



Natural Resources Commission

Final report

Local strategic plan implementation audit

November 2019

Greater Sydney Local Land Services

Enquiries

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List of acronyms

IRIS	Integrated Resource Management System
IT	Information Technology
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LLS	Local Land Services
LMDB	Land Management Database
MERI	Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement
VegNET	National Vegetable Extension Network

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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 Greater Sydney Local Land Services (LLS) region is a complex and highly populated region in NSW. It encompasses metropolitan Sydney and extensive peri-urban areas, as well as small farms and spectacular landscapes including national parks and water ways. Its key management priority is biosecurity, associated with significant and growing gateway incursion risks created by tourism, ports and transport (see **Attachment 1**).

The *Local Land Services Act 2013* requires local boards to prepare a local strategic plan. 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'¹ (see **Attachment 2**). The Greater Sydney LLS local strategic plan (Greater Sydney plan) plan was approved by the Minister in 2016.

The Greater Sydney plan sets out the strategic direction for the five years between 2016 and 2021. It outlines how Greater Sydney 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. It contains six five-year strategic objectives that define the 'outcomes' that Greater Sydney LLS is working towards. To support these outcomes, the Greater Sydney plan includes 19 strategies, 83 actions and 29 key performance indicators (KPIs) to be achieved by 2021.

When written, the Greater Sydney plan built on existing obligations to the community and investors. Its six strategic objectives (outcomes) incorporate the four LLS state-wide goals and adapt them to the Greater Sydney region. The plan discusses the intent of each strategic action but leaves these broad enough to accommodate changes in the work necessary to help maintain the health and productivity of the region.

The impacts of the current drought in the Greater Sydney region are patchy. Some areas, such as Camden, have been badly affected but water is not yet limiting for industries such as horticulture and turf.

The objective of this audit was to assess Greater Sydney LLS' implementation of the Greater Sydney plan and the extent to which stated outcomes have been achieved within set time frames and reported (see **Attachments 3 and 4**). The audit report is informed by a combination of interviews with Greater Sydney LLS staff (see **Attachment 5**) and review of relevant documentation.

The Commission's audit approach was to look at the broad intent of the Greater Sydney 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 around the extent of implementation of the Greater Sydney plan.

Findings

Overall, the Commission found that the delivery of Greater Sydney LLS actions is contributing to the achievement of outcomes stated in the Greater Sydney plan within the set timeframes. All outputs are recorded, progress is reported qualitatively and support systems and processes have been used effectively to support the implementation of the Greater Sydney plan. The

¹ *Local Land Services Act 2013* Section 45(1).
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Commission has therefore determined that Greater Sydney LLS is likely to implement the Greater Sydney plan by 2021. However, greater clarity in reporting progress to the board would allow better assessment of the impact of Greater Sydney LLS activities, enhance oversight of implementation and provide opportunities to improve performance.

Greater Sydney LLS has a strong commercial focus and has been successful in generating new revenue streams through contracts and commercial partnerships which are consistent with the Greater Sydney plan. These revenue streams are in addition to the traditional natural resource management funding streams that have been reducing over time.

The new revenues are applied to a range of investments, most notably the Greater Sydney Demonstration Farm, which is located on four hectares of land beside the Hawkesbury River at Richmond. Leased from the University of Western Sydney for fifteen years, the farm supports landholder education and training in best practice natural resource management, agricultural and biosecurity work. An Aboriginal cultural space is in planning.

The farm complex is designed to support cross-sector collaboration and innovation and to cater for growers, producers, educational institutions and land holders. All work is consistent with the Greater Sydney plan and includes compost trials, soil health, pest animal management, bush and native vegetation restoration, vegetable variety trials, native pastures and irrigation spray application technology.²

It allows landholders to observe best practice when the size of the Greater Sydney farming population effectively prohibits extending best practice to them in their own areas. Over 500 people have visited since the farm's opening in February 2019.

The Commission found the following constraints:

- A key challenge in implementing the Greater Sydney plan is its very low rating base of only 6,000 rate payers, combined with a population of approximately 40,000 landholders on less than 10 hectares, who require services but do not pay rates.
- Funding for natural resource management has been reduced under Catchment Action and the National Landcare Program Phase Two since the Greater Sydney plan commencement. To access funding, the region is required to apply for grants aligned with investor priorities, potentially limiting the region's ability to invest in long-term and strategic landscape-scale improvements. In addition, considerable staff time is absorbed in compiling the detailed three-monthly reports required before funds are made available.
- The Greater Sydney region confronts significant and growing biosecurity risks. The key risk is the gateway incursion risk created by tourism, ports and transport. Biosecurity risks in the region also occur through unregulated online trading of animals, hobby farms, difficulties in engaging with non-English speaking landholders, insect pest incursions and weeds from hay coming into the region.

² Greater Sydney LLS (2019) *The Greater Sydney Demonstration Farm Prospectus*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

Areas going well

The Commission determined the following areas of Greater Sydney plan implementation are going well:

- F1 Greater Sydney LLS documents demonstrate progress in implementing all of the actions in its plan within set timeframes.**
- F3 Planning processes support programs and projects that contribute to the implementation of the Greater Sydney LLS plan.**
- F4 Governance processes support Greater Sydney plan implementation.**
- F6 The Greater Sydney LLS reports on activities relevant to the outcomes of the Greater Sydney plan internally and externally.**

Areas to improve

The Commission identified the following areas for improvement:

- F2 There is no cumulative measurement of outcomes against which to assess implementation of the Greater Sydney plan.**
- F5 There is no formal organisation-wide system or process to guide consistent tracking of overall progress of Greater Sydney plan implementation.**
- F7 There is no explicit reporting towards Greater Sydney plan outcomes.**

Recommendations

The Commission has outlined three recommendations to increase the likelihood that Greater Sydney LLS is able to implement its Greater Sydney plan by 2020:

- R1 The contributions of projects and programs to the achievement of Greater Sydney plan outcomes within the proposed timeframes should be cumulatively assessed. Performance data should be collected to allow the assessment of progress towards outcomes and the identification of any gaps.**
- R2 Greater Sydney LLS should ensure its business plan includes clear links to the Greater Sydney plan and establish:**
 - functional area program logics that provide a link between Greater Sydney LLS activities and Greater Sydney plan outcomes
 - a regional scale monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement framework.
- R3 Greater Sydney LLS should review progress in implementing the Greater Sydney plan every six months and include cumulative information regarding the achievement of outcomes in its board reports.**

1 Achievement of local strategic plan outcomes

While the Commission has determined that there is progress towards all 81 actions contained within the Greater Sydney plan, neither the contribution of actions to outcomes nor the extent of progress made, is transparent.

All but one action has been completed within stated timeframes and the rest are on track for completion. The one not completed within the timeframe is considered ongoing. Greater Sydney LLS has so far not systematically measured its progress towards achieving the strategic objectives (outcomes) and key actions of the Greater Sydney plan.

1.1 Areas going well

F1 Greater Sydney LLS documents demonstrate progress in implementing all of the actions in its plan within set timeframes

The Greater Sydney plan contains six strategic objectives (outcomes) and 83 actions to implement between 2016 and 2021. The outcomes incorporate the four LLS state-wide goals, adapting them to the Greater Sydney LLS region.

The timelines for delivery of Greater Sydney plan actions and KPIs are 'S' (short term – within two years), 'M' (medium term – two to five years) and 'L' (long term – longer than five years). Combinations of these time frames, such as 'SM' or 'ML', are also used, with 'SML' indicating actions that will be delivered on an ongoing basis. Thirty-seven of the Greater Sydney plan actions are formally listed as SML but those with shorter timelines (for example, core service obligations to rate payers, and biosecurity strategies and actions) are also considered ongoing because of their relevance to Greater Sydney LLS' continuing responsibilities in the region.

