



Local Land  
Services  
Western

# Local Strategic Plan 2016-2021



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Western Local Strategic Plan

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

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# Acknowledgement of Country

Western Local Land Services takes this opportunity to pay respect to past, present, and future Elders connected to the Western Region.

Western Local Land Services recognises that the protection and enhancement of Aboriginal culture, heritage and spiritual beliefs is an issue of great importance to the traditional owners of these lands and waters and is of benefit to the whole community.

Connection to Country is of great importance to Aboriginal people and is expressed through social, physical and spiritual lore.

For the sake of future generations it is important for young Aboriginal people to gain traditional knowledge from their Elders.

In implementing the Western Local Strategic Plan, Western Local Land Services encourages Aboriginal communities to share their insights and knowledge. Similarly Western Local Land Services encourages the broader community to understand and respect the knowledge of traditional culture and ways of life.



# Minister's foreword

**The Hon Niall Blair MLC**

**Minister for Primary Industries**

**Minister for Land and Water**

The Local Land Services State Strategic Plan was developed in partnership with land managers and the community to set a clear path for assisting rural and regional communities to be resilient, productive, profitable and sustainable.

Together with the 11 local strategic plans nested under it, the 10-year State Strategic Plan sets the long-term agenda for Local Land Services at both the state and local levels.

These plans define the priorities of the organisation and outline the way services will be delivered to build resilient communities, meet local needs and contribute to state-level priorities.

All plans have been developed with extensive community consultation, emphasising the importance of having farmers, land managers and community members at the heart of decision making.

Local Land Services represents a fundamental shift in the way advice, services and assistance are provided. When it comes to decision making, this model is underpinned by local involvement and accountability, with a strong customer focus at its core.

Using the best available science and support, delivered by experienced and knowledgeable staff, the organisation works in partnership with passionate and committed land managers and community members to deliver balanced social, economic and environmental results.

The strategies outlined in this suite of plans provide a clear and consistent direction across NSW to make the most of current opportunities and guide delivery of the most relevant programs and initiatives to support producers and communities across the state.



# Chair's foreword

**Tom Hynes**

**Chair**

**Western Local Board**

Local Land Services is a series of programs and advisory services associated with agricultural production, biosecurity, natural resource management and emergency management. It is an integrated model of service delivery with a customer focus that endeavours to achieve outcomes that satisfy State and National policies, while at the same time, fulfil regional and local requirements.

The role of each Local Board is to deliver on this integrated model. In order to achieve this, the Local Board sets priorities and strategies for delivery of services at regional and local levels which give effect to State and National policies.

The Western Region, which is managed by the Western Local Board, is a vast area with a relative small population and a diverse agricultural base. The agricultural undertakings in the region range from horticultural development in the south along the Murry River to cotton cultivation in the north along the Darling River, dryland cropping in the south and east complete with rangeland grazing across all the region.

Within this region the Aboriginal communities have great insight and knowledge about the utility of the natural resources, we can learn and adapt our land management processes from these communities. Respect for and retention of the Aboriginal culture and heritage will assist and guide us in enhancement and management of the region.

The regional diversity brings with it a very wide range of activities, associated management issues and risks, particularly around biosecurity, natural resources and climate change.

The focus of this strategic plan is service delivery to our customers. It was developed in consultation with our customers and needs customer support and collaboration to ensure the delivery of its outcomes.

Collaboration processes have started with the establishment of Local Community Advisory Groups and Aboriginal Community Advisory Groups. Further involvement with other established local groups, including Aboriginal, landcare and farming groups will ensure we deliver the services our customers need.

This Local Strategic Plan identifies the regional priorities and strategies. It is flexible and capable of adapting to the future developments around legislation, science, technology and innovation. With these fundamental objectives as a guide, the plan has been developed as a living document with attainable goals and performance accountabilities.

It is about what we need to achieve now and in the future and how we are to be measured and held accountable for the outcomes. How these outcomes are reached is for the organisation's management to decide and control; they will also be measured to ensure they perform their role in the process.

This Local Strategic Plan for the Western Region cannot be implemented by the Board and management alone. We need our stakeholders and customers to help, collaborate, demand and drive us on this journey to successfully achieve the benefits of the plan.



# Intent of the plan

## Introduction

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

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

Success will be driven by local decision making and service delivery supported by transparent, responsive and accountable local boards. This will be combined with the benefits of greater consistency, leverage and more effective use of resources stemming from being one organisation.

## Previous and future services

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

Reflecting this integrated approach, our strategic goals do not relate to achieving functional excellence in agricultural advisory services, biosecurity, emergency management and natural resource management but rather focus on improved and integrated outcomes for customers and land managers and for the communities and environments across NSW.

## Local delivery and decision making

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



## Governance, transparency and reporting

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

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

## What's at stake?

Local Land Services is a once-in-a-generation reform, and there are significant expectations of the organisation. There is also a great sense of optimism and a very talented and committed group of board members and staff.

