



Natural Resources Commission

# Final report **Local strategic plan implementation audit**

November 2019



Hunter Local Land Services

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## **List of acronyms**

IT	Information Technology
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 Hunter Local Land Services (LLS) region covers an area of 33,000 square kilometres east of the Great Dividing Range, from the Goulburn River to the Hunter and Williams Rivers. The region extends along the coast from Lake Macquarie in the south to Taree in the north (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’ (see **Attachment 2**). The Hunter LLS local strategic plan (Hunter plan) was approved by the then Minister for Primary Industries in 2016.

The Hunter plan sets out the strategic direction for the five years between 2016 and 2021. It outlines how Hunter 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 12 outcomes that Hunter LLS is working towards. To support these outcomes, the Hunter plan includes 66 actions and 34 indicators of success.

The objective of this audit was to assess Hunter LLS’ implementation of the Hunter 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 Hunter LLS staff (see **Attachment 5**) and review of relevant documentation.

The Commission’s audit approach was to look at the broad intent of the Hunter 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 Hunter plan.

### Findings

Overall, the Commission found that implementation of all actions within the Hunter Plan is underway and that all outputs are documented appropriately. The governance systems and processes in place are adequate to support the implementation of the Hunter plan and are functioning effectively. Although the first full annual cycle of reporting under the new monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement (MERI) Strategy and Action Plan is not yet complete, the organisation is already taking steps to regularly report outcome Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to the Hunter LLS Board (the board). The Commission therefore has determined that Hunter LLS is likely to implement the Hunter plan by 2021, subject to implementation of the recommendations.

Particular achievements of note that offer significant contribution towards effective implementation of the Hunter plan include the development of the new MERI Strategy and Action Plan (the MERI strategy) and seven industry strategies.

The MERI strategy aims to do the following:

- Embed program theory in strategic work planning within the organisation. It includes three program logics that link day-to-day activities with Hunter plan outcomes.

- Streamline reporting, focussing on outcome reporting to track progress, rather than just reporting on outputs.
- Drive continual improvement by providing a formal structure for evaluation processes and review and improvement processes.

Hunter LLS' work on agricultural production has included the development of seven industry strategies that shape the implementation of the Hunter plan and are aimed at ensuring the delivery of Hunter LLS' services is shaped and targeted for each industry.<sup>1</sup> The industry strategies identify key stakeholders, strategic priorities, barriers to practice change and opportunities for Hunter LLS.

The Commission found the following constraint:

- The current information technology (IT) systems are controlled by LLS at the state level and is therefore beyond the control of regional LLS organisations. While they were deemed adequate to support Hunter plan implementation by Hunter LLS staff, in their current state they pose some risks to integrity, storage and the ease of retrieval of data. The Commission noted that a platform with increased functionality is being rolled out by LLS across the organisation. Although not yet tested by LLS, it is anticipated to address the current risks.

### **Areas going well**

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

- F1 Hunter LLS demonstrated progress against all of the Hunter plan actions identified in the Hunter plan and are on track with the implementation of most Hunter plan outcomes.**
- F3 Hunter LLS' planning framework has been effective in operationalising the Hunter plan and improving customer service delivery.**
- F4 Hunter LLS' MERI Strategy and Action Plan has helped embed program theory in strategic work planning, and increased the focus on continuous improvement and outcome reporting.**
- F5 Governance systems and processes have supported the implementation of the Hunter plan.**
- F8 Reporting to the board has evolved from activity-based reporting to outcomes-based reporting.**

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

The Commission identified the following areas for improvement:

- F2 Monitoring of achievements against Hunter plan outcomes has been limited.**
- F6 Hunter LLS does not yet have a natural resource management strategy in place.**
- F7 The MERI Strategy and Action Plan does not explicitly align with the Hunter plan nor does it identify the audience for reporting activities.**
- F9 Current board reporting does not provide clear, transparent and direct oversight of Hunter plan implementation.**

<sup>1</sup> Industry strategies have been developed for the beef, sheep, dairy, poultry, oyster, equine and wine industries.

## Recommendations

The Commission has outlined four recommendations:

- R1 Collect performance indicator data outlined in the MERI Strategy and Action Plan to inform analysis and decision making.**
- R2 Complete development of a regional natural resource management strategy currently underway.**
- R3 Make the following minor revisions to the MERI Strategy and Action Plan:**
  - Make more explicit the links back to the outcomes and the Hunter plan indicators of success.
  - Add KPIs to address gaps where Hunter plan indicators of success haven't been captured with MERI KPIs.
  - Explicitly identify the audience for reporting activities.
- R4 Include in the new outcomes-based annual or semi-annual report to the board:**
  - an updated assessment of the status of the complete suite of Hunter plan outcomes
  - an identification of key risks to achieving outcomes.

# 1 Achievement of local strategic plan outcomes

The Commission determined that there is progress towards all Hunter plan actions contained within the Hunter plan. While progress on 10 of 12 Hunter plan outcomes are reported as being 'on track', further performance data is required to enable an assessment of the achievements of two outcomes.

## 1.1 Areas going well

### F1 Hunter LLS demonstrated progress against all of the actions identified in the Hunter plan, and are on track with the implementation of most Hunter plan outcomes

The Hunter plan contains a total of 12 outcomes underpinned by 66 actions. A qualitative assessment of the status of these outcomes and actions was undertaken by Hunter LLS in the first quarter of 2019, in preparation for this audit. This assessment was based on feedback from team leaders and project leads, drawing on relevant performance data and referencing supporting information saved in the document management system, CM9.<sup>2</sup>

Of the 12 outcomes:

- Ten are reported as 'on track – progress satisfactory.'
- Outcomes 7 and 8 are described as 'on track – progress against actions satisfactory, further outcome KPI reporting required'. These performance data are due this year, once the first full year of implementation of the MERI strategy is complete.<sup>3</sup>

Delivery has commenced for all of the 66 actions underpinning Hunter plan outcomes, with implementation status outlined in **Table 1**.

**Table 1: Planned timeframes and self-assessed status of Hunter plan actions**

Planned Timeframe	Self-assessment of status (2019)			
	'Complete'	'Ongoing business'	'Commenced'	Total
Short (Years 1-2)	14	8	6	28
Medium (Years 2-5)	3	13	2	18
Ongoing	-	16	3	19
'As needed'	-	1	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>66</b>

In 2018, 2,187 properties were involved in baiting programs across the region and 6,730 pest animals (primarily deer and feral pigs) were removed as part of two aerial shooting campaigns assisting drought affected farmers in the Upper Hunter.