As at July 2019, 18 of the 19 short term actions are complete. The incomplete action is in progress but considered ongoing.³ Self-assessment documents provided to the Commission indicate progress is being made on implementing the remaining 64 actions.⁴

As at July 2019, progress with implementing the Greater Sydney plan actions is (see **Attachment 6** for more detail):

- Eighteen complete⁵
- Twenty-five in progress⁶
- Forty ongoing

³ Greater Sydney LLS (2019) *Greater Sydney LLS plan action status*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

⁴ Based on Greater Sydney LLS annual reports between 2015 and 2018; LLS board reports between February 2016 and February 2019; biosecurity board reports between February 2016 and February 2019; National Vegetable Extension Network (VegNET) project achievements; Project reports 2018-19; Catchment Action NSW Annual Report 2017-18; National Landcare Program Phase Two project logic and monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI) plans.

⁵ Greater Sydney LLS (2019) *Greater Sydney LLS plan action status*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

⁶ *Ibid.*

A key area of achievement in Greater Sydney LLS includes the establishment of commercial partnerships.⁷ The Greater Sydney LLS value proposition to industry partners is that it is an independent broker with governance and monitoring systems in place. There are currently 32 projects specifically set up to generate new revenues:

- Sixteen established new revenues projects and five in development, which are mostly funded by the Australian or NSW governments and have been secured through negotiation or application.⁸
- Sixteen Greater Sydney Demonstration Farm new revenues projects, which have been successfully negotiated with industries or universities.⁹

The revenue from these projects provides Greater Sydney LLS with the opportunity increase its service delivery and further contribute towards outcomes.

One example of this is over the last three years, where Greater Sydney LLS has managed the \$990,000 NSW component of a VegNET project, which is funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited using the vegetable industry levy and funds from the Australian Government. This is one of 10 projects across Australia delivering research based information to vegetable growers. Greater Sydney LLS has run 113 extension events and supported 48 vegetable research and development projects.

Outputs from this work include 1,950 people engaged through project events, with 50 percent of NSW vegetable growers engaged. Surveys of 133 growers and industry representatives have shown 86 percent of these growers have implemented or plan to implement practice change as a result of their learnings.¹⁰ The monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI) phase of the VegNET project involves recontacting growers who have attended events, determining if they have made any changes to the way they farm as a result of their learnings and whether this has led to an increase in productivity or other economic benefit.

Other new revenues are generated from charging workshop and field day attendees. Workshop topics align with Greater Sydney plan actions and outcomes, covering issues such as pest animal management, soil health and water quality.

Other areas going well in Greater Sydney LLS include:

- The focus on improving efficiency. Beginning in 2016, Greater Sydney LLS has periodically undertaken efficiency and effectiveness work activity trials across the organisation. The intent of these reviews is to improve business delivery through identifying how much of what is being done is delivering on the Greater Sydney plan and servicing customer needs.¹¹ These reviews have assisted Greater Sydney LLS to improve management and allow the development of more efficient processes to provide more time for servicing external outcomes and pursuing new LLS activities. For example, changes

⁷ The lack of a sufficient and reliable funding base, together with changing investor priorities and the diverse needs of the large Greater Sydney population, has created the impetus for a strong program to develop commercial opportunities and to generate new revenues. This program has become a critical component of the Greater Sydney LLS budget and is driven and supported by a commercially focused board.

⁸ Greater Sydney LLS (2019) *New revenues list*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

⁹ Greater Sydney LLS (2019) *Greater Sydney Demonstration Farm new revenues list*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

¹⁰ Greater Sydney LLS (2019) *VegNET NSW achievements summary*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

¹¹ Greater Sydney LLS (2016) *Greater Sydney LLS Efficiency and Effectiveness Work Activity Trial 2016*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

were made to managing grants paperwork and approvals processes, which were considered excessive relative to their imposed level of risk.

- Collaboration across teams for project development and funding applications, which resulted in the sharing of skills and expertise between teams.
- A series of workshops tailored specifically to absentee landholders, addressing risks created by these landholders relating to the potential multiplication of pest plants and animals in the owners' absence. The success of these events has prompted similar workshops in other LLS regions facing similar issues.
- Three drought workshops offering support to landholders, held in collaboration with Hunter LLS, South East LLS, the Rural Advisory Mental Health Program, Rural Financial Counselling, Central Coast Council, NSW Department of Primary Industries and the Hawkesbury River County Council.
- Maintaining an efficient ongoing connection with most of the 980 Landcare and Bushcare groups in the region via ongoing support arrangements with Sydney Bushcare Volunteer Coordinators Network and the Greater Sydney Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative Community of Practice.
- The establishment of a network of 15 community gardens for plant biosecurity surveillance, involving the placement and checking of insect traps, surveillance and reporting of pests found.

1.2 Key findings to be addressed

F2 There is no cumulative measurement of outcomes against which to assess implementation of the Greater Sydney plan

Greater Sydney LLS project outputs are recorded on a platform that integrates the current suite of information technology (IT) programs, such as the Integrated Resource Management System (IRIS) and the Land Management Database (LMDB). Financial data is structured in SAP to link to IRIS. This enables detailed project reporting to investors but – because output data have not been aggregated against Greater Sydney plan actions, KPIs or strategies – there are not enough meaningful data on the outcomes to inform a cumulative assessment of progress.

The Commission has determined that overall progress is being made on the achievement of Greater Sydney plan outcomes. Progress is evidenced through:

- project plans and their reported outputs, which the Commission has found to align with the Greater Sydney plan
- the hierarchy of monitoring progress by staff and managers on a project-by-project basis (for example, team members record project activities and monitor progress, and program managers and the General Manager monitor outputs and milestones to report to the board)
- project scale data collected, monitored and reported to managers including spatial, financial and other management data, such as financial data and achievement of milestones.

Greater Sydney LLS gauges the progress of its Greater Sydney plan implementation informally on a project-by-project basis. Staff and board members independently reviewed Greater Sydney plan actions in preparation for this audit and they concluded that most actions have been achieved. However, staff and board members had varying ideas about the extent of this

progress. This is because Greater Sydney LLS has not systematically measured its progress towards achieving the outcomes of the Greater Sydney plan.

The use of program logic at a project level to link aggregated outputs to actions and strategies, together with measuring key performance indicators would:

- provide a basis to measure progress towards outcomes
- provide a shared understanding of progress and what still needs to be achieved
- provide a basis for effective oversight, strategic decision making and reporting on performance
- inform future investment and adaptive management decisions
- support the demonstration of value to investors, customers, and partners
- provide a basis for sharing learnings and a robust platform for celebrating successes and external communications.

A cumulative assessment against outcomes would enable increased precision and transparency in assessing the extent of Greater Sydney plan implementation. More clarity on the extent of the contribution of implemented actions to strategies and outcomes is needed to assist staff and the board in identifying any gaps in implementation, and in evaluating overall progress by 2021.

The measurement of outcomes is a challenge in most organisations, particularly when actions from different projects and annual funding cycles can contribute to more than one outcome. It is often easier to focus on outputs and what has been completed to satisfy stakeholders and investors, rather than on what outcomes resulted from those activities. Measurement of outcomes is often resource intensive, which is a challenge in the face of reduced funding and staffing levels.

