investment Strategy.
- Horticulture in the Central tablelands NSW Investment Priority Plan.
- Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Plan Central Tablelands.
- Travelling Stock Reserve Plan of Management (draft).
- Catchment Action NSW Business Plan.
- National Landcare Program priorities.
- Business services – budget and financial management.
- Customer services.

Central tablelands is developing a Core Services Plan 2019-2022 that will replace its Investment Priorities Plan 2016-18. Delivery priorities have been influenced by extended drought in the region and this was reported as likely to continue as a focus for some time. Some of the priorities looking forward include:

- developing a MERI plan for the agricultural services and natural resource management programs
- improving smaller, new absentee farmers understanding of biosecurity and pest plant and animal species
- building biosecurity surveillance networks and the capacity to respond to new incursions of animal disease
- understanding the shifting ranges of pest species in response to climate change
- maintaining LLS capacity to respond to emergency animal disease outbreaks and increasing community preparedness for these issues
- improved data and processes to prioritise maintenance works on travelling stock reserves
- increasing Aboriginal capacity to share their own cultural heritage with others and their connections to traditional land management and cultural practices
- programs targeting landholders to better manage their natural resources.

## Attachment 2 – Central Tablelands plan success measures

#	State Strategies & Regional Success Measures
<b>1</b>	<b>Provide data, information and knowledge that supports and enables land managers and customers to improve decision making.</b>
	S1.1 Communities with increased capacity, skills and knowledge, enabled to actively manage their local environments, drive profitable agriculture and biosecurity.
	S1.2 Improved engagement and empowerment of Indigenous communities
<b>2</b>	<b>Provide products and advisory services that support and enable customers to implement improved practices.</b>
	S2.1 Successful agricultural systems
	S2.2 Improvements in soil health, biodiversity, vegetation and water quality across the landscape
	S2.3 Weeds and pest animal impact minimised
	S2.4 Landholders better managing their natural resources
	S2.5 Communities with increased capacity, skills and knowledge, enabled to actively manage their local environments, drive profitable agriculture and biosecurity
	S2.6 Staff understanding customers' needs and expectations (interests, barriers and drivers)
<b>3</b>	<b>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.</b>
	S3.1 Community with increased skills and knowledge actively prepared and participating in biosecurity management
	S3.2 Communities that are better prepared for and have the ability to respond to natural disasters/events
	S3.3 Weeds and pest animal impacts reduced
<b>4</b>	<b>Collaborate with investors, stakeholders and external organisations to deliver improved products and services to customers.</b>
	S4.1 Increased formation of active links and improved participation in networks across the whole landscape
	S4.2 Engaged and open communities
	S4.3 Customers, partners and stakeholders with improved trust in us
<b>5</b>	<b>Ensure local people participate in decision making.</b>
	S5.1 Communities with increased capacity, skills and knowledge, enabled to actively manage their local environments, drive profitable agriculture and biosecurity
<b>6</b>	<b>Connect research and development with advisory services to address priority data, information and knowledge gaps and barriers to improved practice.</b>
	S6.1 New and viable agricultural industries and markets emerging

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S6.2 Enhancement of existing industries through landholders easily accessing up-to-date science and innovation

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S6.3 Increased ability to target investments and minimise knowledge gaps

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**7 Deliver services that support Aboriginal people to care for Country and share traditional land management**

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S7.1 Aboriginal people with improved capacity to share their own cultural heritage with other Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people

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S7.2 Aboriginal people with stronger connections to traditional land management and cultural practices

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S7.3 Improvements in traditional land management practices being recognised and incorporated into modern land management

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**8 Deliver consent and compliance services that educate and protect communities, landscapes and industries.**

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S8.1 All legislative requirements undertaken and met

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S8.2 No new pest or disease incursions established

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S8.3 Increased consideration of biosecurity at property and landscape scales across the region

S8.4 An organisational culture of service and achievement

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**9 Manage Crown Land vested in Local Land Services for environmental, social and economic outcomes.**

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S9.1 Crown Land parcels being better managed and utilised for biosecurity, pest control, environmental and social outcomes