Wild dog management has been a particular focus in the Upper Hunter. The Professional Wild Dog Controller Program – a \$1 million joint initiative between Hunter LLS, the Hunter Valley Combined Wild Dog Committee and other partners – was launched in July 2017. Integrated with local wild dog management plans, the program aims to provide specialist wild dog control

<sup>2</sup> Supporting documentation was checked for two sample actions: 1.6 ('Provide information to priority stakeholders on biosecurity obligations, in collaboration with Department of Primary Industries'); and 4.7 ('Facilitate the development of a Hunter River Management Strategy'). In both cases, evidence was found to be sufficient to support the status assessment.

<sup>3</sup> Outcome 7: 'Support and partner aboriginal culture'; Outcome 8: 'Deliver consent and compliance services'.

in areas where agricultural production is under threat. In 2018, 611 wild dogs were reported shot or trapped across the region.

Hunter LLS' work focused on agricultural production has included the development of seven industry strategies that shape the implementation of the Hunter plan. The aim of these industry strategies is to ensure the delivery of Hunter LLS' services is shaped and targeted for each industry.<sup>4</sup> The industry strategies identify key stakeholders, strategic priorities, barriers to practice change and opportunities for Hunter LLS. The development of the industry strategies underpin partnerships which introduce resources and additional skills to address important delivery gaps. KPI reporting indicates that the organisation's approach has been successful in developing partnerships and leveraging external funding.<sup>5</sup>

In 2018, more than 10,000 people attended field days or training events aimed at improving management practices for economic, social and environmental outcomes. In the 12 months to April 2019, a majority of people who attended events reported increased knowledge and skills, and said that they are 'likely' or 'very likely' to implement practice change on their land holdings as a result.

A third key success area has come from Hunter LLS' work on healthy catchments. This includes the development of the Hunter River Management Strategy (action 4.7), which was adopted by the board in February 2019. Developing this strategy involved extensive consultation with key stakeholders across the diverse land uses in the Hunter LLS region. This strategy is accompanied by a 'decision support tool' which will help guide strategic investment and the delivery of activities across the range of stakeholders in the Hunter LLS region.

Alongside efforts in strategic planning, Hunter LLS also delivered a range of on-ground catchment projects. In 2018, this contributed to the 'rehabilitation and enhancement' of 167 hectares of wetlands and 573 hectares of native vegetation. In addition, 910 hectares of habitat for significant species or endangered ecological communities were protected or enhanced.

## 1.2 Key finding to be addressed

### F2 Monitoring of achievements against Hunter plan outcomes has been limited

Outcome performance data is limited, although the Commission recognises that efforts are currently underway to address this gap.

**Table 1** identifies six of the 28 short term Hunter plan actions as 'commenced – on track' or 'commenced – early stage'. It is expected that short-term actions would be completed by this stage of implementation (the third year), indicating some actions may be behind schedule.

Although it is clear that delivery of these actions has begun, it is not clear from the self-assessment what further work is required for their completion or whether delays in their implementation are likely to have a material impact on Hunter LLS' ability to achieve Hunter plan outcomes.

<sup>4</sup> Industry strategies have been developed for the beef, sheep, dairy, poultry, oyster, equine and wine industries.

<sup>5</sup> For example, the April 2019 board report highlights that 34 partnerships were established with target groups in the six months to December 2018 (including industry groups, Landcare or community groups, local government and NSW Government agencies). Over the same period, nearly \$2 million of external support (cash and in-kind) was leveraged from partnerships, building on the approximately \$5 million leveraged in the first half of that calendar year. During 2018, close to 20,000 customers accessed Hunter LLS services including information products, awareness raising events, skills development events and advisory services.

Where just one action is slightly behind schedule, the impact on outcome may not be material. Where more than one action under a particular outcome is delayed, the impact on that outcome may be more significant. For example, three out of four actions underpinning Outcome 9 ('Manage Crown lands') are described as 'commenced - early stage' in the third year of the implementation period.<sup>6</sup> KPI reporting relating to these actions indicates that activities have been 'on hold due to drought' for at least a year. Further feedback indicates that delays in the provision of state-level guidance relating to the management of travelling stock reserves may also have impacted delivery.

Systematic monitoring of outcome-level KPIs or regular self-assessment of outcome status, would enable the identification of delays to outcome achievement and timely remedial actions.

The Commission recognises that this is the first year that initial efforts to collect KPI data are currently underway. As such, the Commission recommends Hunter LLS:

**R1      Collect performance indicator data outlined in the MERI Strategy and Action Plan to inform analysis and decision making.**

<sup>6</sup> Action 9.1 - 'Collaborate with identified stakeholders to develop and implement the Hunter Regional Plan of Management for travelling stock reserves and other Crown Lands' (S); Action 9.2 - 'In collaboration with stakeholders, undertake survey and assessment of all Local Land Services-managed Crown lands to determine their values and capabilities to enable appropriate management' (M) and; Action 9.4 - 'Manage our Crown land in accordance with best practice grazing management, pest and weed control, and its environmental, cultural and recreational values' (Ongoing).

## 2 Systems and processes supporting implementation

The Commission has determined that Hunter LLS has developed adequate planning, governance and IT systems to support implementation of the Hunter plan.

### 2.1 Areas going well

#### F3 Hunter LLS' planning framework has been effective in operationalising the Hunter plan and improving customer service delivery

Written relatively soon after the creation of LLS, the Hunter plan aimed to set out the direction-of-travel for the organisation, while avoiding being overly prescriptive in shaping priorities and activities. While useful as a broad guiding document, there is recognition among the Hunter LLS' leadership that underlying systems would be required to shape the allocation of resources and targeting of efforts on a year-to-year basis.

Hunter LLS has taken a number of steps to further refine and operationalise the Hunter plan through their planning framework. Key components of this framework are described below:

- Strategic plan:
  - The Hunter plan, which is a five-year strategy, sets out the overarching priorities, goals and strategic directions for the organisation.
- Implementation Plans:
  - Annual business plans set out how the work of Hunter LLS will be delivered and how this will contribute to the delivery of the Hunter plan. It also describes the priorities for each of Hunter LLS's seven functional areas.<sup>7</sup>
  - Industry and land manager strategies (2018-2021) are internal planning documents aimed at defining the focus for Hunter LLS service delivery in relation to key industries or regions.
- Operational plans:
  - Service delivery plans: the three-year rolling service delivery plans translate higher-level strategies into day-to-day operations and shape the work of staff in each of the seven functional areas.
- MERI Strategy and Action plan.