For Greater Sydney LLS to be able to assess progress towards Greater Sydney plan outcomes by 2021, recorded project output data should be aggregated.

To improve the likelihood that the region can demonstrate the delivery of Greater Sydney plan outcomes by 2021, the Commission recommends the following:

R1	The contributions of projects and programs to the achievement of Greater Sydney plan outcomes within the proposed timeframes should be cumulatively assessed. Performance data should be collected to allow the assessment of progress towards outcomes and the identification of any gaps.
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1.3 Constraints

A key challenge in implementing the Greater Sydney plan is that Greater Sydney LLS' rates income – with a base of only 6,000 rate payers – is inadequate to cover the costs associated with the biosecurity demands of approximately 40,000 landholders on less than 10 hectares who require services but do not pay rates.

Funding for natural resource management has been reduced under Catchment Action NSW and National Landcare Program Phase Two since the Greater Sydney plan commenced. To access funding, the region is required to apply for grants aligned with investor priorities, potentially limiting the region's ability to invest in long-term and strategic landscape-scale

improvements. In addition, considerable staff time is absorbed in compiling the detailed three-monthly reports required before funds are made available.

The Greater Sydney LLS region confronts significant and growing biosecurity risks. The key risk is the gateway incursion risk created by tourism, ports and transport. Biosecurity risks in the region also occur through unregulated online trading of animals, hobby farms, difficulties in engaging with non-English speaking landholders, insect pest incursions and weeds from hay coming into the region.

2 Systems and processes supporting implementation

The Commission has determined that Greater Sydney LLS' planning and governance supports programs and projects that align with the actions, broad strategies and strategic objectives of its plan. IT systems provide good support for planning, implementation and reporting.¹²

2.1 Areas going well

F3 Planning processes support programs and projects that contribute to the implementation of the Greater Sydney LLS plan

Key planning documents include the:

- Annual Business Plan
- Linking National Landcare Program Phase 2 Outcomes with Greater Sydney Plan
- Greater Sydney LLS Management Unit Delivery Strategy prepared for National Landcare Program Phase Two¹³
- Greater Sydney National Landcare Program Phase Two Core Services Agreement
- Greater Sydney Regional Strategic Pest Animal Plan 2018-2023
- Greater Sydney Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2017-2022
- Greater Sydney Community Engagement Strategy
- Greater Sydney Communications Strategy and Annual Communications Plan
- NSW Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Strategic Plan 2018-2019
- NSW Emergency Management Plan.

The current Greater Sydney plan implementation relies on team-based planning of projects and programs that align with the Greater Sydney plan and the suite of other relevant plans listed above.

Key planning meetings include team meetings, annual planning meetings, cross-functional meetings and an annual staff summit to discuss regional priorities. Greater Sydney LLS operates with three teams which meet independently to identify functional area planning priorities in relation to the Greater Sydney plan, while also taking into account overall regional priorities (as discussed at regular cross-functional meetings and annual staff summits). Managers take the lead on annual planning with their teams, and communicate team plans to the rest of the organisation.

The activities, milestones, KPIs, MERI and reporting requirements are recorded for all projects in Greater Sydney LLS' integrated IT platforms.^{14,15} These platforms are structured up-front to capture and report all the necessary contractual details, financial and project management data.

¹² The proposed rollout of the new LLS state-wide IT platform ('myLAND') is causing some concern due to potential issues impacting Greater Sydney plan delivery, including anticipated difficulties with the migration of data, the time required to re-establish reporting systems, changing database structure (which risks the loss of some existing data), and the possibility that spatial data is read only.

¹³ Greater Sydney LLS (n.d.) *Management Unit Delivery Strategy Schedule 3 - Attachment A National Landcare Program (Phase 2 Regional Landcare Partnerships 2018-2013)*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

¹⁴ Greater Sydney LLS (n.d.) *Funding deed contract Agreement No: GS00451 and Event Report - GS00451*. Internal documents provided to the Commission.

¹⁵ Greater Sydney LLS (n.d.) *Project snapshots*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

Interviewees indicated that the organisation's focus is on efficient delivery rather than on over-planning. New projects have to align with the Greater Sydney plan and many other plans, so formalising another layer of planning documents is considered by staff as duplicative and unnecessary.

These systems and processes have served Greater Sydney LLS well by ensuring the alignment of new investments with the Greater Sydney plan and with other relevant plans. However, the consistent use of program logic and the aggregation of project outputs across years and across related projects would strengthen the planning process. It would provide an understanding of how much has been achieved, where enough has been done or if there are any gaps, and inform a sharper focus on key investment priorities for the next two years to ensure implementation of the Greater Sydney plan.

In response to National Landcare Program Phase Two requirements, Greater Sydney LLS prepared a review of the Greater Sydney plan to demonstrate its consistency with Australian Government requirements and where the outcomes, strategies and actions in the plan align with the National Landcare Program Phase Two investment priorities.¹⁶ Plans demonstrating capability in Aboriginal participation, community participation and natural resource management alignment are also required by National Landcare Program Phase Two, and are in preparation. Greater Sydney LLS can demonstrate these capabilities through, for example, its Local Aboriginal Advisory Group, community participation in programs such as wild dog control, and its work with small landholders to improve environmental outcomes.

F4 Governance processes support Greater Sydney plan implementation

The Greater Sydney LLS board comprises a Chair and six directors (three appointed and three elected), who bring diverse skills and independent thinking to their roles. The geographic spread of directors ensures local knowledge is brought to the board, which in turn improves corporate knowledge. The initial strategic challenges of bringing together three different organisations to establish the Greater Sydney LLS have been successfully overcome.

The Greater Sydney LLS board is characterised by its commercial and customer service focus. This is reflected by Greater Sydney LLS' success in gaining 32 new revenues projects from a broad range of government and industry sources across. Greater Sydney LLS has appropriate risk identification, management and mitigation measures in place. The required staff skills and expertise, resourcing, audit-ready processes and risk analyses are part of tendering for any new project. These components can be determined and checked by the board, board sub-committee or management staff, depending on the size of the project and anticipated degree of risk presented.

Board meetings are held bi-monthly at different centres in the region. They are supported by governance practices, such as structured and consistent meeting procedures and financial planning and reporting. The meetings are held over two days and include a half-day meeting with the remainder of the time being occupied by meetings with regional stakeholders and inspecting projects on ground. The General Manager and managers for land services (which includes natural resource management and agriculture), biosecurity and emergency services, finance and business – together with the Communications and Engagement Officer – report to

¹⁶ Greater Sydney LLS (2019) *Review of Greater Sydney Local Strategic Plan 2019*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

the board at each meeting.¹⁷ The Land Services Manager reports on safety, as they currently sit on the Risk and Safety Sub-committee.

Reports are structured under the strategic objectives of the LLS State Strategic Plan 2016-2026 and discuss recent and upcoming events, together with high-level project updates.

There are three sub-committees of the board. These include the Risk and Safety sub-Committee, the Biosecurity and Emergency Response Sub-Committee, and the Commercial Productivity and Sustainability Improvement Sub-Committee.

The board sub-committees receive detailed reports on project milestones, financials, timeliness and risks (for example, the Commercial Productivity and Sustainability Improvement Sub-committee receives a project tracker spreadsheet and a new revenues spreadsheet) and report any of these details to the board by exception.

Organisational culture was consistently acknowledged by staff and board members as positive, cohesive and respectful. Supporting this is a culture score of over 80 percent for each of the last two People Matter Employee Surveys. This result was attributed to good leadership.