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S9.2 Improved knowledge of the condition and value of Crown Lands in the region

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**10 Develop engaged and accountable people with a strong customer focus**

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S10.1 The Central Tablelands Local Land Services responds to the needs of community and industry to deliver public value

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S10.2 The Central Tablelands Local Land Services is considered a reliable and trustworthy organisation. We have sound financial management

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**11 Foster a values-based culture which emphasises collaboration, innovation and continual improvement.**

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S11.1 Effective, efficient and enthusiastic organisation

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S11.2 Investors hold us up as examples of positive activities and outcomes

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S11.3 Culture and practice focused on open honest review, feedback learning and adaptive management

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S11.4 Our staff collaborate with staff from other regions to deliver on customer needs

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S11.5 We have active links and participation in networks and activities across the state

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**12 Ensure a safe and sustainable organisation.**

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12.1 Our organisation provides public value

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S12.2 Our staff are safe at work and there is no loss of organisational capacity through injury

S12.3 We are an environmentally conscious organisation

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## Attachment 3 – Core Services Plan 2019-22 success measures

#	Core Service Areas and Success Measures
	<b>Goal 2: Biosecure, profitable, productive and sustainable primary industries</b> <b>Animal biosecurity and welfare</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Animal biosecurity and welfare</b>
	SM1.1 Community and Central Tablelands LLS better prepared for and have the ability to respond to biosecurity and animal health
	SM1.2 Successful agricultural systems
	SM1.3 Collaboration, partnerships and networks fostered and maintained
<b>2</b>	<b>Plant biosecurity</b>
	SM2.1 Community and Central Tablelands LLS better prepared for and have the ability to respond to biosecurity, natural disasters and events
	SM2.2 Collaboration, partnerships and networks fostered and maintained
<b>3</b>	<b>Invasive species</b>
	SM3.1 Weeds and pest animal impacts reduced or minimised
	S3.2 Community with increased skills and knowledge actively prepared and participating in biosecurity management
	S3.3 Collaboration, partnerships and networks fostered and maintained
<b>4</b>	<b>Emergency management</b>
	SM4.1 Organisation prepared and with skills and capacity to respond to emergencies
	SM4.2 Community with increased skills and knowledge actively prepared and participating in biosecurity
	SM4.3 Community with ability to positively respond to and recover from natural disasters
	SM4.4 Central Tablelands LLS has active links and participation in partnerships and networks
	<b>Goal 3: Healthy, diverse, connected natural environments</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Travelling stock reserves</b>
	SM5.1 TSRs managed and utilised for biosecurity, pest control, environmental and social outcomes.
<b>6</b>	<b>Conservation and restoration of natural and cultural resources</b>
	SM6.1 Improvements in biodiversity, threatened species, native vegetation and water quality across the landscape

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SM6.2 Landholders better managing their natural resources.

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SM6.3 Community with increased skills and knowledge, enabled to actively manage their local environment.

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SM6.4 Aboriginal people with stronger connections to traditional land management and cultural practices

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**7 Productive, profitable and sustainable agriculture**

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SM7.1 Community with increased skills and knowledge, enabled to actively manage their local environments, drive profitable agriculture and biosecurity

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SM7.2 Successful agricultural systems

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SM7.3 Improved soil health and water quality

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SM7.4 Community with ability to positively respond to natural disasters

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SM7.5 Enhancement of industries through landholders easily accessing up-to-date science and innovation

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## Attachment 3 – Audit overview

### The Commission’s role in auditing local strategic plans

Section 46(1) of the *Local Land Services Act 2013* requires the board of each LLS region to prepare a local strategic plan and to have it approved by the Minister. These local plans were approved by the Minister mid-2016.

Section 45(1) of the *Local Land Services Act 2013* specifies that the purpose of a local strategic plan is to ‘set the vision, priorities and strategy in respect of the delivery of local land services in each region, with a focus on appropriate economic, social and environmental outcomes’. Section 47(1) of the *Local Land Services Act 2013* specifies that a local strategic plan for a region must include:

- outcomes that are expected to be achieved by the implementation of the plan in relation to the region and the timeframes for achieving those outcomes
- requirements for reporting on whether those outcomes and timeframes have been achieved.