#### F4 Hunter LLS' MERI Strategy and Action Plan has helped embed program theory in strategic work planning, and increased the focus on continuous improvement and outcome reporting

MERI processes at Hunter LLS were revised in 2017. The Hunter LLS MERI strategy was finalised in April 2018 and has been approved by the board. It is a quality strategy that has begun to be embedded in day-to-day operations. The aim of the MERI strategy is to drive continual improvement through:

- Embedding program theory in strategic work planning within the organisation, including three program logics which link day-to-day activities (in service delivery plans) with

<sup>7</sup> The functional areas include agriculture production, agriculture protection, travelling stock routes and reserves, emergency management, governance, business, customer services, communications, community engagement and Aboriginal engagement, and healthy landscapes.

Hunter plan outcomes.<sup>8</sup> Feedback from staff suggests that these logics have been useful in linking day-to-day operations with higher-level strategic outcomes. This has begun to shape organisational work planning and enabled staff to be more strategic as they develop service delivery plans.

- streamlining reporting, focussing on outcome reporting to track progress, rather than just reporting on outputs.
- providing clear guidance on undertaking evaluations. The strategy sets out a repeatable approach to selecting and prioritising projects and programs for evaluation based on multi-criteria analysis with a view to completing one or two evaluations per year. The purpose is to enable Hunter LLS to diagnose and inform design and to demonstrate benefits and impacts upon completion.<sup>9</sup>
- providing clear guidance on continuous improvement and learning reviews, which are shorter and less resource-intensive than evaluations. These reviews are scheduled on a regular basis and are documented in brief one to two page reports.<sup>10</sup> They include an assessment of what went well, what could be done better, what should be changed, and the key achievements.

The Commission supports these actions as they will enhance cross organisational learning, inform adaptive management and drive improvements to planning and delivery which will improve strategic performance.

## F5 Governance systems and processes have supported the implementation of the Hunter plan

Hunter LLS has developed governance structures that are aligned to the tiered planning framework (described above) in order to support the implementation of the Hunter plan.

The Hunter LLS board comprises a Chair and three board members that are appointed by the Minister for Primary Industries, alongside three board members that are elected by LLS rate payers. This structure combines a high capacity for strategic planning with insights into the priorities of the local community. The board helps to shape the strategic direction of the organisation, support the development of strong external relationships (including with investors) and plays an important role in communicating the priorities and concerns of customers to the board.

The board has also established three strategic board sub-committees; the Finance, Compliance and Governance Committee, the Healthy Landscapes Committee and the Agricultural Production and Protection Committee. These committees are chaired by board members with specific skills and experience in their relevant fields and make recommendations to the board on their particular focus area. These provide an important opportunity to link strategic oversight with operational delivery within the functional areas.

<sup>8</sup> Outcomes in the MERI Strategy and Action Plan program logics are based on 'clusters' derived from the strategic plan. The clusters are: Cluster 1 - Agricultural Industry Services (primarily related to strategic plan goals 1 and 2), Cluster 2 - Other Land Managers (primarily related to strategic plan goal 3) and Cluster 3 - Hunter LLS Business (primarily related to strategic plan Goal 4).

<sup>9</sup> Evaluations have focussed on the Land Management Grants Program, the National Landcare Program and the Upper Hunter Professional Wild Dog Controller Program.

<sup>10</sup> Continuous learning and improvement reports undertaken to date include assessments of the 2017 rating process, the peri-urban program and the Hunter LLS incentives program.

Hunter LLS has established program-specific regional committees including the Hunter Regional Pest Animal Committee and the Hunter Regional Weeds Committee. These committees comprise a range of board members, key members of Hunter LLS staff and external stakeholders. Committees meet at least four times per year and report to the board. The purpose of the regional committees is to provide advice to the board regarding delivery of relevant activities, develop innovative and effective land management recommendations, and involve community and stakeholders in decision making.<sup>11</sup>

There is one community advisory group; the Aboriginal Community Advisory Group. The group provides advice to the board on Aboriginal matters, including improvements to service delivery. They also provide advice on strategic direction, building relationships with Aboriginal communities, promoting recognition and Aboriginal cultural values.

The *Local Land Services Act 2013* requires each region to have at least one community advisory group, comprised of members who are representative of the community. The Regional Pest Animal Committee and the Regional Weeds Committee could be considered to provide such representation alongside the Aboriginal Community Advisory Group. The Commission understands the board is considering how to improve its community engagement and the role of community advisory groups. The Commission support this action and notes that requirements under the Act should be considered as part of these deliberations.

Hunter LLS' new MERI strategy has also been effective in establishing clear governance in relation to monitoring and reporting across the whole organisation. This includes setting out clear roles and responsibilities for the board, senior managers, the MERI team and operational staff. While it is still relatively early in the implementation of the strategy, this clear governance structure will help ensure that reporting requirements and responsibilities are met, and that there is a good line-of-sight between the board and Hunter LLS operational staff.

## 2.2 Key findings to be addressed

### F6 Hunter LLS does not yet have a natural resource management strategy in place

Hunter LLS has completed seven industry strategies in the area of agricultural production and protection, as well as strategies for the management of pest animals and weeds.<sup>12</sup> These strategies are implementation plans under the Hunter LLS planning framework. They have enabled the organisation to be more targeted in its delivery of services and achieve greater impact at the level of Hunter plan outcomes. However, an implementation strategy has not yet been completed for the organisation's natural resource management work.

Action 2.3 in the Hunter plan requires Hunter LLS to 'develop and implement strategies for biosecurity and invasive species, natural resource management, and agriculture advisory/extension services that clearly define the specific outcomes we are pursuing and the specific service delivery approaches we will implement.' The aim of these strategies is to provide a key link between the high-level outcomes of Hunter plan and operational considerations of the service delivery plans.

The reason that a natural resource management strategy is not yet developed is largely due to internal prioritisation processes, which identified the greatest strategy development need in the areas of agriculture and biosecurity. As a result, the functional area of natural resource

<sup>11</sup> Based on the terms of reference provided for a selection of regional committees.

<sup>12</sup> The seven industry strategies include beef, dairy, equine, oyster, poultry, sheep and wine.

management continues to rely on external funders' requirements to shape and prioritise work in this area.

Development of a natural resource management strategy would help to identify and shape the natural resource management regional priorities for Hunter LLS. While the requirements of external investors will continue to be a constraint, for any major funding program there is sufficient breadth in program outcomes to enable project design that aligns to both Hunter LLS and external strategic drivers.

The Commission recognises that Hunter LLS are already taking steps to address this gap with the board approval of the Hunter River Management Plan in February 2019 and the approval of the development of a natural resource management strategy. The Hunter River Management Plan has been an important piece of strategic regional planning and has enabled Hunter LLS to develop a decision support tool to inform resourcing and decisions.

The Commission recommends that work on the development of a regional natural resource management strategy is completed, drawing on a number of existing pieces of work including the Hunter River Management Plan and decision support tool, as well as elements that informed the former Catchment Action Plan.

