



Natural Resources Commission

Final report

Local strategic plan implementation audit

November 2019

Western Local Land Services

Enquiries

Enquiries about this report should be directed to:

Name	Marguerite Collins
Phone	(02) 9228 4844
Fax	(02) 9228 4970
E-Mail	marguerite.collins@nrc.nsw.gov.au
Postal address	GPO Box 5341, Sydney NSW 2001

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

This work is copyright. The *Copyright Act 1968* permits fair dealing for study, research, news reporting, criticism and review. Selected passages, table or diagrams may be reproduced for such purposes provided acknowledgement of the source is included.

Document No. D19/3744

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

Table of Contents

Executive summary	1
1 Achievement of local strategic plan outcomes	3
1.1 Areas going well	3
1.2 Key finding to be addressed	5
1.3 Constraints	7
2 Systems and processes supporting implementation	9
2.1 Areas going well	9
2.2 Key findings to be addressed	11
2.3 Constraints	12
3 Reporting on local strategic plan implementation	13
3.1 Areas going well	13
3.2 Key findings to be addressed	14
Attachment 1 - Overview of the Western LLS region	15
Attachment 2 - Western plan outcomes	18
Attachment 3 - Audit overview	21
Attachment 4 - Scope of works	22
Attachment 5 - Interviewees	24
Attachment 6 - Western LLS action status	25

Executive summary

Background

The Western Local Land Services (LLS) region covers an area of 314,500 square kilometres, which is 40 percent of NSW. It stretches between the Queensland and Victorian borders and from the South Australian border to Brewarrina, Hillston and Balranald in the east. Severe drought is currently eroding land manager equity, assets, productivity and profitability (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 Western LLS Local Strategic Plan (Western plan) was approved by the Minister in 2016.

The Western plan sets out the strategic direction for the five years between 2016 and 2021. It outlines how Western 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 three five-year objectives that define the 'outcomes' that Western LLS is working towards. To support these outcomes, the Western plan includes 17 strategies, 72 applicable actions and 21 key performance indicators (KPIs) to be achieved by 2020.

The Western plan was developed prior to the LLS State Strategic Plan. It has three outcomes informed by Western regional priorities as opposed to the four goals in the LLS State Strategic Plan. However these outcomes, together with the Western regional vision, mission, values and intents, were considered to be sufficiently aligned to the completed LLS State Plan and the three outcomes were not subsequently changed.

A key challenge to the implementation of the Western plan is the combination of the region's very large area with its very low rating base of only 2,000 widely dispersed rate payers. Implementation of the Western plan has also been affected by drought, diverting some attention from previously planned projects to providing landholder and livestock management support.

The objective of this audit was to assess Western LLS' implementation of the Western 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 was informed by a combination of interviews with Western LLS staff (see **Attachment 5**) and review of relevant documentation.

The Commission's audit approach was to look at the broad intent of the Western 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 Western plan.

Findings

Overall, the Commission found that the delivery of Western LLS actions is contributing to achievement of the Western plan outcomes within the set timeframes. All outputs are recorded, progress is reported qualitatively and the standard suite of supporting systems and processes have sufficiently supported the implementation of the Western plan to date. The Commission

¹ *Local Land Services Act 2013* Section 45(1).
Document No: D19/3744
Status: Final

therefore has determined outcomes will be achieved and Western LLS is likely to implement the Western plan by 2020. However, greater clarity in reporting progress to the board would allow better assessment of the impact of Western LLS investments, enhance strategic and operational oversight of outcomes, and provide opportunities to improve performance.

A new operations plan incorporates planning, monitoring and reporting, and ties project outputs to Western LLS outcomes.

The Commission found the following constraints:

- Funding for natural resource management has been reduced.
- The four-year Department of Primary Industries funding for veterinarians will stop 2019.
- The Western LLS region's size requires long travel times.
- The current information technology (IT) systems are inefficient and pose some risks to data integrity, storage and ease of retrieval.

Areas going well

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

- F1 Western LLS has demonstrated good progress in implementing 69 of the 72 actions in its plan.**
- F3 Annual program and project planning is guided by the Western plan in the context of other established plans and budgets.**
- F4 Governance processes support Western plan implementation.**
- F6 The region reports on activities relevant to the outcomes of the Western plan internally and externally.**

Key findings to be addressed

The Commission identified the following areas for improvement:

- F2 There is no transparency regarding the contribution of actions to Western plan outcomes or cumulative progress to achieving those outcomes.**
- F5 Program and project plans have not consistently explicitly linked expected outputs to Western plan outcomes.**
- F7 There is no explicit reporting on progress towards Western plan outcomes.**

Recommendations

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

- R1 Remeasure key components linked to Western KPIs and benchmarks to demonstrate progress towards required outcomes.**
- R2 The operations plan spreadsheet should be used by all staff for planning, monitoring and reporting on projects.**
- R3 Western LLS should include information relevant to the cumulative achievement towards Western plan strategies and outcomes in its board reports.**

1 Achievement of local strategic plan outcomes

The Commission has determined that there is progress towards 69 of the 72 actions contained within the Western plan (see **Attachment 6**).

Despite progress in implementation, neither the contribution of actions to Western plan outcomes nor cumulative progress to achieving those outcomes, is transparent.

While the Western plan reflects the current priorities of the Western LLS, the Commission recognises that Western LLS has matured since its plan was written. It also recognises that LLS needs to be adaptable to respond to changing environmental conditions, community preferences and changes driven by the LLS state-wide organisation, government and investor needs. This need is indicated in a change to the Western Strategy LM2 action since the Western plan was approved.² The goal of landscape resilience in this action has changed in internal reports to 'ecological and agricultural outcomes' because resilience is considered too difficult to achieve or measure in the stated timeframe.

In the Western plan, KPIs are linked to benchmarks and can be mapped to required outcomes. Delivery against KPIs is due in 2020. It is therefore timely to concentrate monitoring and reporting activities on measuring the achievement of planned strategies and outcomes. Rather than measure all KPIs, one option would be to choose a small number of key KPIs and focus attention on their measurement. Western LLS' expertise, anticipated resources and understanding of the changing needs and expectations of the community, should contribute to identifying the most relevant KPIs.