The Commission has a role under section 54(4) of the *Local Land Services Act 2013* to undertake an audit of local strategic plans.<sup>25</sup> Section 54(2) requires each local strategic plan to be audited within three years of its approval by the Minister to ascertain whether its provisions are being given effect. This requirement has been triggered, given the local strategic plans commenced mid-2016.<sup>26</sup>

### Audit approach and methodology

The Commission interprets the audit objective under section 54(2) of the *Local Land Services Act 2013* as being to assess each LLS region’s implementation of its local strategic plan. Specifically, to assess the extent to which stated outcomes have been achieved within set time frames and reported (see **Attachment 4** for scope of works).

The audit has been carried out consistent with the audit scope endorsed by LLS. The audit focused on the reporting of the achievement of outcomes against timeframes as stated in the strategic plan.

The Commission assessed audit findings against the audit evaluation framework which includes a maturity scale used to assess observed LLS performance with respect to each audit focus area.

### Evidence

The Commission’s audit was informed by a range of evidence, including:

- **Interviews:** with key staff and board members in each LLS region
- **Document review:** the Commission obtained relevant information from each LLS region, documentation received from LLS State Operations and relevant staff.

The Commission would like to thank all the staff in Northern Tablelands LLS, who contributed to this review.

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<sup>25</sup> The *Local Land Services Act 2013* Section 54(4) states that ‘an audit under this section is to be carried out by the Natural Resources Commission or an independent person, body or panel appointed by the Minister’.

<sup>26</sup> The *Local Land Services Act 2013* Section 45(2) states that ‘a local strategic plan has effect for the period of 5 years (or such other period as is prescribed by the regulations) after it is approved by the Minister’.

## Attachment 4 – Scope of works

# Scope of Works

## LLS Strategic Plan Implementation Audit

### Background

The Natural Resources Commission (Commission) will undertake the audits of each LLS local strategic plan to ascertain whether its provisions have been given effect<sup>27</sup> as the independent auditor<sup>28</sup> in accordance with the Local Land Services Act 2013 (the Act).

The local strategic plans were approved by the Minister in 2016. The plans were written to address legislative requirements and the LLS Performance Standard (Standard). The Commission reviewed the plans prior to approval and conducted a detailed assessment of how the plans complied with legislation and aligned with the Standard.

This audit will focus on the implementation of the local strategic plans.

### Audit Objective and Scope

To satisfy legislative requirements, specifically to assess LLS' implementation of local strategic plans and the extent to which stated outcomes have been achieved within set time frames and reported.

The audit scope will include a review of:

- implementation of strategic plans in each of the 11 LLS regions.
- within each LLS region, systems and processes supporting implementation and progress monitoring of strategic plan implementation.

The audit scope will not include a review of:

- the quality and objectives of the plans as this was covered in the Commission's Strategic Plan Review in March 2016.
- the LLS State Strategic Plan.

### Overall Approach

Information to support the audit analysis will be sought from all LLS regions and state wide LLS via document review, interviews and site visits.

Five key audit questions will be addressed. They are listed below.

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<sup>27</sup> The *Local Land Services Act 2013* Section 54(2) states that 'the Minister is to ensure that each local strategic plan is audited, within 3 years of its approval, to ascertain whether its provisions are being given effect'.

<sup>28</sup> The *Local Land Services Act 2013* Section 54(4) states that 'an audit under this section is to be carried out by an independent person, body or panel appointed by the Minister'.