**R2      Complete the development of the regional natural resource management strategy currently underway.**

**F7    The MERI Strategy and Action Plan does not explicitly align with the Hunter plan nor does it identify the audience for reporting activities**

Alignment between the MERI strategy and the Hunter plan is indirect and difficult to interpret. While both plans include the four overarching LLS goals, there is a lack of clear alignment between the MERI strategy's KPIs and the Hunter plan's actions, outputs and indicators.

The MERI strategy has grouped its actions and corresponding outputs and outcomes into three clusters; agricultural industry services, other land managers, and Hunter LLS business.<sup>13</sup> Program logics are presented for each cluster that set out the relationship between actions, outputs and outcomes.<sup>14</sup> Across all aspects of these logics, the MERI strategy identifies 55 KPIs, of which 13 are sourced directly from, and 12 are adapted from, the Hunter plan.<sup>15</sup> The remainder are derived from other sources (for example, external investor requirements).

In contrast, the Hunter plan sets out 34 indicators of success across 12 outcomes, under 12 strategies.

This situation is likely to be a result of Hunter LLS' efforts to set up the MERI strategy to:

- overcome some of the shortcomings of the Hunter plan
- embed an outcomes focus into their ways of working.

<sup>13</sup> 'Agricultural industry services' relates to Hunter plan goals 1 and 3, 'other land managers' relates to Goal 2 and 'Hunter LLS business' relates to Goal 4.

<sup>14</sup> Relating to short, intermediate and long-term actions, outputs and outcomes.

<sup>15</sup> The description of KPIs (in Appendix C of Hunter LLS' MERI Strategy and Action Plan) identifies the original source.

The lack of clear alignment between the MERI strategy's KPIs and the Hunter plan's actions, outputs and indicators of success creates a risk that any issues in the implementation of the Hunter plan are not identified in a timely fashion, and some aspects of the Hunter plan could get overlooked.

This lack of alignment could create some risks, specifically where actions have been delayed. An example is the indicator of success under Outcome 8 of the Hunter plan regarding landholder understanding of statutory and industry requirements for biosecurity surveillance.<sup>16</sup>

In the MERI strategy, this has been translated into a range of KPIs relating to Hunter LLS customer assistance and reduction in biosecurity threats.<sup>17</sup> However, none of these KPIs directly relate to the understanding of landholders in general about their statutory obligations. This is evidenced by the 2017 LLS Biosecurity Attitudinal Survey results, which indicate that 'only 17 percent of the Hunter population state that they have a strong understanding of what biosecurity refers to.'<sup>18</sup>

This risk could be addressed through relatively minor revisions to the MERI strategy to make more explicit the link between the MERI strategy KPIs and program logics and the outcomes and indicators of success in the Hunter plan. It would also be beneficial for the MERI strategy to include the audience for the listed reporting activities so it is clear that the board is receiving relevant information regarding progress towards Hunter plan outcomes.

It is not clear whether a conscious decision has been made by Hunter LLS to shift away from some aspects of its Hunter plan in creating the MERI strategy or whether it is seeking to use the MERI strategy to demonstrate progress against stated Hunter plan outcomes. Hunter LLS may decide that a formal amendment to the Hunter plan is an appropriate course of action in order to update its plan to better reflect its strategic direction.

In lieu of a formal amendment of the Hunter plan, the Commission is auditing whether or not Hunter LLS will implement its Hunter plan by 2021. To increase the likelihood that the region delivers its outcomes within the timeframes of the Hunter plan, the Commission recommends the following:

**R3      Make the following minor revisions to the MERI Strategy and Action Plan:**

- **Make more explicit the links back to the outcomes and the Hunter plan indicators of success.**
- **Add KPIs to address gaps where Hunter plan indicators of success haven't been captured with MERI KPIs.**
- **Explicitly identify the audience for reporting activities.**

<sup>16</sup> Outcome 8 - 'By 2017, landholders understand and are complying with statutory and industry requirements to manage livestock, land and native vegetation', and identifies the 'extent to which customers understand statutory and industry requirements for native vegetation management and biosecurity surveillance'.

<sup>17</sup> KPIs include the 'degree to which customers report Hunter LLS services assisted them to make informed land management decisions' and a 'reduction in threats from biosecurity threats, pests and weeds on farms accessing Hunter LLS services'.

<sup>18</sup> 'The result indicates that within the Hunter Region, a widespread gap in knowledge exists and that significant education is required'.

## 2.3 Constraints

Hunter LLS uses the standard suite of IT systems provided by LLS at the state level, including government agency systems where LLS has shared responsibilities. To some extent these are legacy systems being adapted to enable Hunter LLS staff to meet requirements.

These systems have supported Hunter plan implementation to date, although there are a number of difficulties in terms of data storage and ease of retrieval. Although not yet tested, the proposed roll out of 'myLAND' at the LLS state level may bring some improvement because it encompasses a web based customer (self-service) portal, and other features such as greater accessibility for officers working in the field or at home, and an asset management module.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> myLAND is intended to replace and consolidate the existing set of outdated systems with a SaaS (Software as a Service) solution to provide a platform that enables a range of customer-focused business improvements.

## 3 Reporting on local strategic plan implementation

### 3.1 Areas going well

#### F8 Reporting to the board has evolved from activity-based reporting to outcomes-based reporting

Hunter LLS reported to the board explicitly on the 12 output-level indicators of success between December 2015 and March 2017, using data derived from activity reporting in the Integrated Resource Management System (IRIS).

Prior to the development of the MERI strategy, both external and board reporting focused almost exclusively on outputs. This includes the Hunter LLS annual reports, which are short, externally facing 'highlights' reports.

The development of the MERI strategy aimed to provide guidance around monitoring and reporting requirements and increase the focus on reporting outcomes as well as outputs. The new MERI strategy states that the following reporting to the board will be undertaken:

- Six-monthly reporting, primarily on outputs and short-term outcomes.
- Annual reporting, with a greater focus on intermediate- and long-term outcomes, drawing more heavily on survey data (as per the Hunter plan indicators).

Although the process of KPI reporting is still evolving under the new MERI strategy, the increased focus on outcome-reporting is appropriate. It will enable Hunter LLS to better capture and understand the impact of the work they are doing, as well as helping the board better monitor progress towards Hunter plan implementation and provide strategic direction.

### 3.2 Key findings to be addressed

#### F9 Current board reporting does not provide clear and direct oversight of Hunter plan implementation

Reporting frequencies for KPIs are primarily described in two places; in the appendices of the MERI strategy and the annexure of recent board reports.