1.1 Areas going well

F1 Western LLS has demonstrated good progress in implementing 69 of the 72 actions in its plan

The Western plan contains 72 applicable actions. The third Strategic Plan Implementation Progress Report presented to the board in March 2018 listed action status as follows (see **Attachment 6** for more detail):³

- Thirty-six (50 percent) advanced.
- Twenty-nine (40 percent) in progress.
- Three (4 percent) not progressed to date.
- Four actions (6 percent) were not reported.

The three actions not progressed are listed in the 2018 plan as 'limited due to funding restrictions' and may be pursued if funding becomes available. However, they are all water related and two may be impacted by larger-scale issues in the Murray Darling.⁴ While the implementation of these actions would contribute to outcomes, the Commission has determined that their lack of progress will not prevent the overall implementation of the Western plan. Of the actions not reported, two are complete, one is being implemented as required, although it is not funded, and one is considered ongoing (see Attachment 6).

² Strategy LM2 is to 'support land managers and stakeholders to improve management of terrestrial and aquatic environments for landscape resilience'.

³ Presented by the General Manager to the board at its meeting held on March 14-15 2018.

⁴ Related to irrigator water use efficiency and groundwater and surface water planning.

Although some progress has been made, Western LLS is aware that there has been not enough work on emergency management, especially in preparing the community for disasters. Staff have been trained and are part of the emergency response team but Western LLS has not had sufficient human and financial resources to prepare the community for emergencies such as floods. This is delaying the achievement of the action to 'identify areas for improved preparedness, response and resilience and act on them'.

Building relationships with land managers and other stakeholders such as the Department of Industry (DPI), the Rangelands Alliance and the Bureau of Meteorology has assisted Western LLS in the delivery of some projects. For example, aquatic projects have been impacted by a lack of funding, the cease to flow status of the Darling River and management changes in the Menindee Lakes. To overcome this lack of funding, a collaboration between Western LLS, DPI Fisheries and Central Tablelands LLS has implemented a project to exclude fish larvae from irrigation systems by installing specially designed diversion screens on intake pipes.

Collaboration has also been an important factor in the success of the Western region's predator control program, with community groups being engaged in coordinated wild dog baiting activities in autumn and spring each year. Data from the 2018 program show nearly 400 properties were involved in treating over 23 million hectares with ground baiting and 5,000 kilometres with aerial baiting.⁵ In addition, just under 300,000 baits were distributed.

There are 16 pest control groups in the Western region, with a combined membership of 400, which is growing. They are very active and have increased Western LLS' reach into the community. Twice-yearly surveys of the groups are supplemented by debriefs and planning sessions with the Western LLS project team, which inform program planning, predator control activities and adaptive management.

There are currently four Land Services Program positions in Western LLS that have not been filled due to budget constraints. More could be achieved if these positions were filled but a 2017 change from a sub-regional to a cross-functional structure has provided some assistance with the management of low staff numbers by promoting more efficient use of available staff. Staff from different teams and with different skill sets are built into the same project. This has encouraged integration and cross-team collaboration, which supports learning and a coordinated effort towards Western plan outcomes.

The cross-functional structure also promotes a whole-of-system approach. This approach is suited to the Western region where agriculture, natural resource management and biosecurity are closely linked (as recognised in Outcome 2 of the Western plan).⁶ Natural resource management and production benefits can be delivered by the same project, while also ensuring land managers are aware of their biosecurity obligations. For example, over 90 percent of the region is managed by private land managers who have an interest in sustainable production. In 2017, 9 percent of Western region land managers had a carbon farming agreement, contributing to natural resource management outcomes and earning carbon credits. Seventy percent of land managers said that additional benefits included financial capital to invest in management and infrastructure improvements, such as fencing. Western LLS land manager incentives also supported fencing. Value is now being added to these fencing projects through programs focused on grazing management and the sustainability of livestock enterprises.

⁵ Western LLS (2018) *DPI Mail - Western Local Land Services Newsletters June and November 2018*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

⁶ Outcome 2 is that 'land managers are implementing practices that build productive agricultural enterprises, biosecure primary industries and resilient landscapes'.

A system of regular, structured teleconferences maintains strong lines of communication between widely distributed Western LLS personnel. These include regular meetings between the board Chair and the General Manager and weekly operational meetings of staff leadership groups. Relevant decisions at these meetings are promptly reported to all staff.

The severe drought conditions have implications for both animal pest and weed management in the Western region. For example, it is too dry for many established weed species to germinate or grow actively, and inspection and control activities have decreased. However, the continued importation of fodder into the region, sometimes of varying quality, is likely to cause future issues by introducing new weeds and spreading already existing species. Local weeds officers, Western LLS and DPI staff are promoting sound farm hygiene practices related to the feeding out of imported fodder, and the need to detect and manage problem weeds once the drought breaks.⁷

The drought has put multiple pressures on land managers, eroding their equity, assets, productivity and profitability. A series of four workshops on livestock nutrition in dry times was delivered in June 2018 and other drought information is communicated through the joint DPI-Western LLS Newsletter.⁸

Aboriginal community officers are an integral part of Western LLS, engaging the Aboriginal community across natural resource management, agriculture and biosecurity projects. For example, they coordinate the Aboriginal Community Advisory Group, work with Aboriginal communities on weed control as part of the Coolibah Blackbox Project, help with biosecurity, and work on Aboriginal cultural heritage areas with erosion issues. In 2018, Aboriginal people were supported to 'care for Country, share traditional land management knowledge and help protect and strengthen Aboriginal cultural heritage. 1,031 hectares of land with Aboriginal cultural value was managed along with nine Aboriginal sites'.⁹

Despite natural resource management funding challenges, the outputs required by funding bodies have mostly been consistent with delivering Western regional actions, strategies and outcomes. For example, the five-year National Landcare Program Phase Two project on rabbit control in the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area and the Catchment Action NSW funded Total Grazing Pressure and Predator Management projects.