Key Question	Criteria
To what extent does each LLS region have systems and processes in place to support the implementation of local strategic plans?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Systems fully developed and fully functional</li> <li>2. Systems partially developed/ Systems partially functional</li> <li>3. Systems not developed, ad hoc approach</li> </ol>
To what extent have stated outcomes <sup>29</sup> been achieved within set timeframes for each local strategic plan?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All stated outcomes achieved per set timeframes</li> <li>2. Stated outcomes partially achieved</li> <li>3. Stated outcomes not achieved</li> </ol>
To what extent has achievement of stated outcomes been reported and how does this align with reporting requirements as set out in each local strategic plan?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Progress reporting fully available, integrated and transparent</li> <li>2. Progress reporting partially available, partially integrated</li> <li>3. Progress reporting not available</li> </ol>
What has worked well and what are the potential areas of improvement in LLS' local strategic plan implementation?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Areas for improvement identified are all low risk</li> <li>2. Areas for improvement identified include moderate risk items</li> <li>3. Areas for improvement include high risk items</li> </ol>
What are the gaps/ constraints impacting performance?	N/A

One final report will be provided to the Minister mid-2019.

<sup>29</sup> Each region has identified outcomes in their strategic plans in different ways. For example, local plans may refer to regional success, strategic objective, strategic intent. The Commission will work with each region to verify its interpretation of outcomes as they appear in each local strategic plan.

## Attachment 6 – Interviewees

Functional Area	Role	Name	Date
<b>Board</b>	Chair	Ian Rogan	29 May 2019
	Appointed Board member	Pip Job	31 May 2019
	Elected Board member	John Rowe	29 May 2019
	General Manager	Chris Cumming	29 May 2019
<b>Agriculture &amp; Natural Resources</b>	Manager	Richard Carter	29 May 2019
	Team Leader – Agriculture	Mary Goodacre	30 May 2019
	Senior LSO Horticulture	Karen O’Malley	30May 2019
<b>Biosecurity &amp; Emergency Services</b>	Team Leader – Animal Biosecurity & Welfare	Will Andrew	30 May 2019
	District vet	Nigel Gillan	29 May 2019
<b>Strategy</b>	Team Leader – Strategy & partnerships	Tracey Potts	30 May 2019
	Senior LSO - MER	Michelle Hines	30 May 2019

## Attachment 7 – Central Tablelands LLS action status

The results of an assessment of progress against the actions in the Central Tablelands plan is provided in the following table. This was supported by documents provided to the Commission and was validated by discussions with LLS staff and board members during interviews.

Rating of CT plan actions (39)		Comments / examples:
<b>#</b>	<b>Action not achieved</b>	
12.4	Foster actions that minimise the organisation's environmental impacts though the development of an environmental impacts minimisation plan by June 2016.	Action no longer relevant: while the organisation is conscious to minimise environmental impact where possible in line with DPIE standards, the specific action to develop a plan to address these impacts is no longer relevant in light of the maturity and development other regional priorities since the LSP was written.
<b>#</b>	<b>Action partially achieved and ongoing</b>	
1.2	Support education initiatives that build capacity and foster generational succession in agriculture and natural resource management.	Ag & NRM projects use delivery approaches that support community capacity
2.1	Work with customers to better understand / plan the management of natural resources and production systems.	Consultation with CAGs, 'Bounceback' drought response workshops
2.2	Identify and empower leaders and champions amongst customers and stakeholders.	The Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator (RALF) supports Landcare networks by facilitating training opportunities & works with local champions.
2.3	Align investment priorities across the region with community needs.	Funding from the Pest Levy is aligned with the Species Priorities negotiated through the development of the CT Regional Strategic Pest Animal Plan.
3.1	Foster activities that educate landholders and communities about biosecurity, emergency management and natural resource management responsibilities – e.g. Property Planning	Property Planning support is delivered through the Sustainable Ag and FARM projects which includes integrated biosecurity management, NRM and sustainable ag knowledge and skills transfer via a series of workshops delivered to landholders over 1 year.
3.2	Facilitate the development of individual property biosecurity plans across the region.	The introduction of Farm Biosecurity Plans by Animal Health Australia was supported by CT LLS with a series of workshops lead by District Veterinarians and Ag Advisory staff.