The April 2019 six-monthly board report included 17 KPIs. Of these, nine were taken from the Hunter plan (directly or indirectly linked). The remainder either related to other sources (for example, external funder requirements) or were newly developed as part of the MERI strategy.

The MERI strategy has not yet been through a full reporting cycle and the first round of annual reporting (both external and to the board) is currently underway. Annual board reports will include 27 KPIs. This includes 13 that are directly or indirectly linked to the Hunter plan.

The KPIs reported to the board do not align with the KPIs contained in the MERI strategy. This suggests that some of the reporting set out in the MERI strategy is not intended to be for board-level reporting. However, as the MERI strategy does not clearly identify the audience for each reporting activity, it is not clear.

KPIs are not directly and explicitly aligned to Hunter plan outcomes. In order to make that link, board members would be required to cross-reference the information in the board report, the MERI strategy and the Hunter plan. The MERI strategy also does not identify targets for any of the KPIs, so based on these alone it is difficult to assess the extent to which a particular outcome

has been successfully delivered. The systematic assessment of the status of all Hunter plan outcomes undertaken in 2019 is a one-off exercise and is not currently part of regular reporting requirements.

The net effect of these issues is that the board's oversight of the delivery of the Hunter plan is limited to interpreting KPIs that often only indirectly relate back to the Hunter plan. This creates a risk that the board will not be able to readily identify if the delivery of outcomes has fallen behind schedule (as discussed in F2 above).

The board has the responsibility to oversee and monitor the implementation of Hunter plan.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, knowing the level of progress at the outcome level is critical to performing their role effectively. This can be achieved:

- through more transparent reporting in relation to outcome KPIs (including a clear link back to the Hunter plan)
- by including a high-level, outcomes-based risk assessment (identifying any material risks to the delivery of Hunter plan outcomes) in annual reporting to the board.

This would enable the board to identify key issues, monitor the situation and (where possible) provide guidance on varying the approach to ensure the outcome can still be achieved.

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

**R4      Include in the new outcomes-based annual or semi-annual report to the board:**

- **an updated assessment of the status of the complete suite of Hunter plan outcomes**
- **an identification of key risks to achieving outcomes.**

<sup>20</sup> The *Local Land Services Act 2013* Section 29 (1b) requires the board to 'monitor the performance of Local Land Services in the region, including by reference to the local strategic plan'.

## Attachment 1 – Overview of the Hunter LLS region

The Hunter region covers an area of 33,000 square kilometres east of the Great Dividing Range, from the Goulburn River to the Hunter and Williams Rivers. The region extends along the coast from Lake Macquarie in the south to Taree in the north.

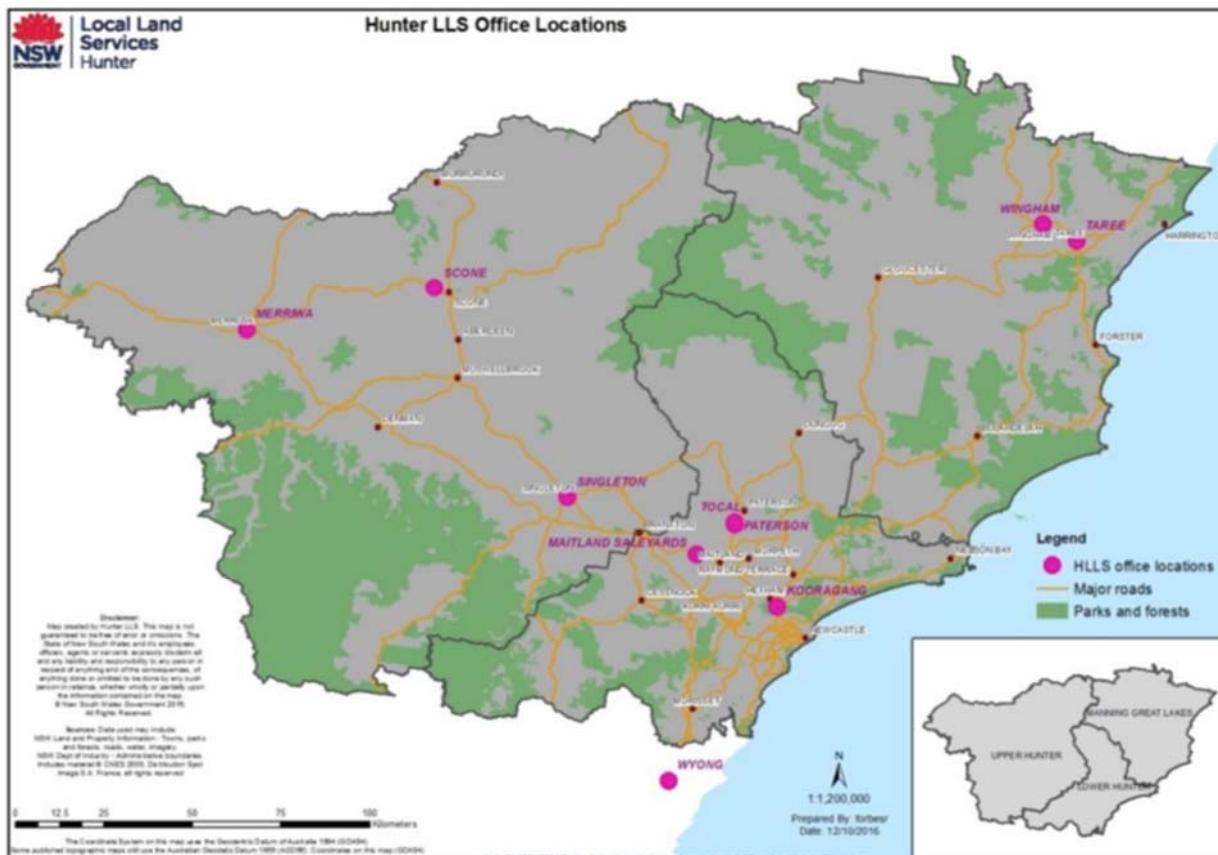


Figure 1: The Hunter region

There are around 670,000 people currently living in the region. The major population centres are in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie local government areas. Along with Maitland and Cessnock, these areas have experienced significant increases in population in recent years, while the population of rural areas has been in decline.