1.2 Key finding to be addressed

F2 There is no transparency regarding the contribution of actions to Western plan outcomes or cumulative progress to achieving those outcomes

Progress towards achieving the Western plan is gauged by Western LLS staff and the board by assessing the achievement of all actions qualitatively – but not cumulatively – against the Western plan strategies and five-year objectives (outcomes). This qualitative assessment, while found useful by the board, lacks precision and transparency. The Commission found that Western LLS staff and board members felt that a lot of progress had been made but there were varying ideas about the extent of this progress. Some interviewees suggested that more clarity was needed to assist in deciding how to resource areas where more needs to be done. Imprecision limits the oversight that should contribute to achieving outcomes and inform effective decision making.

⁷ General Manager's Operational Report provided to the board in July 2018.

⁸ Western LLS (2018) *DPI Mail - Western Local Land Services Newsletters June 2018*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

⁹ Western LLS (2018) *Annual Report*.

Western LLS project outputs are recorded in systems such as the Integrated Resource Management System (IRIS) and the Land Management Database (LMDB) but, to date, these records have not been collated against Western plan actions, strategies or KPIs. As a result, there are not enough meaningful data on the impact of activities to inform a cumulative assessment of progress towards outcomes.

The Western plan includes 10 benchmarks and a hierarchy of outcomes, strategies and actions. The benchmarks are based on surveys and other data (for example, 2014 fractional groundcover Landsat imagery).^{10, 11} These data also provide evidence for the implementation of strategies contributing to outcomes and their KPIs. A number of actions contribute to each strategy.

Targets for each KPI have been developed in a separate document.¹² A second document aligns KPIs, targets, benchmark survey results and output measures, and a third identifies outputs for tracking KPIs.^{13, 14} Information in these documents is used to align KPIs with outputs in the 2019 Operations Plan Spreadsheet (the operations plan).

The operations plan incorporates planning, monitoring and reporting, and links actions to outputs, KPIs and outcomes. The operations plan spreadsheet is designed to ensure project planning is consistent and based on program logic and MERI frameworks. The program logic is documented in the operations plan, ties project outputs to both Western plan outcomes and *LLS State Strategic Plan 2016-2026* goals, and is intended to guide consistent data collection. A matrix of projects and standard project outputs within the spreadsheet links back to the MERI framework, which is also incorporated into the operations plan.

Systems are only useful if they are regularly and consistently used. The operations plan links project implementation to reporting as directly as possible and is user friendly. It is therefore likely that staff will use it regularly to record their field data. Drop down menus provide consistency where this is necessary in planning and monitoring.

The Commission noted that Western LLS is aware of the importance of consistent year-on-year projects and on-ground actions that can deliver the same standard outputs and therefore be aggregated to demonstrate achievement of outcomes. Achieving this consistency can be difficult given annual funding cycles and changing investor priorities. The outputs from 2019 activities will be linked to outcomes in the operations plan but there remain difficulties in incorporating activities from previous years into a cumulative measurement of progress towards outcomes.

Achievements against some of the Western plan outcomes could be assessed by selectively surveying key components linked to Western LLS KPIs and benchmarks. However, to be useful, this should be combined with an understanding of what is driving the assessed change.

While measured percentages provide information as to the extent of change, more information is needed to understand why a change occurred. Identifying the key activities contributing to a survey result that indicates a specified percentage change or outcome, and aggregating and

¹⁰ Western LLS (2017) *Social benchmarking Project Round 4: Key performance indicators*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

¹¹ Western LLS (2017) *Social benchmarking Project Round 4: A survey of Aboriginal people*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

¹² Western LLS (2016) *Western Local Plan Key Performance Indicators*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

¹³ Western LLS (2016) *Western Local Land Services Key Performance Indicators, and Output Measures*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

¹⁴ Western LLS (nd) *Western Local Land Services Outputs for tracking KPIs in the Strategic Plan*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

reporting on them cumulatively will assist this understanding. This will also develop knowledge of the most effective approach to achieving a particular outcome. For example, which activities are most effective, where should they be carried out and how much is enough? These things can be monitored, evaluated and aggregated over time to provide a clearer understanding of change.

Baselines may be improved over time and reset if need be, provided the expected improvement in the quality of information outweighs the increased resources and effort required to gather better data.

The benefits of measuring the outcomes of Western plan actions include:

- providing a shared understanding of progress and what still needs to be achieved
- providing a basis for effective oversight, strategic decision making and reporting on performance
- informing future investment and adaptive management decisions
- demonstrating value to investors, customers, partners and other stakeholders
- providing a basis for sharing learnings and a robust platform for celebrating successes and external communications.

The Commission understands that the intent of the new operations plan is to track outputs linked to Western plan outcomes. However, retrospectively collating this information in order to demonstrate achievement of outcomes is likely to be difficult and resource intensive. With this in mind it may be more straightforward to re-measure benchmarks. Recognising that it may be costly to fully repeat earlier benchmarking, it may be prudent and still valuable to re-measure select components of these benchmarks to demonstrate achievements towards outcomes.

To improve the likelihood that Western LLS can demonstrate the delivery of outcomes within the timeframe of the Western plan, the Commission recommends the following:

R1 Remeasure key components linked to Western KPIs and benchmarks to demonstrate progress towards required outcomes.

1.3 Constraints

The Commission identified the following issues that may impact the extent to which Western LLS' can deliver its strategic plan outcomes:

- Investor priorities drive project planning, however priorities can change from year to year and impact the continuity of regional programs and the scale of on-ground works necessary to achieve some longer term ecological outcomes. Inconsistent funding makes it difficult to align outputs to outcomes, especially when delivering a five-year strategic plan. Natural resource management is now a much smaller part of Western LLS business because funding priorities have changed. Cuts in the funds made available by Catchment Action NSW and National Landcare Program Phase Two funding programs have also impacted on Western LLS staff numbers.
- The four-year DPI funding for veterinarians will stop in 2019. As yet there are no options for future funding of these positions, putting the biosecurity obligations of the Western LLS at risk.

- The long hours required for staff travel to project sites reduces productivity, increases costs and constrains the number, scale and scope of activities that can be undertaken.