<b>4.2</b>	Partner in the delivery of integrated services (cross-regional, cross-agency, regional stakeholders and investors).	NLP tender preparation, cross tenure aerial baiting program
<b>4.3</b>	Support innovation and new industries through planning and capacity building.	Ag team members work with new industries such as native flower growers and garlic growers
<b>5.1</b>	Work with landholders to better manage and understand their natural resources, production systems, biosecurity and emergency responsibilities.	Advisory service formalised into a project called Bounce Back for drought response, also FARM project; Smaller Smarter Farms
<b>5.2</b>	Identify and empower leaders and champions amongst customers and stakeholders to facilitate and mentor.	As per action 2.2
<b>6.1</b>	Foster actions to identify and reduce knowledge gaps and obtain benchmark information through investment priority plans.	During the development of new CSP, a number of gaps were identified that will need to be addressed through the MERI framework which has commenced development.
<b>6.2</b>	Support current and foster emerging industries through partnerships with R&D organisations.	As per action 4.2
<b>7.1</b>	Undertake and support programmes that build the capacity of Indigenous communities to implement traditional land management practices.	CTLLS employs an SLSO - Aboriginal Communities to build the capacity of indigenous communities to implement traditional land management practice. Programs include the Firesticks Program which is returning the practice and knowledge of traditional burning to the Central Tablelands.
<b>7.2</b>	Develop case studies and opportunities to share traditional knowledge, practice and culture.	Through delivery of the Aboriginal Cultural Land Management project, opportunities are created to share traditional knowledge, practice and culture in a culturally respectful and appropriate manner.
<b>7.3</b>	Foster the development of cultural champions including youth within Aboriginal communities.	SLSO is developing a project based in Cowra to engage young Indigenous community members to learn about cultural and environmental value of riparian areas.
<b>7.4</b>	Foster actions that demonstrate respect for, and encourage access to, culturally significant sites, flora and fauna.	Dedicated SLSO Aboriginal Communities supports culturally significant site assessment and protection on LLS-managed TSR's
<b>8.3</b>	Educate landholders and communities about natural resource management responsibilities through awareness raising.	Engaging with wider cohort of landholders through Smaller Smarter Farms project

8.4	Delivery of biosecurity, emergency management and Property Vegetation Plan services and activities.	Biosecurity and EM services delivered as outlined in regional plans linking in with the business plan. PVP now remit of SLM unit in LLS
9.2	Educate users of Crown Land about their biosecurity and natural resource management responsibilities.	All TSR permits outline the biosecurity and natural resource responsibilities of lessees.
11.3	Provide opportunities for Staff and Board to work outside current roles and/or the region.	CTLLS staff have opportunities to nominate for acting roles on an ad hoc basis. Inclusion in a SWAG allows staff to work outside the region in a state-wide collaboration.
<b>#</b>	<b>Action achieved and ongoing</b>	
1.1	Involve community in strategic planning and decision making through the support of advisory group meetings across the region at least four times per year.	CAG Terms of Reference (TOR) Regional Pest Animal Committee TOR, Regional Weeds Committee TOR established and committees operating
2.4	Foster and empower a skilled and experienced body of staff with capacity for customer and advisory services.	CTLLS formally invests in staff capacity through the PDP process. CTLLS also creates opportunities for development through attending fora such as the District Vet's conference, the Pest Animal & Biodiversity in Action conferences
3.3	Foster and support community action for integrated pest management through the establishment of a minimum of two vertebrate pest animal campaigns per annum.	Multiple cross tenure pest control programs are conducted every year
3.4	Maintain a trained body of staff to provide response and administration during emergency and biosecurity incidents.	EMtrain tracks staff emergency management training. WebEOC is the program used that matches staff to emergency management roles and training requirements.
4.1	Develop a partnership that links R&D with land managers, using a biannual forum.	CT LLS presents an Agri-Business forum every year in partnership with CW LLS, RDA-Central West and CSU at the Graham Centre.
5.3	Provide customer, stakeholder and investor information in a relevant and accessible form.	CT LLS communicates with stakeholders, customers and investors via a number of formats: - Tablelands Telegraph is published monthly; CTLLS website; CTLLS Facebook page
5.4	Support groups and organisations to access diverse investment opportunities.	CTLLS provides support to groups and community organisations such as Landcare, Producer Groups, Local Aboriginal Land Councils &