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

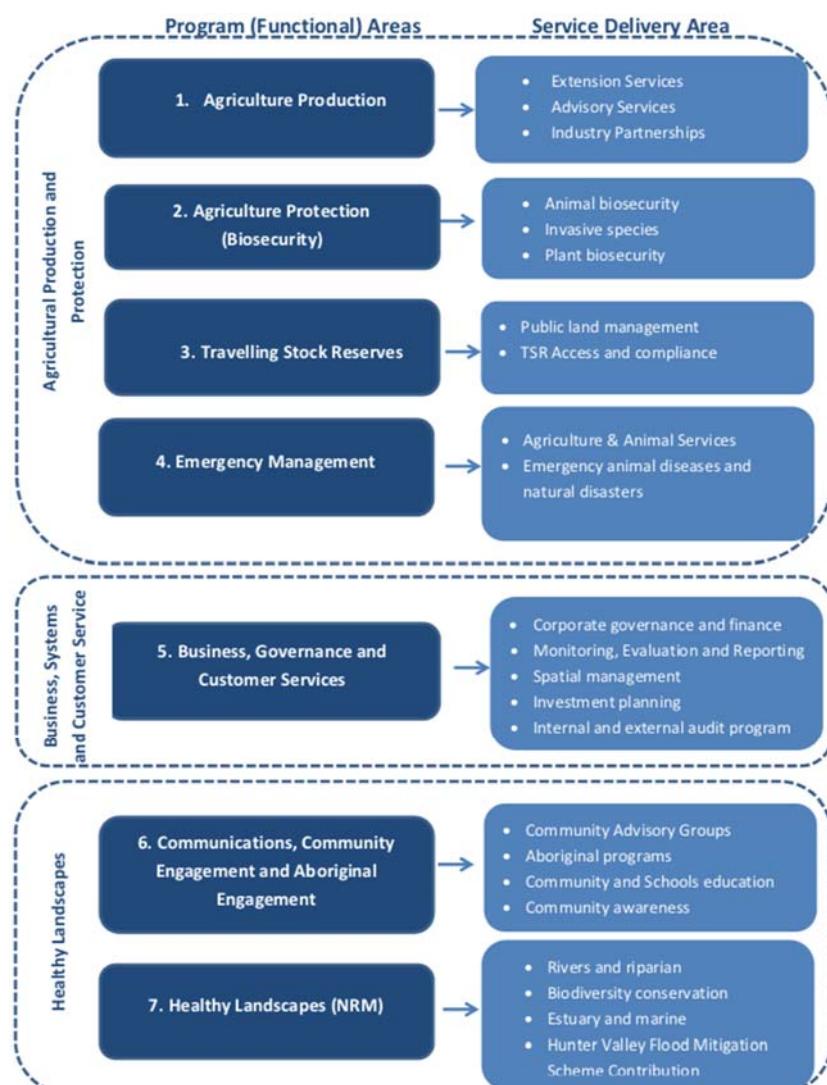
The region is home to the Barrington Tops and Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Areas, and seven national parks. The Hunter Estuary and Myall Lakes systems are Ramsar listed as nationally and internationally significant wetland sites for migratory and resident shorebirds. Port Stephens Great Lakes Marine Park has significant soft coral and sponge gardens, which provide important habitat for many marine species.

There are a number of major waterways and lakes. Groundwater aquifers in the region support town water supplies and agriculture, as well as several groundwater-dependent ecosystems. The landscape also has highly significant indigenous cultural heritage areas, values and elements.

The natural resources of the Hunter region have enabled the development of a wide range of industries, including tourism, agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries, coal mining, power generation, and recreation. Residential and commercial development dominates the coastal fringe. Grazing of beef cattle is the major agricultural activity in terms of land use and economic value. Other major industries are poultry production, dairying, sheep grazing, cropping and intensive horticulture. The region is internationally known for its thoroughbred horse industry and vineyards. The estuaries and coastal waters support the high-value production of oysters and other fish and crustaceans.

Operationally, Hunter LLS comprises seven ‘functional areas’, each with its own scope and responsibilities (**Figure 2**). Governance and oversight is provided by its board and the senior management team.

The Hunter plan is a high-level document setting out the broad strategic direction and the range of duties and services that are delivered by the organisation. Hunter LLS has developed a range of industry-specific strategies that sit below the Hunter plan, and articulate the strategic priorities within a range of important sectors. Day-to-day activities within the organisation are shaped by an annual business plan and team-level service delivery plans. The planning framework is shown in **Figure 3**.



**Figure 2: Hunter region program areas**



Figure 3: Hunter LLS' planning framework

## Attachment 2 – Hunter plan outcomes

#	Outcomes & Indicators of success	Method <sup>21</sup>
1	<b>By 2021, customers and stakeholders are able to access useful information to support their decisions in relation to biosecurity, natural resource management, agricultural production and emergency management</b>	
	Number of times communication platforms accessed	A
	Degree of customer satisfaction with information and knowledge provided	S
	Extent to which information and knowledge services support customers to make informed decisions	S
2	<b>By 2021, integrated services have helped primary producers and land managers in priority industries or landscapes implement improved practices for economic, social and environmental outcomes.</b>	
	Number of service delivery engagements or events conducted that are delivering integrated services	A
	Degree of customer satisfaction with advisory/extension service delivery	S
	Extent to which customers report that advisory/extension services have assisted with practice improvement (including the proportion that are from our priority stakeholder groups)	S
	Extent to which biosecurity issues are being better managed (as a result of LLS actions)	S
	Extent to which natural resources are being better managed (as a result of LLS actions)	S
3	<b>By 2021, the capacity of industries and communities to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from biosecurity and natural disaster emergencies has improved.</b>	
	Number of assessments of preparedness completed	A
	Degree to which emergency management services have increased community preparedness for biosecurity and natural disaster emergencies	S
	Degree to which coordination of, and response to, any emergencies has improved	S
4	<b>By 2021, Hunter Local Land Services is working in effective partnerships with stakeholders with similar goals and priorities to add value to service delivery.</b>	
	Number of partnerships established	A
	Degree of partner satisfaction with Hunter Local Land Services partnerships	S
	Extent to which partnerships are adding value to Local Land Services' services	S
5	<b>By 2021, local people, partners and stakeholders are participating effectively in Local Land Services decision-making</b>	
	Number of opportunities to participate in planning and decision-making	A
	Number of inputs into key Local Land Services plans	A
	Degree to which community and Aboriginal community advisory groups are satisfied with contributions to Local Land Services decision-making	S

<sup>21</sup> A: Measured by activity reporting; S: Measured by survey.