2 Systems and processes supporting implementation

The Commission has determined that Western LLS' planning and governance support the implementation of its plan. IT systems, although inefficient, have supported the implementation of the Western plan. These systems are now being supplemented by the new operations plan, which encompasses project planning, program logic, MERI, project reporting, and links to Western plan and LLS State Plan outcomes.

2.1 Areas going well

F3 Annual program and project planning is guided by the Western plan in the context of other established plans and budgets

Systems and processes include the preparation of annual business plans, detailed project plans, program logic, MERI plans, and the operations plan.

These are informed by documents and services such as:

- the Western plan
- Spatial mapping, for example, of priority areas for investment in biodiversity
- the Western Local Land Services Key Performance Indicators, and Output Measures
- the Western Local Land Services Outputs for tracking KPIs in the Strategic Plan
- the Western Local Plan Key Performance Indicators
- Business services, including budget and financial management
- the Western Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plan
- the Western Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
- the Western LLS Emergency Management Plan
- the Western LLS Communications and Engagement Plan
- the Travelling Stock Reserve Management Plan.

Western LLS' business planning is first informed by the Western plan but alignment with funding body requirements is also necessary.

Prior to board approval of new investments, the Business and Finance Manager works with the General Manager during the planning phase to cost all aspects of proposed programs and projects. They consider how each potential program fits with the delivery of Western outcomes and how project activities can be funded to make sure the required outputs are delivered.

F4 Governance processes support Western plan implementation

The Western LLS board comprises a Chair and eight directors – four appointed and four elected – which is unlike other LLS regions, which have six directors on the board. The larger number of directors ensures sufficient geographic spread over the region. They are able to bring useful local knowledge, as well as diverse skills and independent thinking to the board. This contributes to building corporate knowledge.

The initial area-based structure – established to overcome inherited silos – and the subsequent move to a functional structure, is cited by staff and board as being key in overcoming the initial challenges of bringing together three different organisations to establish the Western LLS.

With board members and staff widely distributed across a large area, distance is an inherent challenge. The programming of board meetings is one way to address this challenge, while scheduled teleconferences ensure everyone is informed and aware of their responsibilities.

Board meetings are held four to five times each year. Each meeting is held in a different part of the region and they are supported by good governance practices, such as structured and consistent meeting procedures and sound financial planning and reporting. To make the most of the travel time involved, meetings are held over four to five days to accommodate Community Advisory Group meetings and field days. The program also includes a number of meetings with land managers, the General Manager and the senior management team to make strategic decisions. Discussion is encouraged and facilitated by an in-camera session at each board meeting. Face-to-face meetings alternate with teleconferences which are structured but more focused on reviewing recent activities.

Detailed qualitative reports are presented by the General Manager at each board meeting. They provide information covering all Western LLS business responsibilities. These reports, together with monthly dashboard reviews, are important to inform the board's oversight and monitoring function of the Western plan implementation.

Each board member has a portfolio of interest, for example, Landcare, NSW Farmers or water. Board members are encouraged to share their specialised knowledge and experience with staff, while still maintaining a strategic rather than operational interest in LLS business.

Consistent with the Western plan, board members sit on five community groups. These include the:

- Pest Committee
- Weeds Committee
- Kangaroo Taskforce
- Aboriginal Community Advisory Group
- Agricultural Services and Natural Resource Management Advisory Group. Members of this group have been chosen for their expertise and have been tasked with developing an agricultural and natural resource management strategy to investigate future opportunities in the Western region, and potential roles for Western LLS.

Regular staff meetings are important to Western LLS' communication and governance. These occur under formal terms of reference and include the:

- Tactical Group, which includes the General Manager, all team leaders, managers and the communications officer. It meets every Monday to ensure all key issues are being addressed. This meeting informs the newsletter that goes to all staff on Monday afternoons (the 'Western Region Roundup').
- Leadership team (Senior Management Group), which includes the General Manager, Manager Operations and Manager Business and Finance. It meets weekly to review service delivery needs and improvements.¹⁵ Standing agenda items include workplace health and safety, culture and staff engagement, recruitment, and partnerships (such as Community Advisory Groups and Landcare).

¹⁵ Western LLS (2014) *Senior Management Group Terms of Reference*. Internal document provided to the Commission.

- Western projects team (Project Management Team), which includes most staff and meets monthly to review the progress of all projects, including the continuous improvement of project implementation and investment prioritisation processes.¹⁶

As managers and team leaders are stationed in different offices from most of their staff, other short, structured catch-up meetings occur weekly between individual team members, and their manager and/or team leader.

2.2 Key findings to be addressed

F5 Program and project plans have not consistently explicitly linked expected outputs to Western plan outcomes

Whilst program and project plans, including program logic and MERI, have been guided by and can be mapped to the Western plan, they have not always explicitly linked expected outputs to outcomes or described how actions contribute to Western plan outcomes.

In addition, the Commission noted that, in developing its annual business plan, Western LLS adopted the format of the LLS State-wide Annual Business Plan. This format does not include explicit links to the Western plan stated outcomes or activities.

All relevant planning documents should incorporate Western actions and provide a clear line of sight to required outcomes. Western LLS' annual business plan should assess the structure, resources and responsibilities of the business and provide a whole-of-organisation guide to implementing the Western plan. In this context, it is important that its annual business plan includes clear links to the Western plan, and that the regional focus of Western LLS business is not lost in the broader context of LLS state-wide agreed outputs or investor priorities.

The benefits of having explicit links between outputs and outcomes, and of measuring achievements (see R1 and F2 above), enable measurement of progress. Among other things, such information should feed into the planning of future program activities, budgets and allocations of staff time. The immediate benefit would be that the planning process would provide an understanding of what has already been achieved, identify gaps and inform decisions around what should be done.

An effective way to ensure all future programs and projects deliver outputs that contribute to the delivery of the Western plan, is to ensure the operations plan is consistently used by all project and program teams.

The operations plan program logic is listed in a drop down menu and includes assessment of:

- what outputs can feasibly be directly measured
- tested assumptions needed to link activities, outputs and their expected outcomes
- what metrics will be tracked
- baselines, if assessed as needed, and meaningful targets
- links between outputs and outcomes
- the data collection frequency and spatial scale required to show which activities are being delivered as expected and to inform future improvements (included in MERI).