These factors provide the opportunity to create something truly great: an organisation that lives up to its potential, is values based and removes the inefficiencies and inertia of legacy organisations. Achieving this will require a change in direction, ideas and operations, but if not undertaken Local Land Services will not meet its long term goals. The organisation cannot miss this once-in-a-generation opportunity and must live up to the expectations of our customers, investors and stakeholders.

The strategic plan sets Local Land Services on the path to deliver on its potential to partner with land managers and communities to improve primary production within healthy landscapes.

## Strategic direction

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

The relevant extract from the legislation is below.

The State Strategic Plan must have regard to:

- any state priorities for Local Land Services
- the provisions of any environmental planning instrument under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*
- any other existing natural resource management plans
- sound evidence-based practices to support primary industries, resilient communities and healthy landscapes
- the need for engagement of the community, including the Aboriginal community.

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

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

# About Local Land Services

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

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

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

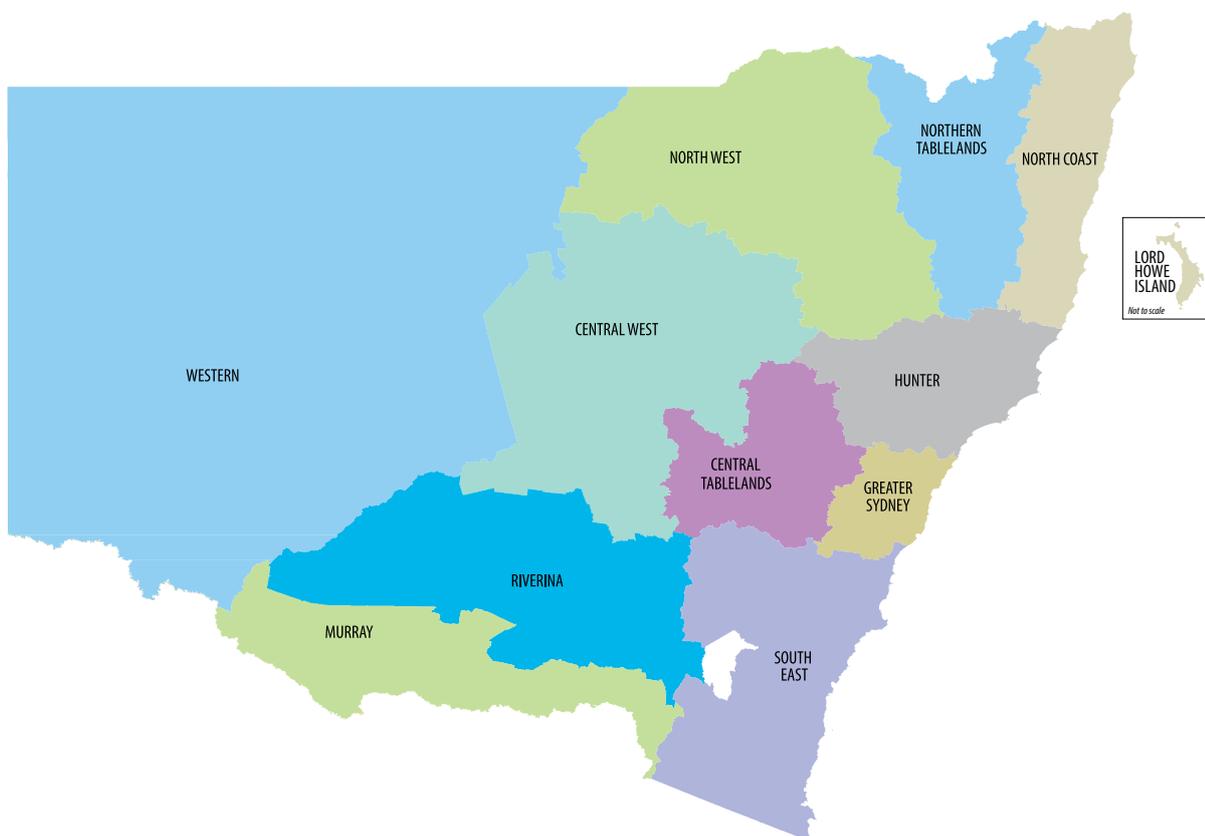
The State Strategic Plan sets the overarching strategy for the whole organisation.

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

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

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

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



**Figure 1: The 11 Local Land Services regions.**

## What we do

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

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

## Customers, stakeholders and investors

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

**Stakeholders** Organisations that collaborate and partner with Local Land Services directly to support customer service delivery.

**Investors** Organisations and individuals who invest in Local Land Services and leverage outcomes from this investment.



# Vision, mission and values

## Vision

Resilient communities in productive healthy landscapes

## Mission

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

## Values

Accountability	Performance
Collaboration	Service
Innovation	Trust
Integrity	



# The Local Land Services Strategy

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

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

This will see four state-wide goals pursued.