Greater Sydney LLS has established the Greater Sydney Regional Pest Management Committee and the Greater Sydney Regional Weeds Committee but the Aboriginal Advisory Group is the only current Greater Sydney LLS local community advisory group. Although there have been multiple advisory groups in the past (up to six different groups), these groups are no longer in place. The last formal local community advisory group meeting was held by the Central Coast Community Advisory Group in August 2017. Greater Sydney LLS intends appointing a new local community advisory group but is currently waiting for LLS to advise on structure.

The *Local Land Services Act 2013* stipulates that each region is to have at least one community advisory group with members representative of the community. It could be argued that the Regional Pest Animal Committee and Regional Weeds Committee provide such representation alongside the Aboriginal Community Advisory Group. Greater Sydney LLS is reminded to consider the requirements of the Act in their deliberations regarding community engagement mechanisms.

2.2 Key findings to be addressed

F5 There is no formal organisation-wide system or process to guide consistent tracking of overall progress of Greater Sydney plan implementation

The Commission noted that in developing its annual business plan, Greater Sydney LLS has adopted the format of the LLS state-wide annual business plan. This plan includes Greater Sydney LLS project-based priority actions to meet KPIs and annual targets, and references program and other relevant plans but the format does not include explicit links to the Greater Sydney plan, stated outcomes or actions.

An annual business plan should assess the structure, resources and responsibilities of the business and provide a whole-of-organisation guide to implementing the Greater Sydney plan. In this context, and in the context of what can be achieved by Greater Sydney LLS before 2021, it is important that the business plan includes clear links to the Greater Sydney plan and that the regional focus of Greater Sydney LLS business is not lost in the broader context of LLS state-wide agreed outputs or investor priorities.

¹⁷ Greater Sydney LLS (2019) *Agenda – Greater Sydney LLS Board Meeting No: 43 – Lithgow – 13 June 2019*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

Greater Sydney LLS processes place insufficient focus on the collective contribution of all projects to the overall implementation of the Greater Sydney plan.

This could be improved by establishing systems or enhancing existing systems to track implementation of the Greater Sydney plan. Output data and metrics relating specifically to the KPIs in the plan should be collected and aggregated across related actions to provide a cumulative assessment of progress against plan strategies and ultimately against strategic objectives. This cumulative progress should be regularly reported to the Greater Sydney board and senior executive to inform their oversight and decisions.

At the functional area scale, the development and consistent use of a strong program logic would ensure greater certainty and clarity on the contributions of projects to the delivery of the Greater Sydney plan. This should also start to build a clearer understanding of any gaps and what still needs to be achieved to deliver Greater Sydney plan outcomes by 2021.

Project activities, milestones, KPIs, MERI requirements are already recorded in Greater Sydney LLS' integrated IT platforms, together with all necessary contractual details, and financial and project management data.^{18,19} However, they do not include program logic, documented assumptions, metrics specific to KPIs or baselines.

A broader program logic linking to the Greater Sydney plan and cascading to projects would be helpful. Principles that should be applied to this logic include:

- what outputs can feasibly be directly measured
- assumptions linking activities and outputs to their expected outcomes and identifying whether these assumptions have been tested or untested
- what metrics will be tracked
- baselines, if assessed as needed, and meaningful targets
- the feasibility of activities and timeframes
- a MERI framework identifying the data collection frequency and spatial scale required to show whether activities are delivering as expected and to inform future improvements.

Greater Sydney LLS has already identified baselines specific to current National Landcare Program Phase Two projects. This is an important step and it would be useful to assess whether these existing baselines can be applied to other programs or projects.

The impact of investments needs to be measured to provide an understanding of progress in implementing the Greater Sydney plan. This can best be achieved by establishing baselines wherever possible. The value of baselines as starting points from which progress can be measured should not be underestimated. They may be improved over time and reset if need be, provided the expected improvement in quality of information outweighs the increased resources and effort required to gather better data.

¹⁸ Greater Sydney LLS (n.d.) *Funding deed contract Agreement No: GS00451 and Event Report - GS00451*. Internal documents provided to the Commission.

¹⁹ Greater Sydney LLS (n.d.) *Project snapshots*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

To increase the likelihood that the region delivers the required outcomes within the timeframe stated in the Greater Sydney plan, the Commission recommends the following:

- R2 Greater Sydney LLS should ensure its business plan includes clear links to the Greater Sydney plan and establish:**
- **functional area program logics that provide a link between Greater Sydney LLS activities and Greater Sydney plan outcomes**
 - **a regional scale monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement framework.**

3 Reporting on local strategic plan implementation

The General Manager and other managers provide detailed qualitative reports at every board meeting. These regular reports on issues relating to implementation of the Greater Sydney plan are useful in providing an indication of the extent of activities contributing to Greater Sydney plan implementation. However, they do not provide a clear measure of progress to date or indicate how much remains to be achieved. Details are available on the implementation of all projects but cumulative reporting, particularly on actions contributing to key programs and outcomes, is needed to improve the transparency and understanding of progress and of organisational achievements.

3.1 Areas going well

F6 The Greater Sydney LLS reports on activities relevant to the outcomes of the Greater Sydney plan internally and externally

Detailed qualitative reports are presented to the board by the General Manager and by other managers on all areas of Greater Sydney business. Structured under the outcomes of the Greater Sydney plan, they cover program activities and also include, for example, Workplace Health and Safety, cross functional collaboration and financial performance.

These reports maintain the currency of board awareness of key issues and Greater Sydney LLS activities and are accepted internally as a general indicator of progress in implementing the Greater Sydney plan. Directors provided positive feedback on the usefulness of the reports.

There are a number of external reports, including:

- quarterly reports to the Department of Primary Industries on activities against the NSW Animal Biosecurity & Welfare Business Plan
- the Greater Sydney LLS Annual Report, which reports against a number of high-level State LLS specified outputs and includes information on activities such as pest control programs, managing biosecurity risks, travelling stock reserve management and landholder incentives
- reports to the Australian and NSW governments (for example, Catchment Action NSW and National Landcare Program Phase Two), which provide data on the extent to which programs and projects are complete and identify performance against milestones and spend
- reports via mixed media publicising Greater Sydney LLS activities.

External reports meet requirements specified by external stakeholders. They also provide some information to the board regarding achievements of Greater Sydney LLS through its activities, projects and programs. However, it is not expected that these reports provide information regarding progress towards Greater Sydney plan outcomes.

3.2 Key findings to be addressed

F7 There is no explicit reporting on progress towards Greater Sydney plan outcomes

Managers' reports to the board provide detailed qualitative information but none of the existing reports provide the cumulative progress information that is needed to demonstrate achievement of outcomes or progression towards implementing the Greater Sydney plan.

Many of the actions in the Greater Sydney plan are considered by Greater Sydney LLS as ongoing, with 2021 considered by Greater Sydney LLS staff and board as a point of review and reflection rather than an endpoint.

All project data including financial, spatial and MERI data are recorded in Greater Sydney's integrated IT platforms. This data is comprehensive and may be sufficient to permit aggregation of outputs to outcomes and demonstrate progress towards achieving the Greater Sydney plan. This process would be assisted through the consistent application of planning principles as suggested in F5 above and recommended in R2.

It is the board's responsibility to oversee and monitor the implementation of the Greater Sydney plan, so knowing the level of progress towards outcomes is critical to performing its role effectively.²⁰

Cumulative assessment of progress towards outcomes will provide some clarity to both board and staff on what still needs to be achieved and maximise the opportunities for strategic and operational decisions while options and time are still available.