¹⁶ Western LLS (2017) *Project Review Team Terms of Reference*. Internal document provides to the Commission.
Document No: D19/3744
Status: Final

The expected contribution of each activity to outcomes is included in the program logic.

As discussed previously (see F2), the baseline data gathered for some KPIs should be used not only to measure progress towards Western plan outcomes but also to inform future planning.

The new cluster arrangements for the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment provide opportunities for collaboration and sharing of data and resources, in particular to access data on outcomes for which LLS has a shared responsibility.

Program logic, planning, implementation, outputs, MERI activities and KPIs are now integrated in the operations plan spreadsheet together with Western plan outcomes. Consideration is being given to cost benefit analysis. Consistent use of this system will ensure that project planning and implementation links investment back to the Western plan and drives data collection, reporting and outcomes for all activities.

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

R2 The operations plan spreadsheet should be used by all staff for planning, monitoring and reporting on projects.

2.3 Constraints

Western LLS uses the standard suite of IT systems provided by LLS at the state level, including government agency systems where LLS has shared responsibilities.

Although they have supported Western plan implementation to date, the systems present a number of difficulties in terms of data storage and ease of retrieval.

The proposed roll out of the new system, 'myLAND', at the LLS state level may bring some improvement. However, it is noted that, to date, the region has not been consulted on myLAND and its benefits are not yet demonstrated.

myLAND includes an asset management module, a web based customer self-service portal and other features such as greater accessibility for officers working in the field or at home.¹⁷ Western LLS staff anticipate that myLAND will make it easier to:

- access to customer data where customers do business in multiple LLS regions, for example, recording 1080 poison baiting distribution to rate payers
- access to and integration of data records.

¹⁷ 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

The regular reports to the board on issues relating to implementation of the Western plan provide an indication of the extent to which activities are contributing to plan implementation. However, they do not provide a clear measure of progress to date or what remains to be achieved. Cumulative reporting, particularly on actions contributing to key programs and outcomes, would improve the transparency and understanding of progress and of organisational achievements.

3.1 Areas going well

F6 The region reports on actions relevant to the outcomes of the Western plan internally and externally

The General Manager's report to the board at every meeting, together with the monthly dashboard report, provides good insight into issues relating to progress on Western plan outcomes and related initiatives. Other board papers are presented that focus on specific areas, such as community engagement or community advisory groups.

The monthly dashboard report is a LLS state level project management reporting tool made available to all LLS regions. It summarises cumulative progress against critical project management components for each project. This includes a summary of each component including planning, administration, approvals, community, stakeholder partnerships established, contracts, procurement, resourcing, on-ground work, implementation and MERI.¹⁸ The summaries are based on the number of corresponding activities completed as a percentage of the total for each project. It does not aggregate information across multiple projects linked to an outcome. However, this information is incorporated into the operations plan monthly review.

The board therefore receives a monthly update on the number of planned activities completed for each project, which gives an indication of progress towards the completion of actions.

At each board meeting, the General Manager updates the board on activities relevant to the Western LLS' areas of responsibility including people, communication, region-wide activities, sustainable land management, business and finance, agriculture, communities, biosecurity, natural resource management and risk. These reports maintain the currency of board awareness of key issues and LLS activities in the region.

The dashboard reports give quantitative information on individual projects but the other reports are qualitative rather than quantitative and do not provide an assessment of any activity's contribution towards Western plan outcomes. Despite this, they are accepted internally as a general indicator of progress in implementing the Western plan. Interviews with directors provided positive feedback on both the general manager and dashboard reports.

External reports include quarterly reports to DPI on activities against the NSW Animal Biosecurity & Welfare Business Plan, the LLS State Local Annual Report, and reports to the Australian and NSW governments (for example, National Landcare Program Phase Two and Catchment Action NSW). Reports to funding bodies provide data on the extent to which programs and projects are complete and identify performance against milestones and spend.

¹⁸ Western LLS (n.d.) *Operations dashboard report proforma*. Internal document provided to the Commission.
Document No: D19/3744
Status: Final

External reports meet requirements specified by external stakeholders. It is not expected that these reports provide information regarding progress towards Western plan outcomes.

High-level outputs are published in the Western LLS Annual Report and posted on the Western LLS website. They provide information on activities such as pest control programs, managing biosecurity risks, travelling stock reserve management and landholder incentives. There are many reports via mixed media which publicise Western LLS activities.

Reporting provides information internally to the board and external stakeholders regarding Western LLS achievements through its activities, projects, and programs.

3.2 Key findings to be addressed

F7 There is no explicit reporting on progress towards Western plan outcomes

The board does not receive cumulative information against Western plan actions, strategies or outcomes, which is required to drive strategic performance, enable strategic oversight and demonstrate the impact of the Western plan's implementation. As a result, there is no clear and consistent organisational understanding of progress towards implementing the Western plan.

It is the board's responsibility to oversee and monitor the implementation of the Western plan, therefore knowing the level of progress towards outcomes is critical to the board performing its role effectively.¹⁹

A regularly scheduled review that provides information on cumulative progress towards KPIs would supply the information required for the board to make strategic decisions. It would also enable the board to provide a greater degree of assurance to stakeholders regarding progress towards organisational goals.

A cumulative assessment of progress towards outcomes will also provide clarity for board members and staff on what still needs to be achieved, and maximises opportunities for strategic and operational decisions while options and time are still available.

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

R3 Western LLS should include information relevant to the cumulative achievement towards Western plan strategies and outcomes in its board reports.

¹⁹ The *Local Land Services Act 2013* Section 29(1)(b) states that local boards must 'monitor the performance of Local Land Services in the region, including by reference to the local strategic plan'.

Attachment 1 – Overview of the Western LLS region

The Western region is the largest LLS region in NSW, covering an area of 314,500 square kilometres or 40 percent of the state. It extends from the South Australian border in the west to Brewarrina, Hillston and Balranald in the east, the Queensland border in the north, and the Victorian border in the south (**Figure 1**).