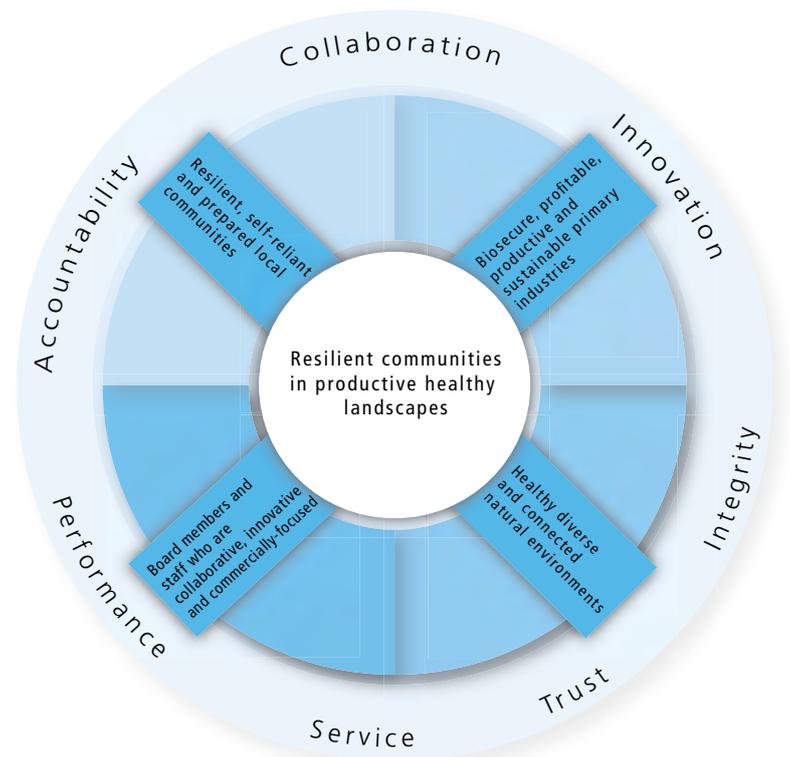
- Resilient, self-reliant and prepared local communities
- Biosecure, profitable, productive and sustainable primary industries
- Healthy diverse and connected natural environments
- Board members and staff who are collaborative, innovative and commercially-focused.

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

It also gives Local Land Services the agility and responsiveness to meet the needs of external investors and other stakeholders and address state and national priorities.

This includes the development and implementation of a range of partnerships with key organisations at state and local level.

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



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

# The Western region

The Western region is the largest Local Land Services region in NSW (figure 3), covering 40% of the State. The region encompasses one of the most diverse rangeland areas of Australia, comprised of arid and semi-arid land, mostly unsuitable for intense agriculture due to unreliable rainfall and constraints such as soil type. Approximately 95% of the Western region remains uncleared, however the condition of the landscape is variable due to the impacts of total grazing pressure and changes to fire regimes.

Land manager, stakeholder, technical and scientific input into this plan have identified several drivers which continue to shape landuse, social structures and natural resources in the Western region. They were found to apply in all sub-regions to varying degrees.

They are as follows:

- climatic variability
- remoteness
- financial and market fluctuations
- technology

The arid and semi-arid areas of Australia have some features that interact and drive the way ecological, economic and social systems function. The Western region has a highly variable and unpredictable climate. As in other arid and semi-arid regions its plants and animals have adapted to these characteristics. Coupled with low nutrients in many of the soils in the region, agricultural productivity also follows this pattern. As a result, native species as well as agricultural productivity in the region are highly variable across time and space. Adaptation to these drivers tends to lead to a high level of diversity. Highly variable productivity and sparse resources also tend to lead to human populations that are variable and sparse.

Climatic variability may increase under climate change which will present further challenges to managing natural resources and agriculture in a sustainable way and to maintain the community health and wellbeing.

The Western Local Strategic Plan considers remoteness using a remoteness index in an attempt to express degrees of sparseness in human populations in the region. The people who live in the region are generally well adapted to this. Despite this, small populations in a large region may have difficulty accessing and influencing major markets, business, social and political centres. Uncertainty over labour, policies and markets has been raised by land managers and stakeholders in the Western region. These factors add to the variability experienced in the region.

Financial and market fluctuations, and changes in technology also affect the region. While these drivers tend to affect land managers everywhere, they can be exacerbated by the variability in climate and remoteness of populations in the Western region.

The interaction of these drivers influences the goals and strategies in this plan and the way they are implemented. It influences organisational capacity and the way that services are developed and provided. Despite long distances, contact with land managers and stakeholders tends to be extensive. The Western Local Strategic Plan and the planning framework that supports it incorporate these drivers to ensure regionally relevant actions are taken to achieve the vision of strong communities, resilient landscapes and competitive agriculture.



**Figure 3: Western Local Land Services.**

## Regional profile

Rainfall in the Western region is low and highly variable – summer dominant in the north and winter dominant in the south. Annual rainfall is highest towards the north-east and lowest to the west, averaging 411mm at Brewarrina to 260mm in Broken Hill. Drought is a major part of the climatic cycle in the Western region. Rainfall may become even more variable and that heavy rainfall events are expected to increase in magnitude. There is medium confidence that drought will increase over the course of the century and very high confidence that there will be an overall increase in temperatures and heat waves.

Grazing (sheep, cattle, goats), dryland agriculture (cereals in the southern Mallee), irrigated agriculture (cotton, horticulture and viticulture), mining, tourism and nature conservation are the main land uses within the Western region. Carbon farming is another land use that has emerged in recent years with carbon projects increasing in number and type in the region.