		Corporations and Pest Management Groups to access funds by promoting grant opportunities via networks and providing training opportunities for grant writers; CTLLS has a Strategy & Investments Advisor Role to support staff and stakeholders to secure funding.
6.3	Development of two industry case studies per annum.	Case studies are developed as part of reporting on annual achievements.
8.1	Foster the development of individual property biosecurity plans across the region.	As per action 3.2
8.2	Active membership and participation on emergency management committees.	CTLLS staff actively participate in and contribute to Local Emergency Management Committees.
9.1	Undertake actions to manage threatening processes on Crown Land.	CT LLS issues long and short term grazing permits for reserves and monitors their condition through a number of inspection methods for environmental values and grazing pressure. Threatening processes such as overgrazing and weed infestations are managed via the conditions in permits and weed spraying activities.
10.1	Invest in staff training and personal development.	Mandatory personal development plans (PDPs)
10.2	Involve staff in strategic programme development and reference groups.	Board meetings have staff presentation on part of business; additional Strategic Planning forums each year
11.1	Maintain an active Risk and Governance committee which meets quarterly.	CT LLS Risk and Governance committee developed an Assurance tool (in pilot with the state) that is being used.
11.2	Engage with other regions in development of external funding applications.	Ag Production monthly State phone meeting- projects developed by working groups; grant applications developed in partnership with other regions
12.1	Foster a culture of safe work practices and act to prevent lost work time due to injury.	LLS is part of the Industry Cluster (Industry & Planning from July 2019) with Dept of Industry providing services including industrial relations and WH&S support. LLS has a regional committee in the Central Tablelands. CTLLS has a comprehensive system with a Work Plan for the Regional Committee and the Leadership Team, with quarterly reporting.

<b>12.2</b>	Provide opportunities for staff development in all staff personal development plans annually.	The PDP process captures staff personal and professional development needs and intentions annually, with a mid-year review.
<b>12.3</b>	Joint Board and Senior Management meetings with neighbouring regions on an annual basis.	The CTLLS Board have had joint meetings with SE and CW LLS.
<b>Rating of Foundational actions (8)</b>		<b>Comments:</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>Action partially achieved and ongoing</b>	
<b>F3</b>	Implement a robust Adaptive Management Plan and a Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting (MER) approach to programme design and project delivery – June 2016	This activity is still relevant and will be achieved by June 2020.
<b>F4</b>	Implement at a regional level, adopted state and national priorities for weed, pest animal, exotic animal disease and exotic plant pest and disease management – December 2016	Activity established and ongoing: priorities considered in development of regional planning including the Regional Pest Plan, Regional Weeds Plan, Core Service Delivery Plan and the Annual Business Plan.
<b>F5</b>	Establish and maintain reference groups allowing two-way communication and inclusion (Landcare, Local Government, Aboriginal, Agricultural Industries) – January 2016	Activity established and ongoing: being achieved through the delivery of the Central Tablelands Community Advisory Groups (CAGs).
<b>F6</b>	Development of regional and site-specific management plans for Crown Lands in the Central Tablelands – March 2015	Activity established and ongoing: this activity is being addressed through the state process for TSR planning. At the regional level, CT has assessed all of the TSRs and currently has a draft TSR Annual Business plan submitted for Board endorsement by July 2019. This plan is specific to the region and documents site information. This plan will be the foundation for an ongoing process of annual review and site specific planning for TSR management.
<b>F8</b>	Foster a culture of accountability and celebration of success in customer service through the development of a customer service scorecard – March 2016	Activity established and ongoing: this action is still relevant to the region, with implementation and monitoring through the state coordinated customer satisfaction survey results and RateIt customer feedback reporting.
<b>#</b>	<b>Action achieved (completed)</b>	
<b>F1</b>	Develop and implement a robust Communications and Partnership Plan – June 2016	Relevant plans provided as evidence for the audit.

<b>F2</b>	Develop and implement Investment Priority plan – March 2016	Relevant plans provided as evidence for the audit.
<b>F7</b>	Foster and empower a skilled and experienced body of staff with capacity for customer and advisory services	Example professional development plans provided as evidence for the audit, increase in customer satisfaction in State survey.

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