Figure 1: Western LLS region area

Agricultural systems and native fauna and flora species in the area are diverse as a result of the region's highly variable climate and low nutrient soils. Severe drought is currently eroding landholder equity, assets, productivity and profitability.

The key challenges and threats facing the region include the following:

- Potential emergency issues and biosecurity hazards, which impact extensive livestock enterprises and threaten market access.
- Threats to productivity and profitability of regional enterprises from drought and longer-term climate change, which cause unreliable feed and water supply.
- Threats to regional social structure associated with variable climate, and people leaving and people coming into the region.
- Invasive species (pest animals and weeds) and other threats to natural values.
- Insufficient resources to invest at a large enough scale to effectively manage natural landscapes.
- Natural disasters, including floods.

Western LLS provides the following services:

- Delivery of advice to primary producers.
- Biosecurity and emergency management services.
- Natural resource management
- Relationship brokering and knowledge sharing.

The delivery of these services is influenced by the large geographic area of the region and a relatively low rating base, which is comprised of only 2,000 widely dispersed rate payers.

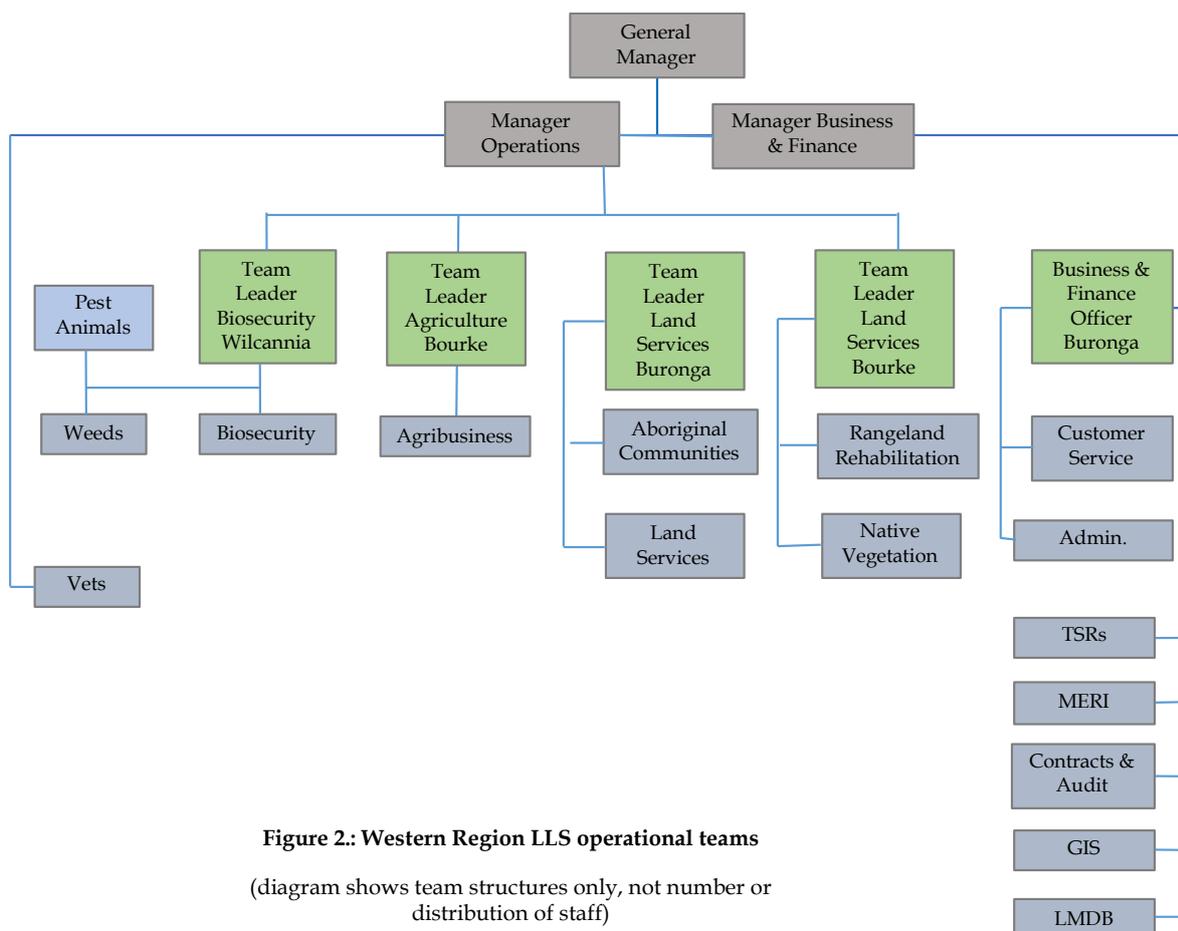


Figure 2: Western Region LLS operational teams

(diagram shows team structures only, not number or distribution of staff)

Operationally, Western LLS comprises five teams with team members situated in twelve different offices throughout the region. Team members report to team leaders, who in turn report to the senior management team, which comprises the Manager – Operations, Manager – Business and Finance and the General Manager. When project team members are not located in the same office, cross-functional team leadership ensures the timely management of local issues. Governance and oversight is provided by the local board and the senior management team.

Key projects for 2018-19 are listed in the Western LLS Operational Plan. In addition to being aligned with the Western plan, these projects need to be consistent with the requirements of other plans including the:

- Western Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plan
- Western Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
- NSW Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Business Plan
- Western LLS Emergency Management Plan

- Western LLS Communications and Engagement Plan
- Travelling Stock Reserve Management Plan
- Catchment Action NSW Business Plan
- National Landcare Program priorities
- Business services – budget and financial management
- Customer services.

Board members and staff describe Western LLS as being, most importantly, a customer focused business. Customer satisfaction and confidence in the organisation is a priority, as well as biosecurity and profitable, sustainable agricultural businesses. These priorities are reflected in the work of Western LLS throughout 2018. The annual report for that year outlined the following achievements:

- ‘Specialist staff conducted 850 plant health investigations and our vets and biosecurity officers attended more than 464 general consultations and conducted 276 animal disease investigations’.
- ‘We ran 48 community awareness and capacity building events with nearly 3,000 participants attending’.
- Aboriginal people were supported to ‘care for Country, share traditional land management knowledge and help protect and strengthen Aboriginal cultural heritage. 1,031 hectares of land with Aboriginal cultural value was managed along with nine Aboriginal sites’.