Intensive agriculture is supported by irrigation along the river systems as well as dryland cropping which is supported in the south and south eastern fringes of the region (see Figure 4). A diversity of aquatic systems span across the region, from the iconic Barwon-Darling River system and its highly fertile black soils, to the fringes of the Lake Eyre Basin in the north-west. The region is largely Crown Land administered under the *Western Lands Act 1901*. This is a unique institutional arrangement in NSW and has had some significant implications for land management.

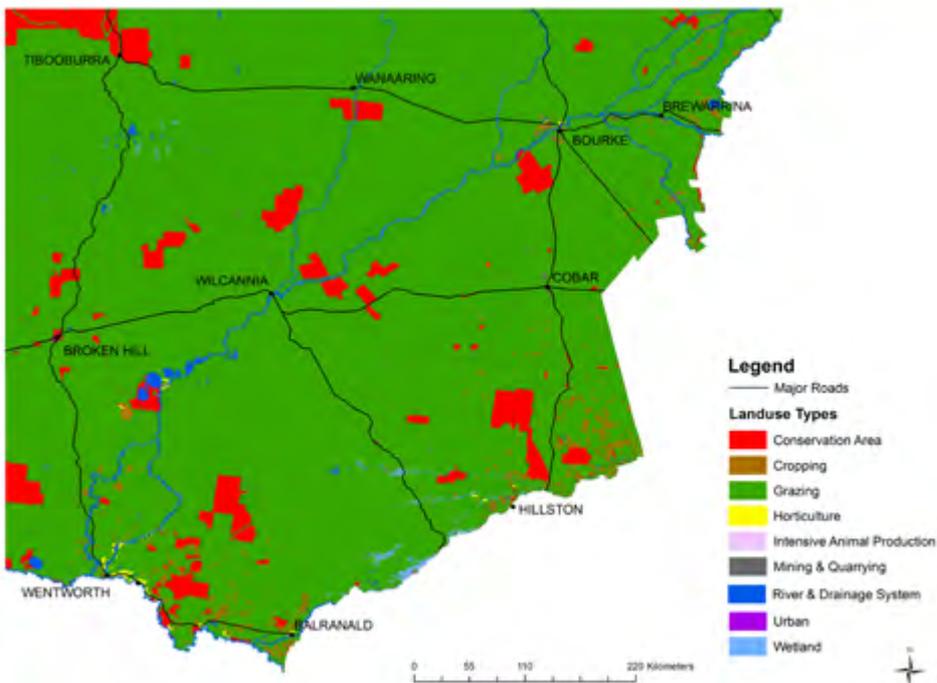


Figure 4: Landuse types in the Western region.

The Barwon-Darling River System, part of Australia's longest river, transporting water 2,000km through a single, meandering channel is located within the region. In the south the Murray River forms one boundary while the Murrumbidgee River forms another. There are a number of smaller and ephemeral rivers and creeks across the region. Major water storages include The Great Artesian Basin, Menindee Lakes and Lake Victoria. It is a predominantly flat area that is interrupted by stony ridges and ranges.

Except for the cities of Broken Hill (within the regional boundary) and Mildura (just outside the regional boundary), towns are relatively small and distances vast. Property sizes range from a few thousand hectares to well over 150,000 hectares. It is the diversity and spectacular landscapes of the region, the challenges involved in living and working there and tight links within communities that attract people to the region. This attachment to the land for both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community was strongly identified throughout community consultation over the past several years.

Aboriginal people make up approximately 13% of the population. There are many sites of cultural significance including the Brewarrina Fish Traps, Mt Grenfell, Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area, Lake Victoria, Mt Hope and the Mutawintji Historic Site. Aboriginal people are passionate about environmental health and many are successful primary producers.

A range of iconic threatened fauna in the region include the kultarr, malleefowl, yellow-footed rock wallaby, tawny crevice dragon, western pygmy possum, plains wanderer, red-tailed black cockatoo, glossy black cockatoo, pink cockatoo and grey grasswren. The mallee spinifex vegetation communities support the majority of the threatened species in the region.

Coordinated programs are undertaken to control unmanaged goats, rabbits, pigs, foxes and cats, and in some areas wild dogs, which threaten agricultural productivity, groundcover and native plants and animals as well as presenting a major biosecurity threat.