Rather than waiting to perform a review at the end of the 2021 period, a regularly scheduled review (for example six monthly) providing information on cumulative progress towards outcomes against stated timeframes, would provide the required information for the board to make real-time strategic decisions and influence performance prior to 2021. It would also enable the board to provide a greater degree of assurance to stakeholders regarding cumulative progress over time towards Greater Sydney plan outcomes.

To increase the likelihood that the region delivers outcomes within the timeframes stated in the Greater Sydney plan and optimises its strategic performance, the Commission recommends the following:

R3 Greater Sydney LLS should review progress in implementing the Greater Sydney plan every six months and include cumulative information regarding the achievement of outcomes in its board reports.

²⁰ The *Local Lands Services Act* 2013 Section 29(1) states that one of the functions of the local board is to 'monitor the performance of Local Land Services in the region, including by reference to the local strategic plan'.

Attachment 1 – Overview of the Greater Sydney LLS region

The Greater Sydney region is the most populous and complex in NSW. It encompasses culturally and economically diverse metropolitan, peri-urban and rural populations, as well as spectacular natural landscapes and waterways which attract many local and overseas visitors (**Figure 1**). Agricultural enterprises include horticulture, turf and livestock including poultry, horses, goats and cattle. To facilitate service delivery, Greater Sydney LLS has divided the region into the Blue Mountains, Central Coast and Metro sub-regions. Three core services are delivered; natural resource management, agriculture and biosecurity.

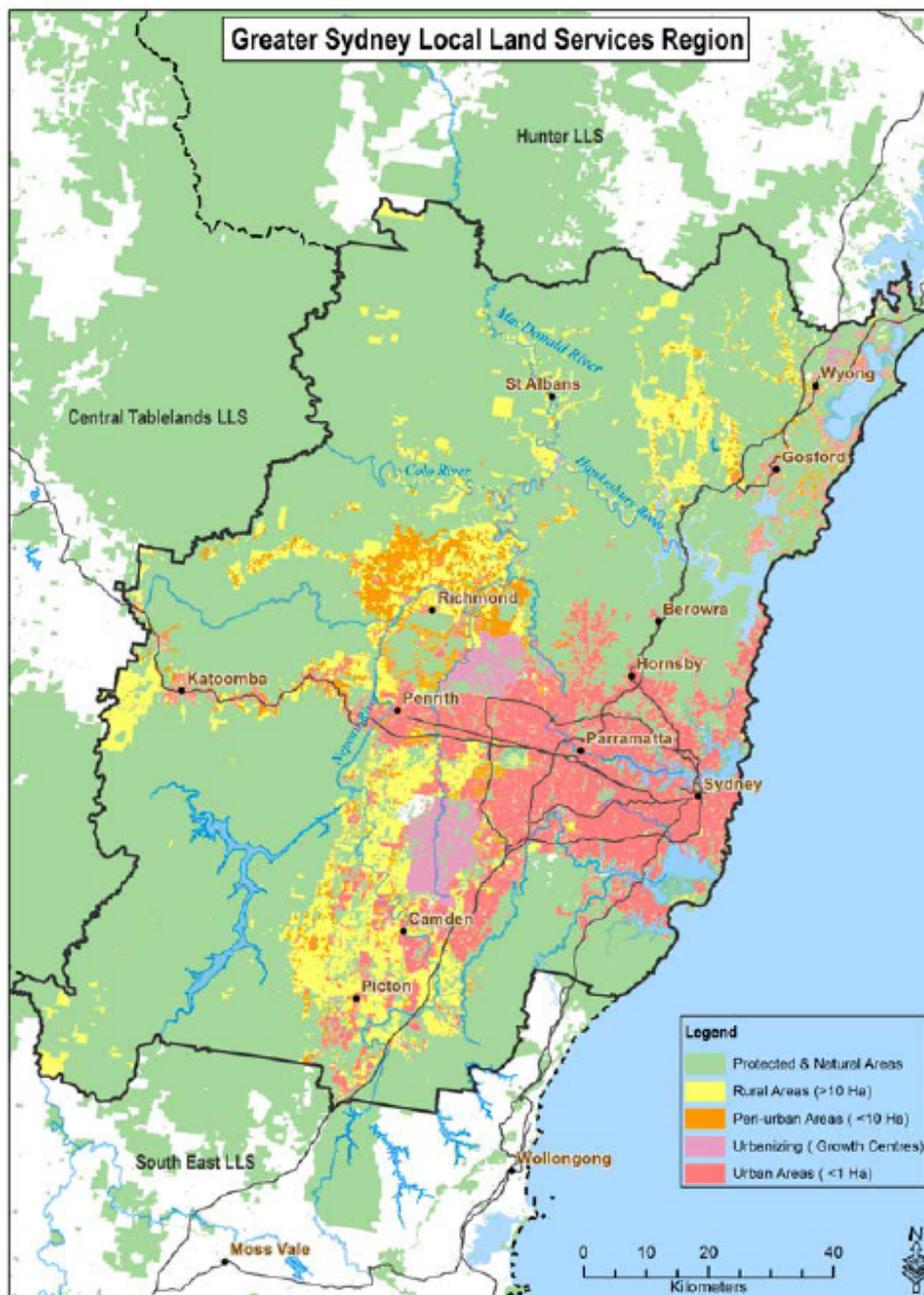


Figure 1: Greater Sydney LLS region²¹

²¹ Greater Sydney LLS (2017) *Greater Sydney Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2017-2022*. Available at: https://greatersydney.lls.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/722368/Greater-Sydney-Regional-Weed-Mgmt-Plan-29-June-2017_FINAL-web-res.pdf.

Challenges and threats facing the region include:

- significant and growing gateway incursion risks created by tourism, ports and transport
- identification, containment and control of incursions, for example, brown marmorated stink bug
- emergency management, including non-biosecurity (floods) and biosecurity (diseases such as equine influenza) disasters
- peri-urban and urban encroachment, including threats to regionally-based enterprises and shrinking availability of suitable agricultural land
- pest control, including wild dogs, foxes, deer, rabbits and pigs
- commercial and residential development often focused on water and waterways, with potential risks to Sydney drinking water
- river systems and wetlands vital for environmental diversity, aquaculture and recreational amenity heavily utilised by the regional population
- invasive pest animals and weeds
- insufficient resources to invest at a scale large enough to effectively manage natural landscapes.

Greater Sydney LLS delivers advice to primary producers, provides biosecurity and emergency management services, manages natural resources, brokers relationships and shares knowledge.

Operationally, Greater Sydney LLS comprises the Managers Team which includes the Manager – Land Services (natural resource management and agriculture), Manager – Biosecurity and Emergency Services and the Business Manager. The team leaders sitting underneath these managers are specialists in their particular fields (**Figure 2**).