Attachment 2 – Western plan outcomes

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

	Outcomes & regional measures of success	Timeframe
1	<p>Customers and stakeholders have a growing capacity to build self-reliant, adaptive and prepared communities</p> <p>Land Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An improvement in the capacity of land managers to improve land management and agricultural enterprise viability. ▪ An increase in the level of innovation demonstrated by land managers to improve land management and agricultural enterprise viability. <p>Indigenous Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An increase in the number of aboriginal people involved in programs which encourage connection to Country. ▪ An increase in the number of aboriginal people involved in programs which facilitate the sharing of traditional land management techniques. <p>Emergency Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An improvement in the regional capacity to prevent, prepare for and respond to biodiversity and natural disaster risks. <p>Climate Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An improvement in the level of regional collaboration in developing and implementing programs aimed at adapting to climate change. 	2020
2	<p>Land managers are implementing practices that build productive agricultural enterprises, biosecure primary industries and resilient landscapes</p> <p>Biodiversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An increase in the area of land being managed to maintain or improve native vegetation composition and structure in optimal condition for improving biodiversity. <p>Productivity and sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An increase in the area of land being managed to maintain protective groundcover above 50%. ▪ An increase in the capacity of land managers to increase enterprise productivity and sustainability. ▪ An increase in the level of regional collaboration on programs aimed at improving the management of aquatic environments. <p>Biosecurity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All emerging pests, weeds and diseases detected and contained. ▪ An increase in the capacity of land managers to contain pest animals, weeds and disease to reduce the impact on landscapes and agriculture. ▪ An increase in the level of awareness by land managers of existing and emerging biosecurity risks. ▪ An improvement in the level of regional capacity to ensure the traceability of plant and animal product. <p>Crown Lands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An improvement in the administration of crown land assets. 	2020

3 Local people are engaged in decision making for their region and value the services provided by Local Land Services Western

Satisfaction

- An improvement in the level of customer satisfaction with Western Local Land Services' service delivery.
- An improvement in the level of customer and investor satisfaction with the level of integration of Western Local Land Services' services.
- An increase in the number of front line staff trained in the delivery of customer service.

2020

Participation

- An improvement in the level of community participation and engagement in decision making.
- An improvement in the level of regional collaboration with customers, stakeholders and industry with respect to delivery of Western Local Land Services' services.

Benchmarking for key performance indicators

- 1 An Aboriginal communities benchmarking survey has been designed and will be undertaken throughout 2016. Results from this study will provide the benchmark for these KPIs.
- 2 A regional social benchmarking study was undertaken in 2014 which captured detailed information on the capacity of landholders with respect to the management of their land. The survey investigated landholder capacity with respect to financial, human, physical, social and natural capacity. The survey also investigated levels of customer satisfaction with the LLS. The results of this study will provide the benchmark for these KPIs. This will be supported by a Statewide Customer Satisfaction Survey.
- 3 A benchmark for the level of regional collaboration will be based on the number of formal and informal collaborations negotiated by the LLS by the end of 2016.
- 4 A benchmark will be based on the number of programs being implemented by the LLS aimed at supporting land holder innovation by the end of 2016.
- 5 The term 'optimal condition' was previously defined within the Western Catchment Action Plan and as such will be used as the benchmark for this KPI.
- 6 Fractional groundcover was measured across the Western region using Landsat imagery in 2014. This will be the benchmark for this KPI.
- 7 A benchmark will be based on the number of programs being implemented by the LLS aimed at supporting the administration of Crown Lands by the end of 2016.
- 8 A benchmark will be based on the number of staff trained by the end of 2016.
- 9 A benchmark will be based on output reporting focused on local participation. For example the number of local advisory groups, number of participants in person days in local advisory groups as of 2016.

- 10 Output reporting will support all KPIs that have a focus on 'improving capacity'. Outputs relating to improving capacity will be benchmarked and measured on an on-going basis. This may include outputs with a focus on advisory service activities (e.g. no of awareness raising events or training programs), financial incentives (e.g. the number of agreements) or support (e.g. the no of trained staff or programs available).
- 11 A newly established species whose distribution and abundance is expanding.
-

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.²⁰ 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-2016.²¹

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.

²⁰ 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’.

²¹ 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 effect²² as the independent auditor²³ 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.

²² 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'.

²³ 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 ²⁴ 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.

²⁴ 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	Ben Barlow	11 June 2019
	Appointed Board member	Magnus Aitken	11 June 2019
	Elected Board member	Andrew Mosely	11 June 2019
	General Manager	Erlina Compton	12 June 2019
Land Services	Team Leader Agriculture	Gemma Turnbull	12 June 2019
	Land Services MERI	Silvana Keating	13 June 2019
	Team Leader Land Services Agriculture	Ben Slingsby	13 June 2019
	Land Services Officer	Kaye Gottschutzke	13 June 2019
	Manager Operations	Andrew Hull	13 June 2019
Business and Finance	Manager Business & Finance	Michelle Johnson	12 June 2019

Attachment 6 – Western LLS action status

The results of the self-assessment undertaken by Western LLS in the first quarter of 2019 in preparation for this audit are outlined below. Various documentation was provided as evidence in support of this assessment.

Rating Limited due to funding restrictions

Invest in partnership projects to protect and restore in-stream habitat and connectivity in aquatic systems

Invest in water efficiency programs in partnership with irrigators.

Participate in groundwater and surface water planning

Rating In progress

Provide training to land managers in financial management and marketing to improve agricultural enterprise productivity

- Invest in innovation that will improve productivity and sustainability of primary industries

Work with stakeholders and industry groups to identify and invest or collaborate in priority research and development needs

Promote opportunities for Aboriginal people to connect to Country for the purpose of practicing traditional culture, transferring knowledge and implementing sustainable land management practices

Promote positive relationships, trust and respect between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal land managers and organisations

Increase training opportunities for Aboriginal people in land management and primary industries with a view to long term employment.