# Strategic direction

## Local Land Services state-wide goals and strategies

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

# The Western Local Strategic Plan

Vision	<b>Strong Communities, Resilient Landscapes, Competitive Agriculture</b>		
Goals 25 years	Self-reliant, adaptive and prepared communities	Productive, biosecure and sustainable primary industries operating in resilient landscapes	Effective, efficient, integrated service delivery and local decision making
Objectives 5 years	Land managers and stakeholders have a growing capacity to build self-reliant, adaptive and prepared communities	Land managers are implementing practices that build productive agricultural enterprises, biosecure primary industries and resilient landscapes	Local people are engaged in decision making for their region and value the services provided by Western Local Land Services
Strategies	<p>CC1: Build land manager's capacity to improve land management and agricultural enterprise productivity</p> <p>CC2: Collaborate with stakeholders and industry to improve innovation, productivity and sustainability of primary industries</p> <p>CC3: Create opportunities for Aboriginal people to connect to Country and share traditional land management knowledge</p> <p>CC4: Support the community to prevent or prepare for, respond to and recover from biosecurity and natural disaster events</p> <p>CC5: Support land managers and collaborate with industry and government to adapt to climate change</p>	<p>LM1: Support land managers and stakeholders to manage threats to improve biodiversity outcomes</p> <p>LM2: Support land managers and stakeholders to improve management of terrestrial and aquatic environments for ecological and agricultural outcomes</p> <p>LM3: Support land managers to implement practices that increase enterprise productivity and sustainability</p> <p>LM4: Deliver consent, compliance and enforcement activities that educate and protect Western communities and industries from biosecurity risks</p> <p>LM5: Support land managers and stakeholder groups to identify, contain and manage plant pest and disease, animal pest and disease and weed risks to reduce impacts on landscapes and agriculture</p> <p>LM6: Support primary industries to maintain the integrity and traceability of plant and animal product to ensure containment of risks and market security of agricultural enterprises in the Western region</p> <p>LM7: Care for, control and manage Crown Land vested in the Western region for environmental, social and economic outcomes</p>	<p>AG1: Understand customer needs and deliver quality services that create value and promote innovation</p> <p>AG2: Involve local people in decision making to drive continuous improvement in the services, policies and projects provided by Western Local Land Services</p> <p>AG3: Identify and act on opportunities to create value for customers and investors through integrated service delivery</p> <p>AG4: Strengthen partnerships with customers, stakeholders and industry using principles of collaboration and local delivery</p> <p>AG5: Ensure ongoing improvement in service delivery by using an adapting approach to planning and implementation</p>

## Intent of the Western Local Strategic Plan

The Western Local Strategic Plan will guide Western Local Land Services to become a customer-focused organisation and achieve the shared regional vision of enabling people to build strong communities, resilient landscapes and a competitive agricultural industry.

Western Local Land Services will achieve this by attaining the regional goals of:

- self-reliant, adaptive and prepared communities
- productive, biosecure and sustainable primary industries operating in resilient landscapes

A third goal establishes the foundation for strong organisational governance, measuring performance, adaptive management and ongoing improvement both in the way the organisation operates its business and in the focus of its efforts to improve natural resource management, agricultural competitiveness and community resilience.

By implementing the strategic plan, Western Local Land Services will deliver regionally relevant services to its customers and be adaptive to changing social, economic and environmental conditions at the local, regional and national scale.

The strategic plan establishes the base from which Western Local Land Services will monitor, evaluate and improve its performance and outlines the key performance indicators that the organisation will use to define and measure its achievements.

Importantly, the strategic plan reflects the values and vision of its customers and stakeholders.



Figure 5: Western Local Land Services vision, mission, principles and values.

## Western Local Land Services goals, strategies and key performance indicators

Goal 1: Self-reliant, adaptive and prepared communities.	
Objective: Customers and stakeholders have a growing capacity to build self-reliant, adaptive and prepared communities.	
Strategies:	Actions:
CC1: Build land manager's capacity to improve land management and agricultural enterprise productivity	<p>Provide incentives to land managers to install infrastructure to improve land management and enterprise productivity</p> <p>Invest in innovative approaches to developing physical infrastructure to improve land management and enterprise productivity</p> <p>Demonstrate and advocate successful innovations to land managers</p> <p>Provide information, workshops and other capacity building activities to increase adoption of agricultural best management practices</p> <p>Provide programs to assist land managers to identify new economic opportunities and increase enterprise diversification</p> <p>Provide training to land managers in financial management and marketing to improve agricultural enterprise productivity</p> <p>Invest in community and industry stakeholder groups and networks to build social and human capital</p>
CC2: Collaborate with stakeholders and industry to improve innovation, productivity and sustainability of primary industries	<p>Invest in innovation that will improve productivity and sustainability of primary industries</p> <p>Work with stakeholders and industry groups to identify and invest or collaborate in priority research and development needs</p> <p>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</p> <p>Work with government and industry to identify opportunities for enterprise diversification that ensure long term sustainability of natural resources, agriculture and communities</p>
CC3: Create opportunities for Aboriginal people to connect to Country and share traditional land management knowledge	<p>Implement and expand the Western Local Land Services Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge System</p> <p>Promote opportunities for Aboriginal people to connect to Country for the purpose of practicing traditional culture, transferring knowledge and implementing sustainable land management practices</p> <p>Promote positive relationships, trust and respect between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal land managers and organisations</p> <p>Increase training opportunities for Aboriginal people in land management and primary industries with a view to long term employment</p> <p>Strengthen and communicate duty of care for Aboriginal cultural landscapes</p> <p>Increase youth awareness and knowledge of sustainable land management and Aboriginal culture</p>
CC4: Support the community to prevent or prepare for, respond to and recover from biosecurity and natural disaster events	<p><b>Prevent:</b> Work with the community and stakeholders to identify existing risks, minimise future risks and develop disaster resilience in their communities</p> <p><b>Prepare:</b> Disseminate information to the community when there is a known natural disaster or biosecurity event approaching the Western Region</p> <p><b>Respond:</b> 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</p> <p><b>Recover:</b> Work with Department of Primary Industries to implement the NSW Recovery Plan</p> <p>Review and reflect on emergency preparedness, response and community resilience in recovery</p> <p>Identify areas for improved preparedness, response and resilience and act on them</p>