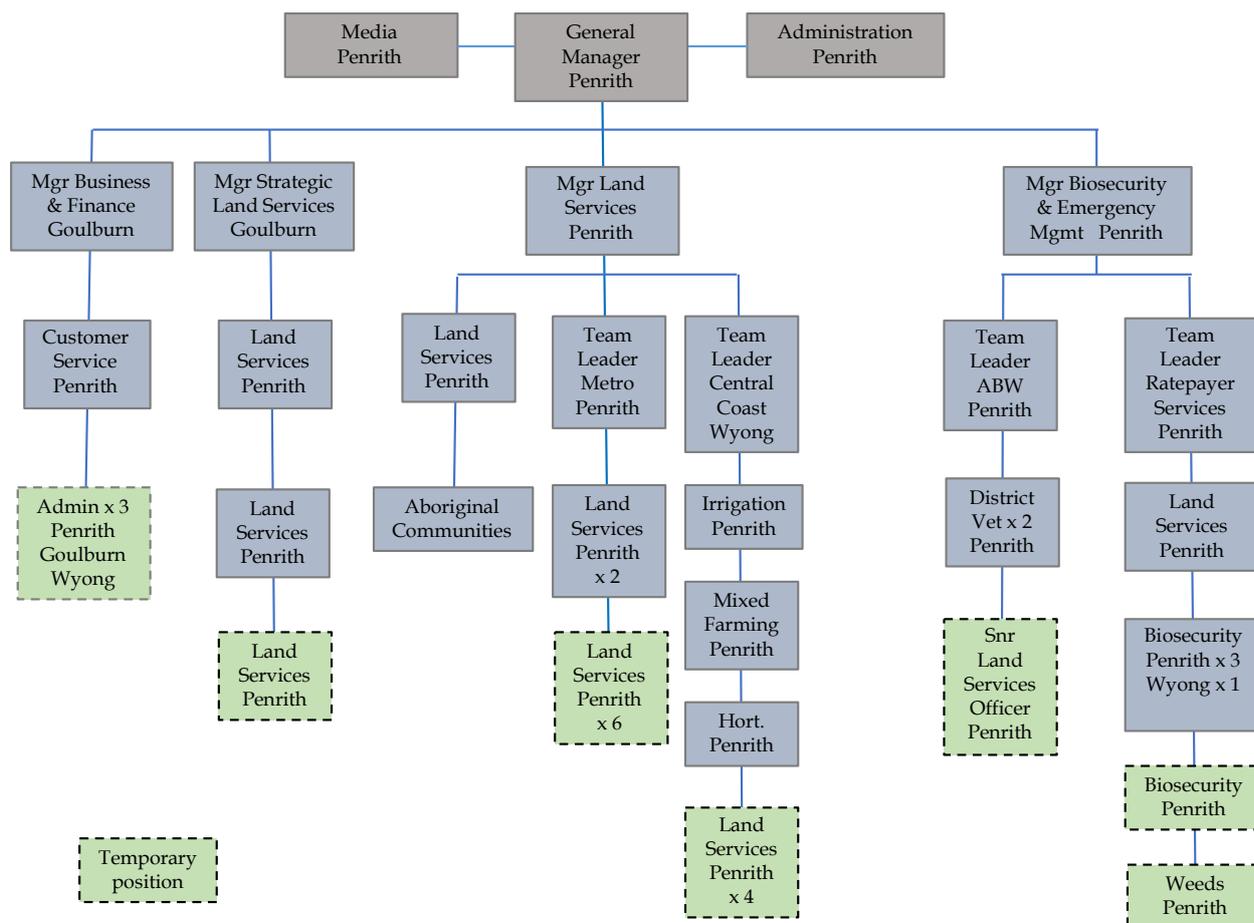


Figure 2: Greater Sydney LLS operational teams

All projects for 2018/19 are entered into Greater Sydney IT platforms. In addition to being aligned with the Greater Sydney plan, these projects need to be consistent with the requirements of other plans including the:

- Greater Sydney Regional Strategic Pest Animal Plan 2018-2023
- Greater Sydney Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2017-2022
- NSW Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Strategic Plan 2018-2019
- Greater Sydney LLS Emergency Management Plan
- Greater Sydney LLS Community Engagement Strategy
- Greater Sydney LLS Landcare Strategy 2015-2020
- Greater Sydney LLS Aboriginal Participation Plan 2016-2021
- Catchment Action NSW Business Plan
- National Landcare Program priorities

Board members and staff describe the Greater Sydney LLS as being, most importantly, a service delivery business. Customer satisfaction and confidence in the organisation is a priority together with biosecurity and profitable, sustainable agricultural businesses. These priorities are reflected in the work of Greater Sydney LLS. Statistics in its Annual Report for 2017/18 included:

- over 6,330 attendees at events
- responded to more than 2,200 customer enquiries
- 4,900 hectares managed for pest animal control
- 1,600 vegetable growers engaged through VegNET
- 529,125 hectares of bushland protected/enhanced.

Attachment 2 – Greater Sydney plan outcomes

Outcomes for the Greater Sydney LLS region, as stated in the Greater Sydney plan, are outlined below.

	Outcomes, strategies & key actions	Timeframe
1	Reduce risks from animal and plant pests and diseases	
1.1	Improve management of key vertebrate pests to reduce impacts on agricultural, environmental and social assets	
	1.1.1 Plan and co-ordinate priority regional approaches to vertebrate pest management	S
	1.1.2 Raise landholder and community awareness of vertebrate pest issues	SML
	1.1.3 Provide advice, training and pest control with landholders and groups	SML
	1.1.4 Develop and support vertebrate pest management groups	SM
	1.1.5 Ensure compliance with legislative requirements	SML
	1.1.6 Provide staff training in the safe and effective use of pest control products, machinery and techniques (SML)	SML
	1.1.7 Monitor and review vertebrate pest management programs for effectiveness	ML
1.2	Improve management of animal health risks such as Exotic Diseases to minimise impacts on producers	
	1.2.1 Plan priority regional approaches to animal health management	S
	1.2.2 Undertake regional passive surveillance for significant diseases of animals and residues on land	SML
	1.2.3 Undertake regional active surveillance for specific stock diseases and risks	SML
	1.2.4 Participate in state animal health programs including planning and preparedness for animal health/disease risks	SML
	1.2.5 Provide support for animal welfare programs	SML
	1.2.6 Raise stakeholder awareness and knowledge of animal health risks	SML
1.3	Improve management of plant biosecurity threats to minimise impacts on producers and environmental assets	
	1.3.1 Minimise plant biosecurity threats from pests and diseases -as per regional Plans	SML
	1.3.2 Respond to plant pest and disease incursions	SML
	1.3.3 Improve compliance with existing plant biosecurity regulations	SML
	1.3.4 Raise stakeholder awareness and knowledge of plant biosecurity risks	SML
1.4	Improve management of pest plants to minimise impacts on agricultural and environmental assets	
	1.4.1 Support and co-ordinate regional approaches to weed management	SM
	1.4.2 Deliver investment in weed management	SML

	1.4.3 Prevent the further spread of priority weeds	SML
2	Productive and sustainable agriculture	
2.1	Increase uptake of innovations by primary producers to further develop best practice	
	2.1.1 Perform a knowledge broker function for producers	S
	2.1.2 Develop and deliver available incentives to trial and promote advancement in best practice	SML
	2.1.3 Develop and support on-farm demonstration initiatives	SML
2.2	Increase knowledge transfer to primary producers to improve commercial viability and sustainability of resource use	
	2.2.1 Develop Customer Service Strategies for specific agricultural industries in the Greater Sydney region	S
	2.2.2 Implement Action Plans from the Horticulture, Irrigation and Mixed Farming Customer Service Strategies	S
	2.2.3 Explore opportunities for fee for service initiatives, including with other Local Land Services regions	SML
	2.2.4 Develop a technology bridge and transfer role, including transferring research and development outcomes to growers and industry	SML
	2.2.5 Provide independent and targeted agricultural extension advice to producers and industry	SML
	2.2.6 Participate in & support key industry representative groups and relevant initiatives	SML
2.3	Improve knowledge transfer and peer support for small area landholders to improve sustainability of resource use	
	2.3.1 Implement priority recommendations from Mixed Farming Customer Service Strategy for servicing peri-urban clients	SM
	2.3.2 Support peri-urban Landcare/biosecurity groups and network	SML
	2.3.3 Development of a Small Farms network to support small scale enterprise	S
3	Healthy harbours, rivers and waterways	
3.1	Improve the condition of priority waterways to enhance habitat value and amenity	
	3.1.1 Identify priorities for investment	S
	3.1.2 Develop incentive projects for implementation	SML
	3.1.3 Promote and disseminate educational resources	SM
	3.1.4 Develop targeted strategic cross tenure riparian weed control programs	SM
	3.1.5 Maintain and develop partnerships with local government and agencies	SML
3.2	Improve the condition of urban waterways to enhance amenity value, ecosystem health and the quality of receiving waters	
	3.2.1 Develop local government and agency partnership projects for priority urban waterways with incentive funding	SM
	3.2.2 Support capacity building initiatives for best practice urban waterway management	SML
	3.2.3 Support initiatives to minimise adverse landuse and recreation impacts	SML