#	Outcomes & Indicators of success	Method <sup>21</sup>
6	<b>By 2021, Hunter Local Land Services has facilitated partnerships to fill knowledge gaps through research and development.</b>	
	Number of partnerships between research and industry groups to identify and address knowledge gaps to improve the adoption of sustainable practices	A
	Number of times outcomes from research have been incorporated in extension and advisory services	S
7	<b>By 2021, support for Aboriginal people to care for Country and practice traditional land management has increased.</b>	
	Number of employment and training opportunities identified and implemented	A
	Degree to which Aboriginal Community Advisory Group is satisfied with contributions to Local Land Services decision-making	S
	Number of partnerships between Aboriginal groups and other stakeholders facilitated by Local Land Services	A
8	<b>By 2017, landholders understand and are complying with statutory and industry requirements to manage livestock, land and native vegetation.</b>	
	Number of information products/advisory engagements	A
	Extent to which customers understand statutory and industry requirements for native vegetation management, biosecurity surveillance	S
	(A low) number of compliance or enforcement actions in the region	A
9	<b>By 2021, Local Land Services-managed Crown lands, particularly travelling stock reserves, are managed consistent with best practice.</b>	
	Extent to which travelling stock reserves are being managed in accordance with the Plan of Management	S
	Extent to which key stakeholders are satisfied with management of Local Land Services-managed Crown Lands	S
10	<b>Between 2016 and 2021, Board members and staff are appropriately skilled and focused on delivering results and quality customer service</b>	
	Level of staff and Board satisfaction as measured by Employee Matters survey and Board surveys	S
	Degree of customer satisfaction with Local Land Services Board and staff	S
11	<b>Between 2016 and 2021, Hunter Local Land Services implements best practice business management and reduces red tape.</b>	
	Number of internal continuous improvement activities incorporated into business processes	A
	Degree to which MERI framework is useful	S
12	<b>Between 2016 and 2021, Hunter Local Land Services has a safe and sustainable organisation.</b>	
	Number of work, health and safety near misses	A
	Level of staff and Board satisfaction as measured by Employee Matters survey and Board surveys	S
	Level of investor satisfaction	S

## 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>22</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>23</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.

<sup>22</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>23</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>24</sup> as the independent auditor<sup>25</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.

<sup>24</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>25</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>26</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>26</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 5 – Interviewees

Functional Area	Role	Name	Date
Board	Chair	Lindy Hyam	23 May 2019
	Appointed Board member	Tony Hegarty	22 May 2019
	Elected Board member	Art Brown	23 May 2019
Leadership	General Manager	Brett Miners	22 May 2019
Agricultural Production & Protection	Manager	Andrew Hodgson	22 May 2019
	Team Leader (Agricultural Extension)	Simon Turpin	22 May 2019
	Agricultural Extension Officer	Albert Mullen	22 May 2019
Healthy Landscapes	Manager	Joe Thompson	23 May 2019
	Team Leader (Hunter Catchment Programs)	Camilla Cowley	23 May 2019
	Advisory Officer (Estuary River Management)	Jenny Weingott	23 May 2019
MERI	Development and Improvement Officer	Claire Parkes	22 May 2019
	MERI Officer	Sue Rowland	22 May 2019

## Attachment 6 – Hunter LLS outcome and action status

The information in the table below is sourced from the Hunter LLS self-assessment undertaken in March/April 2019 regarding strategic plan implementation.

#	Outcomes & Actions	Timeframe <sup>27</sup>	Status
1	<b>By 2021, customers and stakeholders are able to access useful information to support their decisions in relation to biosecurity, natural resource management, agricultural production and emergency management</b>	2021	On track - progress satisfactory
1.1	Improve systems for communication with customers	S	Commenced - on track
1.2	Review information needs of Local Land Services customers and stakeholder	S	Complete
1.3	Develop Communications and Engagement Implementation Strategy	S	Complete
1.4	Deliver communication services tailored to meet local needs	Ongoing	Ongoing business
1.5	Develop and make available information that is evidence-based and adaptive to existing and emerging risks	M	Ongoing business
1.6	Provide information to priority stakeholders on biosecurity obligations, in collaboration with Department of Primary Industries	M	Ongoing business
1.7	Identify and empower local leaders, experts and champions to provide information and inspire others	M	Ongoing business
2	<b>By 2021, integrated services have helped primary producers and land managers in priority industries or landscapes implement improved practices for economic, social and environmental outcomes.</b>		On track - progress satisfactory
2.1	Work with priority stakeholders to understand their needs across our biosecurity, natural resource management, agricultural production, and emergency management services	S	Complete and ongoing business
2.2	Deliver services to primary producers and land managers using a whole-of-property and triple bottom line approach	Ongoing	Ongoing business
2.3	Develop implementation strategies for Biosecurity & Invasive Species, Natural Resource Management, and Agriculture Advisory/Extension Services that clearly define the specific outcomes we are pursuing and the specific service delivery approaches we will implement	S	Commenced - on track
3	<b>By 2021, the capacity of industries and communities to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from biosecurity and natural disaster emergencies has improved.</b>		On track - progress satisfactory
3.1	Provide information to primary producers and communities on key contacts, responsibilities and processes in emergency management, in collaboration with Department of Primary Industries	S	Complete
3.2	Train Hunter Local Land Services staff in the range of emergency management functions	S	Commenced - on track

<sup>27</sup> S – Short-term actions (years 1-2); M – Medium-term actions (years 2-5); O – Ongoing actions.

#	Outcomes & Actions	Timeframe <sup>27</sup>	Status
3.3	Conduct surveillance and monitoring of animal pests, diseases and welfare, and plant pests and diseases	Ongoing	Ongoing business
3.4	Review preparedness of industries and communities for biosecurity, natural disaster and other emergencies, in collaboration with Department of Primary Industries	S	Complete
3.5	Develop Hunter Emergency Management Operational Plan	S	Commenced - on track
3.6	Provide advisory/extension and support services to assist industries and communities to prevent, and prepare for, biosecurity incidents and natural disaster emergencies, including support to incorporate emergency management in property plans	Ongoing	Ongoing business
3.7	Participate in local and regional emergency management committees	Ongoing	Ongoing business
3.8	Respond to emergencies in accordance with agreed procedures, and assist in recoveries	As needed	Ongoing business
3.9	Provide support to the effective operation of the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme including the review of the Scheme	M	Complete
4	<b>By 2021, Hunter Local Land Services is working in effective partnerships with stakeholders with similar goals and priorities to add value to service delivery.</b>		<b>On track - progress satisfactory</b>
4.1	Identify priorities for industry, community and government partnerships	S	Complete
4.2	Develop and support priority groups to engage in effective strategic partnerships with Hunter Local Land Services	Ongoing	Ongoing business
4.3	Deliver a Landcare Support Program with farmers, fishers, and land managers to achieve priority landcare outcomes	Ongoing	Ongoing business
4.4	Collaborate with Department of Primary Industries to implement the new Biosecurity Act 2015	M	Complete
4.5	Collaborate with Office of Environment & Heritage on biodiversity policy reforms to deliver native vegetation management that achieves social, economic and environmental outcomes, and cultural heritage reforms that are informed by the views of the Hunter Aboriginal community	S	Complete
4.6	Collaborate with weeds authorities and land managers to deliver effective weed management, and develop Regional Weeds Strategy	Ongoing	Ongoing business - Weed Strategy Complete
4.7	Facilitate the development of a Hunter River Management Strategy	M	Complete
4.8	Collaborate with water managers on water quality and water resource availability	M	Complete
4.9	Support the delivery of the National Landcare Program, Catchment Action NSW, the Green Army Program, and other government programs	Ongoing	Ongoing business
4.10	Respond to any other regional planning initiatives that are likely to have impacts on the productivity of agriculture or the natural environment	M	Ongoing business