CC5: Support land managers and collaborate with industry and government to adapt to climate change

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

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

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

# Local Land Services will support development of suitable carbon methods.

### Key performance indicators (To be achieved by 2020)

#### Land Management

- An improvement in the capacity of land managers to improve land management and agricultural enterprise productivity #2, #10
- An increase in the level of innovation demonstrated by land managers to improve land management and agricultural enterprise productivity #4

#### Indigenous Community

- An increase in the number of Aboriginal people involved in programs which encourage connection to Country #1
- An increase in the number of Aboriginal people involved in programs which facilitate the sharing of traditional land management techniques #1

#### Emergency Response

- An improvement in the regional capacity to prevent, prepare for and respond to biosecurity and natural disaster risks #2, #10

#### Climate Change

- An improvement in the level of regional collaboration in developing and implementing programs aimed at adapting to climate change #3
- An improvement in the capacity of land managers to adapt to climate change #2, #10

*NOTE: For KPIs aiming for an improvement in 'capacity' this is in reference to the five capitals of adaptive capacity (i.e. financial, social, natural, physical and human)*

# - Footnotes can be found in the appendices

## Goal 1 summary

This goal is about building the capacity of people in the region to prepare, adapt and respond to circumstances and events at the property, regional, national and international scales. Some of the key areas that Western Local Land Services will focus on to achieve this will be working with stakeholders and industry to improve innovation, productivity and sustainability of primary industries and working with Aboriginal people to build their capacity through increasing their involvement in land management.

For example, the capacity of land managers and communities is important. In order to manage their land to achieve their desired financial and land management goals, land managers' need to have adequate financial capital to invest in the property and support them through drought.

Without adequate physical capital (e.g. fences and water infrastructure) it will be difficult to manage grazing pressure. Land managers also need a good reserve of natural capital to ensure groundcover is maintained to support livestock and prevent erosion. Both land managers' and communities in the Western region need adequate capacity in order to prepare for natural disaster and biosecurity events and respond to and recover from them as well as possible when they do occur.

Increases in temperatures, heatwaves, drought and extreme weather events under a variable climate may also impact on the distribution of both native and exotic flora and fauna providing further challenges for land managers. However national and international activities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit the impacts of climate change will drive the carbon economy and may provide economic and land use opportunities.

Having adequate capacity also enables communities and land managers' to respond more effectively to pressures such as climate change. Throughout the strategic plan review process the importance of the involvement of Aboriginal people in land management in the Western Region was identified. Aboriginal people make up 13 per cent of the population of the region and are a critical sector of the community for Western Local Land Services and its partners to engage with. The level of involvement of Aboriginal people in Country, culture and heritage varies and there is significant scope for improvement. The Western Local Strategic Plan provides strategies and actions to do this.

## Goal 2: Productive, biosecure and sustainable primary industries operating in resilient landscapes

**Objective: Land managers are implementing practices that build productive agricultural enterprises, biosecure primary industries and resilient landscapes**

Strategies:	Actions:
LM1: Support land managers and stakeholders to manage threats to improve biodiversity outcomes	<p>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</p> <p>Work with land managers to manage priority weeds threatening biodiversity identified in the regional weed management plan</p> <p>Work with land managers to implement landscape-scale predator and competitor control programs focused on priority landscapes identified in regional pest animal management plans</p>
LM2: Support land managers and stakeholders to improve management of terrestrial and aquatic environments for landscape resilience	<p>Work with land managers to implement landscape-scale predator and competitor control programs focused on priority landscapes identified in regional pest animal management plans</p> <p>Provide incentives to land managers to manage total grazing pressure</p> <p>Provide information, workshops and other capacity building activities to land managers to enable effective management of total grazing pressure</p> <p>Provide incentives to land managers to improve management of aquatic environments</p> <p>Invest in partnership projects to protect and restore in-stream habitat and connectivity in aquatic systems</p> <p>Invest in water efficiency programs in partnership with irrigators</p> <p>Participate in groundwater and surface water planning</p> <p>Work with land managers to increase the use of appropriate fire regime in the landscape</p> <p>Work with land managers to protect and rehabilitate areas affected by overland flow obstructions or degradation of soil surface function</p>
LM3: Support land managers to implement practices that increase enterprise productivity and sustainability	<p>Identify areas of aquatic and terrestrial refugia for improved management and conservation projects</p> <p>Manage priority weeds threatening enterprise productivity identified in the regional weed management plan</p> <p>Provide information and incentives to land managers to implement grazing, cropping and horticultural best management practices</p> <p>Provide land managers with advisory services and tools to manage native vegetation composition and structure including the use of codes of practice</p>
LM4: Deliver consent, compliance and enforcement activities that educate and protect Western communities and industries from biosecurity risks	<p><u>Consent</u>: Undertake emergency response consent activities as directed</p> <p><u>Compliance</u>: 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 <i>Local Land Services Act</i></p> <p><u>Enforcement</u>: Provide assistance and support to other agencies in delivering legislative law enforcement activities</p> <p>Apply the enforcement activities specified in the <i>Local Land Services Act</i></p>
LM5: Support land managers and stakeholder groups to identify, contain and manage pest, disease and weed risks to reduce impacts on landscapes and agriculture	<p>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)</p> <p>Develop and implement regional pest animal and weed management plans in conjunction with key regional committees, taking into account new threats and changes in distribution invasive species under a variable climate</p> <p>Provide information and incentives to land managers and stakeholder groups to implement actions identified in the pest animal and weed management plans</p>