Prevent: Work with the community and stakeholders to identify existing risks, minimise future risks and develop disaster resilience in their communities

Respond: In the event of a natural emergency or biosecurity event act out the direction provided by Department of Primary Industries as stipulated in the NSW State Disaster Plan, the Biosecurity (Animal and Plant) Emergency Sub-Plan and the State Agriculture and Animal Service Functional Area Supporting Plan

Recover: Work with Department of Primary Industries to implement the NSW Recovery Plan

Work with Indigenous groups to increase community awareness of regional Cultural Heritage values and local significant sites.

Provide information and incentives to land managers to increase the amount of land managed for biodiversity outcomes including threatened species protection, the establishment of private conservation programs and implementation of managed grazing systems

Work with land managers to manage priority weeds threatening biodiversity identified in the regional weed management plan

Work with land managers to implement landscape-scale predator and competitor control programs focused on priority landscapes identified in regional pest animal management plans

Work with land managers to implement landscape-scale predator and competitor control programs focused on priority landscapes identified in regional pest animal management plans

Work with land managers to increase the use of appropriate fire regime in the landscape

Manage priority weeds threatening enterprise productivity identified in the regional weed management plan

Provide information and incentives to land managers to implement grazing, cropping and horticultural best management practices

Consent: Undertake emergency response consent activities as directed

Compliance: Work with land managers and community to increase awareness of, and ensure adherence to, the rules and regulations governing plant and animal biosecurity as stipulated in the *Local Land Services Act*

Enforcement: Provide assistance and support to other agencies in delivering legislative law enforcement activities

Apply the enforcement activities specified in the *Local Land Services Act*

Identify high risk plant pest and disease, animal pest and disease and weed risks and develop and implement a surveillance, containment and eradication strategy for each risk (using principles of prioritisation identified in the Invasion Curve – NSW Biosecurity Strategy)

Develop and implement regional pest animal and weed management plans in conjunction with key regional committees

Provide advisory services to support implementation of the National Livestock Identification Scheme

Ensure regulatory responsibilities for biosecurity integrity and traceability are met including compliance with National Livestock Identification Scheme on farm, during transport and at point of sale or display

Work with Crown Lands, land managers and stakeholders to ensure the travelling stock reserve network and other Crown Land is managed for environmental, social and economic outcomes

Issue long-term grazing permits via competitive tender on selected travelling stock reserves, and issue short-term grazing permits on selected travelling stock reserves (subject to seasonal conditions)

Issue Walking and Slow Walking permits for the movement of stock to a destination (subject to seasonal conditions)

Utilise Local Community Advisory Groups, Aboriginal Community Advisory Groups, stakeholder forums and other feedback mechanisms to understand, and respond to customer needs

Ensure that Western Local Land Services meets the Local Land Services Performance Standard

Rating Advanced

Provide incentives to land managers to install infrastructure to improve land management and enterprise productivity

Invest in innovative approaches to developing physical infrastructure to improve land management and enterprise productivity

Demonstrate and advocate successful innovations to land managers

Provide information, workshops and other capacity building activities to increase adoption of agricultural best management practices

Provide programs to assist land managers to identify new economic opportunities and increase enterprise diversification

Invest in community and industry stakeholder groups and networks to build social and human capital

Support the development of viable performance-based enterprise models, based on delivery of ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, active conservation management and groundcover maintenance

Implement and expand the Western Local Land Services Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge System

Strengthen and communicate duty of care for Aboriginal cultural landscapes

Increase youth awareness and knowledge of sustainable land management and Aboriginal culture

Prepare: Disseminate information to the community when there is a known natural disaster or biosecurity event approaching the Western Region

Review and reflect on emergency preparedness, response and community resilience in recovery

Provide land managers with information, workshops and other capacity building activities on climate change risks, adaptations and responses to enable mitigation and adaptation to climate change

Provide incentives to land managers to manage total grazing pressure

Provide information, workshops and other capacity building activities to land managers to enable effective management of total grazing pressure

Provide incentives to land managers to improve management of aquatic environments

Work with land managers to protect and rehabilitate areas affected by overland flow obstructions or degradation of soil surface function

Provide land managers with advisory services and tools to manage native vegetation composition and structure including the use of codes of practice

Provide information and incentives to land managers and stakeholder groups to implement actions identified in the pest animal and weed management plans

Support Department of Primary Industries to contain biosecurity risks

Provide locally relevant input into the development of policies and procedures

Implement the roles and responsibilities for biosecurity management of Western Local Land Services identified in the NSW biosecurity guidelines (*NSW Biosecurity Strategy 10.3)

Administer leases over stock watering places

Monitor customer satisfaction through regular surveys

Ensure that all service offerings align with core principles of adding value, are customer focused, provide integrated local delivery and are achieved by collaborating when possible

Establish an organisational structure which drives integrated service delivery

Establish Local Community and Aboriginal Community Advisory Groups

Enable Local Community and Aboriginal Community Advisory Groups to be effective, relevant and drive continuous improvement through agreed terms of reference

Provide ongoing support to Local Community and Aboriginal Community Advisory Groups to ensure groups remain effective, relevant and fit for purpose

Engage customers and stakeholders in planning, decision making and implementation

Implement an organisational structure which supports integrated service delivery

Ensure that all service offerings align with core principles of adding value, are customer focused, provide integrated local delivery and are achieved by collaborating when possible

Collaborate with community based organisations including Landcare to improve development and delivery of services and projects

Implement an adaptive management approach to organisational performance review

Evaluate and improve performance to improve program design and land management outcomes

Rating Ongoing

Work with government and industry to identify opportunities for enterprise diversification that ensure long term sustainability of natural resources, agriculture and communities

Rating As needed but not funded

Support land managers to understand the risks and opportunities for carbon sequestration and mitigation activities

Rating Completed

Provide support and participate in developing new carbon farming methodologies suitable for the rangelands

Identify areas of aquatic and terrestrial refugia for improved management and conservation projects