3.3	Improve the condition of Greater Sydney's harbours and estuaries to maximise recreational, commercial and environmental values	
	3.3.1 Develop local government, agency and community partnership projects with incentive funding	SM
	3.3.2 Support the preparation and implementation of Water Quality Improvement Programs and Coastal Zone Management Plans	S
	3.3.3 Support initiatives to minimise adverse landuse and recreational impacts	SML
4	Healthy native vegetation and habitats	
4.1	Increase the extent and connectivity of priority native vegetation to improve ecosystem health and resilience	
	4.1.1 Identify priority locations for rehabilitation	S
	4.1.2 Establish partnerships with key land managers to support strategic rehabilitation projects	SM
	4.1.3 Deliver strategic rehabilitation projects through partnership and incentive programs	SML
	4.1.4 Raise awareness of priority vegetation management issue	SM
	4.1.5 Support and promote Landcare programs which improve vegetation connectivity	SM
4.2	Protect and restore key biodiversity assets such as wetlands and rainforests to improve ecosystem health and resilience	
	4.2.1 Identify key biodiversity assets for management	S
	4.2.2 Identify key threats to priority assets	S
	4.2.3 Establish partnership projects with key land managers to reduce threats or recover assets	SM
	4.2.4 Deliver incentives to land managers to implement strategic threat management projects	SML
	4.2.5 Support education and awareness initiatives which manage threats to biodiversity	SM
	4.2.6 Support and promote Landcare programs which protect biodiversity asset	SM
4.3	Implement the Native Vegetation Act to assist landholders to meet their legal obligations under the legislation	
	4.3.1 Fulfil Local Land Services obligations under Native Vegetation Act	SML
	4.3.2 Maintain the appropriate staff skills and resources to undertake assessments and reviews	SML
	4.3.3 Respond to requests for comment and assessment on development proposals where the Native Vegetation Act applies	SML
	4.3.4 Development of strategic plans, review of planning instruments and tools, where appropriate	SML
	4.3.5 Engage constructively with landholders and respond to native vegetation management inquiries	SML
5	Emergency Management	
5.1	Provide appropriate resources to enable delivery of effective Emergency Management to the community	
	5.1.1 Key natural disaster and Biosecurity risks identified and planned for in consultation with NSW Department of Primary Industries and key regional groups	SM
	5.1.2 Identify staff for key local and regional response roles	S

	5.1.3 Staff training and resource readiness	SML
	5.1.4 Engage with emergency management agencies to build partnerships and identify support needs	SM
	5.1.5 Educate ratepayers and community to facilitate preparedness, minimize animal welfare impacts and enhance recovery	SML
5.2	Deliver local Emergency Management responses to reduce the impact of emergencies on communities and promote recovery	
	5.2.1 Maintain required emergency response capacity and preparedness	SML
	5.2.2 Support NSW Governments emergency responses with a focus on local events and agricultural production	SML
6	Service delivery	
6.1	Develop a safe, skilled and customer focussed workforce as land management service providers of choice	
	6.1.1 Implement systems to ensure compliance with workplace health & safety policies and standards, and create a “culture of safety” among all staff	SM
	6.1.2 Align staff work plans with corporate objectives and strategies	S
	6.1.3 Maintain, improve and adapt staff skills for current and future service delivery requirements	SML
	6.1.4 Embed customer focus as a dominant cultural value	S
6.1	Engage customers and stakeholders in the delivery and improvement of Local Land Services	
	6.2.1 Develop and implement a Customer and Stakeholder and Community Engagement and Communications Strategy and Action Plans	SM
	6.2.2 Maintain and manage relevant stakeholder and community advisory groups	SM
	6.2.3 Develop the extension and marketing skills of program delivery staff	S
	6.2.4 Develop and implement a Landcare Strategy and Action Plan	S
	6.2.5 Activities which support Landcare	SM
	6.2.6 Finalize & implement the Aboriginal Advisory Group Strategic Plan	S
6.3	Implement a planning process and corporate structure that enables Greater Sydney LLS to deliver on the objectives of the LLS State Strategic Plan	
	6.3.1 Develop a Greater Sydney Local Land Services Local Strategic Plan that aligns with local planning needs and the Local Land Services State Strategic Plan	S
	6.3.2 Align the corporate structure to facilitate delivery of the Local Strategic Plan outcomes	S
	6.3.3 Work with agency partners to achieve cross function objectives	SM
6.4	Implement systems and processes that drive business improvement to respond to customer need	
	6.4.1 Maintain systems and processes that comprehensively support audit requirements	SM
	6.4.2 Develop and implement a focused monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement Strategy and Plan that covers all areas of service delivery	SM
	6.4.3 Support systems for data collection, storage and analysis to enable reporting and business improvement	SM
	6.4.4 Support processes that identify business improvement opportunities	SM

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.²² 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-2016.²³

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.

²² 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'.

²³ 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 effect²⁴ as the independent auditor²⁵ 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.

²⁴ 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'.

²⁵ 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"> 1. Systems fully developed and fully functional 2. Systems partially developed/ Systems partially functional 3. Systems not developed, ad hoc approach
To what extent have stated outcomes ²⁶ been achieved within set timeframes for each local strategic plan?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All stated outcomes achieved per set timeframes 2. Stated outcomes partially achieved 3. Stated outcomes not achieved
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"> 1. Progress reporting fully available, integrated and transparent 2. Progress reporting partially available, partially integrated 3. Progress reporting not available
What has worked well and what are the potential areas of improvement in LLS' local strategic plan implementation?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Areas for improvement identified are all low risk 2. Areas for improvement identified include moderate risk items 3. Areas for improvement include high risk items
What are the gaps/ constraints impacting performance?	N/A

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

²⁶ 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 5 – Interviewees

Functional Area	Role	Name	Date
Board	Chair	Robert Webster	28 June 2019
	Appointed Board member	Melissa Joseph	28 June 2019
	Elected Board member	Matt Collins	28 June 2019
Land Services	Manager Land Services	Paul Bennett	27 June 2019
	Manager Peri-urban Land Services	Vanessa Keyzer	27 June 2019
	Land Services Officer – Peri-urban Blue Mountains & Metro cross functional team	Angela Maier	27 June 2019
Agriculture	Manager Demonstration Farm	Peter Conasch	28 June 2019
MERI	MERI Officer	Alison Towerton	27 June 2019
Biosecurity	Manager Biosecurity	Graham Wilson	28 June 2019
Customer Service	Administration/Customer Service	Peter Freeman	27 June 2019

Note: The Acting General Manager was not available for interview due to personal circumstances.