<p>LM6: Support primary industries to maintain the integrity and traceability of plant and animal product to ensure containment of risks and market security of agricultural enterprises in the Western Region</p>	<p>Provide advisory services to support implementation of the National Livestock Identification Scheme</p> <p>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</p> <p>Support Department of Primary Industries to contain biosecurity risks</p> <p>Provide locally relevant input into the development of policies and procedures</p> <p>Implement the roles and responsibilities for biosecurity management of Western Local Land Services identified in the NSW biosecurity guidelines (*NSW Biosecurity Strategy 10.3)</p>
<p>LM7: Care for, control and manage Crown land vested in Western Local Land Services for environmental, social and economic outcomes</p>	<p>Work with Crown Lands, land managers and stakeholders to ensure the travelling stock reserve (TSR) network and other Crown Land is managed for environmental, social and economic outcomes</p> <p>Administer leases over stock watering places</p> <p>Issue long-term grazing permits via competitive tender on selected TSR's, and issue short-term grazing permits on selected TSR's (subject to seasonal conditions)</p> <p>Issue Walking and Slow Walking permits for the movement of stock to a destination (subject to seasonal conditions)</p>

### Key performance indicators (To be achieved by 2020)

#### Biodiversity

- An increase in the area of land being managed to maintain or improve native vegetation composition and structure in optimal condition for improving biodiversity<sup>#5</sup>

#### Productivity and sustainability

- An increase in the number of properties being actively managed across the region to achieve a protective groundcover layer of 50% or above <sup>#6</sup>
- An increase in the capacity of land managers to increase enterprise productivity and sustainability <sup>#2, #10</sup>
- An increase in the level of regional collaboration on programs aimed at improving the management of aquatic environments <sup>#3</sup>

#### Biosecurity

- New and emerging pests, weeds, plant pests and diseases and animal diseases detected and contained <sup>#11</sup>
- An increase in the capacity of land managers to contain invasive species, plant pests and disease and animal pests and diseases to reduce their impact on landscapes and agriculture <sup>#2, #10</sup>
- An increase in the level of awareness by land managers of existing and new and emerging biosecurity risks <sup>#2, #10</sup>
- An improvement in the level of regional capacity to ensure the traceability of horticultural produce and animal products <sup>#2, #10</sup>

#### Crown Lands

- An improvement in the administration of crown land assets <sup>#7</sup>

NOTE: For KPIs aiming for an improvement in 'capacity' this is in reference to the five capitals of adaptive capacity i.e. financial, social, natural, physical and human

# - Footnotes can be found in the appendices

## Goal 2 summary

This goal focuses on maintaining and improving the health and resilience of landscapes. Because of the largely intact nature of the region, improvements in management of terrestrial and aquatic habitats enhance both agricultural and ecological outcomes.

Western Local Land Services will support customers to undertake works and programs to manage total grazing pressure, manage impacts from pest animals and weeds, increase the use of fire in the landscape, improve the management of overland flow and areas impacted by poor soil surface function, protect and improve the management of aquatic environments including the connectivity of flow across the landscape and in-stream, and work with irrigators to improve water use efficiency and participate in water planning.

Western Local Land Services has obligations under the *Local Land Services Act 2013* to deliver consent, compliance and enforcement activities which educate and protect the communities and the agricultural industry in the Western region from biosecurity risks. Biosecurity risks include animal and plant diseases and outbreaks. Western Local Land Services supports the Department of Primary Industries in the implementation of the NSW Biosecurity Strategy. It does this by providing the on-ground consent, compliance and enforcement activities required to ensure biosecurity is maintained.

Working with customers to implement the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) is one of the key ways that Western Local Land Services will support primary industries to maintain the integrity and traceability of plant and animal products.

Western Local Land Services supports customers and stakeholders to identify, contain and manage the risks posed to agriculture and the natural environment from pests animals and weeds including new issues that may emerge in response to climate change. A priority action in this plan is to develop pest animal and weed management plans with the input of stakeholders and the community for identified high priority aquatic and terrestrial pest animal and weed species. They will prioritise investment in pest animals and weeds and will reflect both the agricultural impacts and impacts on biodiversity of the species.