#	Outcomes & Actions	Timeframe <sup>27</sup>	Status
<b>5</b>	<b>By 2021, local people, partners and stakeholders are participating effectively in Local Land Services decision-making</b>		<b>On track - progress satisfactory</b>
5.1	Develop and maintain effective advisory groups that provide input to, and feedback on, Local Land Services priorities and service delivery	Ongoing	Ongoing business
5.2	Identify opportunities for ongoing customer and stakeholder participation in decision-making, and integrate into Communications and Engagement Strategy and our strategic partnership approach	S	Complete
5.3	Utilise appropriate tools for participation and ensure transparency in Local Land Services decisions	Ongoing	Ongoing business
<b>6</b>	<b>By 2021, Hunter Local Land Services has facilitated partnerships to fill knowledge gaps through research and development.</b>		<b>On track - progress satisfactory</b>
6.1	Work with research organisations and industry groups to identify knowledge gaps and prioritise research and development projects	S	Ongoing business
6.2	Support primary producers and community groups to undertake applied research and development trials to improve practices	M	Ongoing business
6.3	Disseminate research and development outcomes through advisory, extension and information services to facilitate on-ground practice change	Ongoing	Ongoing business
<b>7</b>	<b>By 2021, support for Aboriginal people to care for Country and practice traditional land management has increased.</b>		<b>On track - progress against actions satisfactory</b> <b>Further outcome KPI data required</b>
7.1	Work with the Aboriginal Community Advisory Group to set priorities and develop a program of activities for improving training opportunities	S	Complete and ongoing business
7.2	Develop a Regional Aboriginal Engagement and Employment Program	S	Commenced - early stage
7.3	Facilitate and assist in negotiations between the Aboriginal community and other stakeholders to develop employment opportunities and training projects	Ongoing	Ongoing business
7.4	Develop rapport with the Aboriginal community by understanding and promoting Aboriginal cultural competency	Ongoing	Ongoing business
7.5	Provide capacity building, financial incentives and assistance in land and sea management	Ongoing	Ongoing business
7.6	Promote best practice cultural heritage management on LLS-managed land	Ongoing	Commenced - early stage
<b>8</b>	<b>By 2017, landholders understand and are complying with statutory and industry requirements to manage livestock, land and native vegetation.</b>		<b>On track - progress against actions satisfactory</b> <b>Further outcome KPI data required</b>
8.1	Provide native vegetation clearing consent and assist landholders to understand and comply with native vegetation clearing approval requirements	S	Complete and ongoing business

#	Outcomes & Actions	Timeframe <sup>27</sup>	Status
8.2	Provide best practice native vegetation management advice as part of a triple bottom line whole of property and enterprise approach	S	Complete and ongoing business
8.3	Provide information and education services to assist landholders comply with weed, pest, disease and animal health and welfare requirements	S	Complete and ongoing business
8.4	Undertake compliance action where information and support programs are not effective and conduct enforcement action as a last resort	S	Ongoing business
<b>9</b>	<b>Improved management of North West Local Land Services managed crown land for environmental, social, and economic outcomes.</b>		<b>On track - progress satisfactory</b>
9.1	Collaborate with identified stakeholders to develop and implement the Hunter Regional Plan of Management for travelling stock reserves and other Crown Lands	S	Commenced - early stage
9.2	In collaboration with stakeholders, undertake survey and assessment of all Local Land Services-managed Crown lands to determine their values and capabilities to enable appropriate management	M	Commenced - early stage
9.3	Provide information to users of Crown land as to their biosecurity and natural resource management responsibilities	M	Ongoing business
9.4	Manage our Crown land in accordance with best practice grazing management, pest and weed control, and its environmental, cultural and recreational values	Ongoing	Commenced - early stage
<b>10</b>	<b>North West Local Land Services has an improved customer and stakeholder focus and an increased level of highly trained and skilled staff</b>		<b>On track - progress satisfactory</b>
10.1	Implement Professional Development Plans for all staff and invest in development and training	S	Complete
10.2	Promote a unified staff culture through a Culture Development Program	S	Complete
10.3	Develop and implement a Customer Service Charter	S	Complete
10.4	Put customer and staff feedback mechanisms in place to continually improve local service delivery	S	Complete
10.5	Foster, retain and empower a skilled and experienced workforce with capacity for customer service and advisory/extension services	M	Complete
<b>11</b>	<b>Collaboration, innovation and continual improvement promote a valued-based culture in North West Local Land Services</b>		<b>On track - progress satisfactory</b>
11.1	Review and reduce red tape and transaction costs to customers and staff	Ongoing	Ongoing business
11.2	Review changes in the operating environment of Local Land Services, particularly related to biodiversity and biosecurity legislation, and ensure customers and staff are informed	S	Ongoing business
11.3	Review and utilise a Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) framework that drives continuous improvement, usefully contributes to strategic planning and business efficiency, and ensures long term/enduring outcomes are achieved	S	Complete

#	Outcomes & Actions	Timeframe <sup>27</sup>	Status
11.4	Develop and implement a Business Improvement Program	S	Complete
11.5	Review and reduce duplication of systems and activities	M	Ongoing business
11.6	Provide reliable and functional information and communications technologies to continually improve Local Land Services staff and customer interactions	M	Ongoing business
11.7	Evaluate our service delivery and major programs against NSW Performance Standard for Local Land Services on an annual basis	Ongoing	Ongoing business
11.8	Establish a culture of identifying and implementing innovative practices with staff and customers	M	Commenced - on track
11.9	Provide transparency in LLS processes through publicly reporting on Board and community advisory group meetings	Ongoing	Commenced - on track
12	<b>Between 2016 and 2021, Hunter Local Land Services has a safe and sustainable organisation.</b>		<b>On track - progress satisfactory</b>
12.1	Implement an effective work, health and safety system across the organisation	S	Complete
12.2	Undertake best practice budget and financial management to ensure a financially viable business	M	Ongoing business
12.3	Develop and implement financial and corporate governance procedures that facilitate local, consistent and transparent decision making that meets government requirements	M	Ongoing business