Attachment 6 – Greater Sydney LLS action status

The results of a self-assessment undertaken by Greater Sydney LLS in July 2019 in response to this audit are outlined below. Various documentation was provided as evidence in support of this assessment.

Rating Complete

- 1.1.1 Plan and co-ordinate priority regional approaches to vertebrate pest management
- 1.2.1 Plan priority regional approaches to animal health management
- 2.1.2 Develop and deliver available incentives to trial and promote advancement in best practices
- 2.2.1 Develop Customer Service Strategies for specific agricultural industries in the Greater Sydney region
- 2.3.3 Development of a Small Farms network to support small scale enterprises (S)
- 3.1.1 Identify priorities for investment (S)
- 3.3.2 Support the preparation and implementation of Water Quality Improvement Programs and Coastal Zone Management Plans (S)
- 4.1.1 Identify priority locations for rehabilitation (S)
- 4.2.1 Identify key biodiversity assets for management (S)
- 4.2.2 Identify key threats to priority assets (S)
- 5.1.2 Identify staff for key local and regional response roles (S)
- 6.1.2 Align staff work plans with corporate objectives and strategies (S)
- 6.1.4 Embed customer focus as a dominant cultural value (S)
- 6.2.3 Develop the extension and marketing skills of program delivery staff (S)
- 6.2.4 Develop and implement a Landcare Strategy and Action Plan (S)
- 6.2.6 Finalize & implement the Aboriginal Advisory Group Strategic Plan (S)
- 6.3.1 Develop a Greater Sydney Local Land Services Local Strategic Plan that aligns with local planning needs and the Local Land Services State Strategic Plan (S)
- 6.3.2 Align the corporate structure to facilitate delivery of the Local Strategic Plan outcomes (S)

Rating In progress

- 1.1.4 Develop and support vertebrate pest management groups (SM)
- 1.1.7 Monitor and review vertebrate pest management programs for effectiveness (ML)
- 1.4.1 Support and co-ordinate regional approaches to weed management (SM)
- 2.3.1 Implement priority recommendations from Mixed Farming Customer Service Strategy for servicing peri-urban clients (SM)
- 3.1.3 Promote and disseminate educational resources (SM)
- 3.1.4 Develop targeted strategic cross tenure riparian weed control programs (SM)
- 3.2.1 Develop local government and agency partnership projects for priority urban waterways with incentive funding (SM)
- 3.3.1 Develop local government, agency and community partnership projects with incentive funding (SM)
- 4.1.2 Establish partnerships with key land managers to support strategic rehabilitation projects (SM)

- 4.1.4 Raise awareness of priority vegetation management issue (SM)
- 4.1.5 Support and promote Landcare programs which improve vegetation connectivity (SM)
- 4.2.3 Establish partnership projects with key land managers to reduce threats or recover assets (SM)
- 4.2.5 Support education and awareness initiatives which manage threats to biodiversity (SM)
- 4.2.6 Support and promote Landcare programs which protect biodiversity assets (SM)
- 5.1.1 Key natural disaster and Biosecurity risks identified and planned for in consultation with NSW Department of Primary Industries and key regional groups (SM)
- 5.1.4 Engage with emergency management agencies to build partnerships and identify support needs (SM)
- 6.1.1 Implement systems to ensure compliance with workplace health & safety policies and standards, and create a "culture of safety" among all staff (SM)
- 6.2.1 Develop and implement a Customer and Stakeholder and Community Engagement and Communications Strategy and Action Plans (SM)
- 6.2.2 Maintain and manage relevant stakeholder and community advisory groups (SM)
- 6.2.5 Activities which support Landcare (SM)
- 6.3.3 Work with agency partners to achieve cross function objectives (SM)
- 6.4.1 Maintain systems and processes that comprehensively support audit requirements (SM)
- 6.4.2 Develop and implement a focused monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement Strategy and Plan that covers all areas of service delivery (SM)
- 6.4.3 Support systems for data collection, storage and analysis to enable reporting and business improvement (SM)
- 6.4.4 Support processes that identify business improvement opportunities (SM)

Rating Ongoing

- 1.1.2 Raise landholder and community awareness of vertebrate pest issues (SML)
- 1.1.3 Provide advice, training and pest control with landholders and groups (SML)
- 1.1.5 Ensure compliance with legislative requirements (SML)
- 1.1.6 Provide staff training in the safe and effective use of pest control products, machinery and techniques (SML)
- 1.2.2 Undertake regional passive surveillance for significant diseases of animals and residues on land (SML)
- 1.2.3 Undertake regional active surveillance for specific stock diseases and risks (SML)
- 1.2.4 Participate in state animal health programs including planning and preparedness for animal health/disease risks (SML)
- 1.2.5 Provide support for animal welfare programs (SML)
- 1.2.6 Raise stakeholder awareness and knowledge of animal health risks (SML)
- 1.3.1 Minimise plant biosecurity threats from pests and diseases -as per regional Plans (SML)
- 1.3.2 Respond to plant pest and disease incursions (SML)
- 1.3.3 Improve compliance with existing plant biosecurity regulations (SML)
- 1.3.4 Raise stakeholder awareness and knowledge of plant biosecurity risks (SML)
- 1.4.2 Deliver investment in weed management (SML)
- 1.4.3 Prevent the further spread of priority weeds (SML)
- 2.1.1 Perform a knowledge broker function for producers (SML)
- 2.1.3 Develop and support on-farm demonstration initiatives (SML)
- 2.2.2 Implement Action Plans from the Horticulture, Irrigation and Mixed Farming Customer Service Strategies (S)
- 2.2.3 Explore opportunities for fee for service initiatives, including with other Local Land Services regions (SML)

- 2.2.4 Develop a technology bridge and transfer role, including transferring research and development outcomes to growers and industry (SML)
 - 2.2.5 Provide independent and targeted agricultural extension advice to producers and industry (SML)
 - 2.2.6 Participate in & support key industry representative groups and relevant initiatives (SML)
 - 2.3.2 Support peri-urban Landcare/biosecurity groups and networks (SML)
 - 3.1.2 Develop incentive projects for implementation (SML)
 - 3.1.5 Maintain and develop partnerships with local government and agencies (SML)
 - 3.2.2 Support capacity building initiatives for best practice urban waterway management (SML)
 - 3.2.3 Support initiatives to minimise adverse landuse and recreation impacts (SML)
 - 3.3.3 Support initiatives to minimise adverse landuse and recreational impacts (SML)
 - 4.1.3 Deliver strategic rehabilitation projects through partnership and incentive programs (SML)
 - 4.2.4 Deliver incentives to land managers to implement strategic threat management projects (SML)
 - 4.3.1 Fulfil Local Land Services obligations under Native Vegetation Act (SML)
 - 4.3.2 Maintain the appropriate staff skills and resources to undertake assessments and reviews (SML)
 - 4.3.3 Respond to requests for comment and assessment on development proposals where the Native Vegetation Act applies (SML)
 - 4.3.4 Development of strategic plans, review of planning instruments and tools, where appropriate (SML)
 - 4.3.5 Engage constructively with landholders and respond to native vegetation management inquiries (SML)
 - 5.1.3 Staff training and resource readiness (SML)
 - 5.1.5 Educate ratepayers and community to facilitate preparedness, minimize animal welfare impacts and enhance recovery (SML)
 - 5.2.1 Maintain required emergency response capacity and preparedness (SML)
 - 5.2.2 Support NSW Governments emergency responses with a focus on local events and agricultural production (SML)
 - 6.1.3 Maintain, improve and adapt staff skills for current and future service delivery requirements (SML)
-