Western Local Land Services will support its customers and stakeholders to manage threats to biodiversity including pest animals and weeds, the development of threatened species protection programs and by supporting private conservation projects.

Western Local Land Services has responsibilities for the care of, control and management of Crown Lands, primarily stock watering places. Western Local Land Services will work with land managers, Crown Lands and stakeholders to ensure travelling stock network and other Crown land is managed for environmental, social and economic outcomes.



### Goal 3: Effective, efficient, integrated service delivery and local decision making

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

Strategies:	Actions:
AG1: Understand customer and investor needs and identify and act on opportunities to create value, deliver quality services and promote innovation	<p>Monitor customer satisfaction through regular surveys</p> <p>Utilise Local Community Advisory Groups, Aboriginal Community Advisory Groups, stakeholder forums and other feedback mechanisms to understand, and respond to customer needs</p> <p>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</p> <p>Establish an organisational structure which drives integrated service delivery</p>
AG2: Involve local people in decision making to drive continuous improvement in the services, policy and projects provided by Western Local Land Services	<p>Establish Local Community and Aboriginal Community Advisory Groups</p> <p>Enable Local Community and Aboriginal Community Advisory Groups to be effective, relevant and drive continuous improvement through agreed terms of reference</p> <p>Provide ongoing support to Local Community and Aboriginal Community Advisory Groups to ensure groups remain effective, relevant and fit for purpose</p> <p>Engage customers and stakeholders in planning, decision making and implementation</p>
AG3: Identify and act on opportunities to create value for customers and investors through integrated service delivery	<p>Implement an organisational structure which supports integrated service delivery</p> <p>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</p>
AG4: Strengthen partnerships with customers, stakeholders and industry using principles of collaboration and local delivery	<p>Collaborate with community based organisations including Landcare to improve development and delivery of services and projects</p>
AG5: Ensure ongoing improvement in service delivery by using an adapting approach to planning and implementation	<p>Implement an adaptive management approach to organisational performance review</p> <p>Ensure that Western Local Land Services meets the Local Land Services Performance Standard</p> <p>Evaluate and improve performance to improve program design and land management outcomes</p>

### Key performance indicators (To be achieved by 2020)

#### Satisfaction

- An improvement in the level of customer satisfaction with Western Local Land Services' service delivery<sup>#2</sup>
- An improvement in the level of customer and investor satisfaction with the level of integration of Western Local Land Services' services<sup>#2</sup>
- An increase in the number of front line staff trained in the delivery of customer service<sup>#8</sup>

#### Participation

- An improvement in the level of community participation and engagement in decision making<sup>#9</sup>
- An improvement in the level of regional collaboration with customers, stakeholders and industry with respect to delivery of Western Local Land Services' services<sup>#3</sup>

# - Footnotes can be found in the appendices

## Goal 3 summary

Success as an organisation will be determined by the satisfaction of its customers. This is reflected in the KPI's used to measure achievement against this goal. An adaptive management approach will be used to review the organisation's progress in the area of customer satisfaction.

Shared decision making, continuous learning and improvement are vital to the successful implementation of this plan. An adaptive approach to planning, implementation and service delivery (adaptive management) establishes the framework for Western Local Land Services to learn and improve through experience.

Adaptive management is integral to dealing with the complex challenges that confront the region. It brings together local, technical and scientific knowledge to develop and test approaches to agricultural productivity, natural resource management and social resilience. This approach will allow Western Local Land Services and its stakeholders and customers to learn from implementation and adjust management as new knowledge is gained.

Local Community Advisory Groups and Aboriginal Community Advisory Groups have been established to provide input into local planning, implementation and decision making.

Monitoring and evaluation programs and monitoring data from individual land managers will play an important role in measuring the success of programs and identifying the need for change.

The arid and semi-arid rangelands of the region are subject to variability in natural, social and economic systems and have unique ways of coping with the diversity and patchiness of resources across time and space. To ensure the best outcomes for the natural resources and the people of the Western region, adaptive governance and decision making are needed.



# Implementation

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

## Investment principles

The Western Local Strategic Plan is a document shared by land managers, stakeholders, investors, Western Local Land Services staff and the Western Local Board which strives to achieve the vision of strong communities, resilient landscapes and competitive agriculture in the Western region.

It exists within a complex system and reflects best available science, investor priorities, land manager and stakeholder priorities and the legislative responsibilities of Local Land Services under the *Local Land Services Act 2013*. Accountability, transparency and public return on investment are also at the core of investment decisions. The capacity of Western Local Land Services to implement programs is also a consideration when developing an investment plan.

Western Local Land Services operates under the principles of adding value, focusing on customers, providing locally integrated program and service delivery and collaborating with stakeholders.

While some of these factors remain the same throughout the life of the plan, others may change. Climatic and market conditions, pest and weed outbreaks, biosecurity threats and other factors can change quite dramatically and this plan must be responsive to such changes in order to best serve land managers and stakeholders of Western Local Land Services.

Within the scope of the strategic plan, Western Local Land Services will make investments guided by the considerations illustrated below.

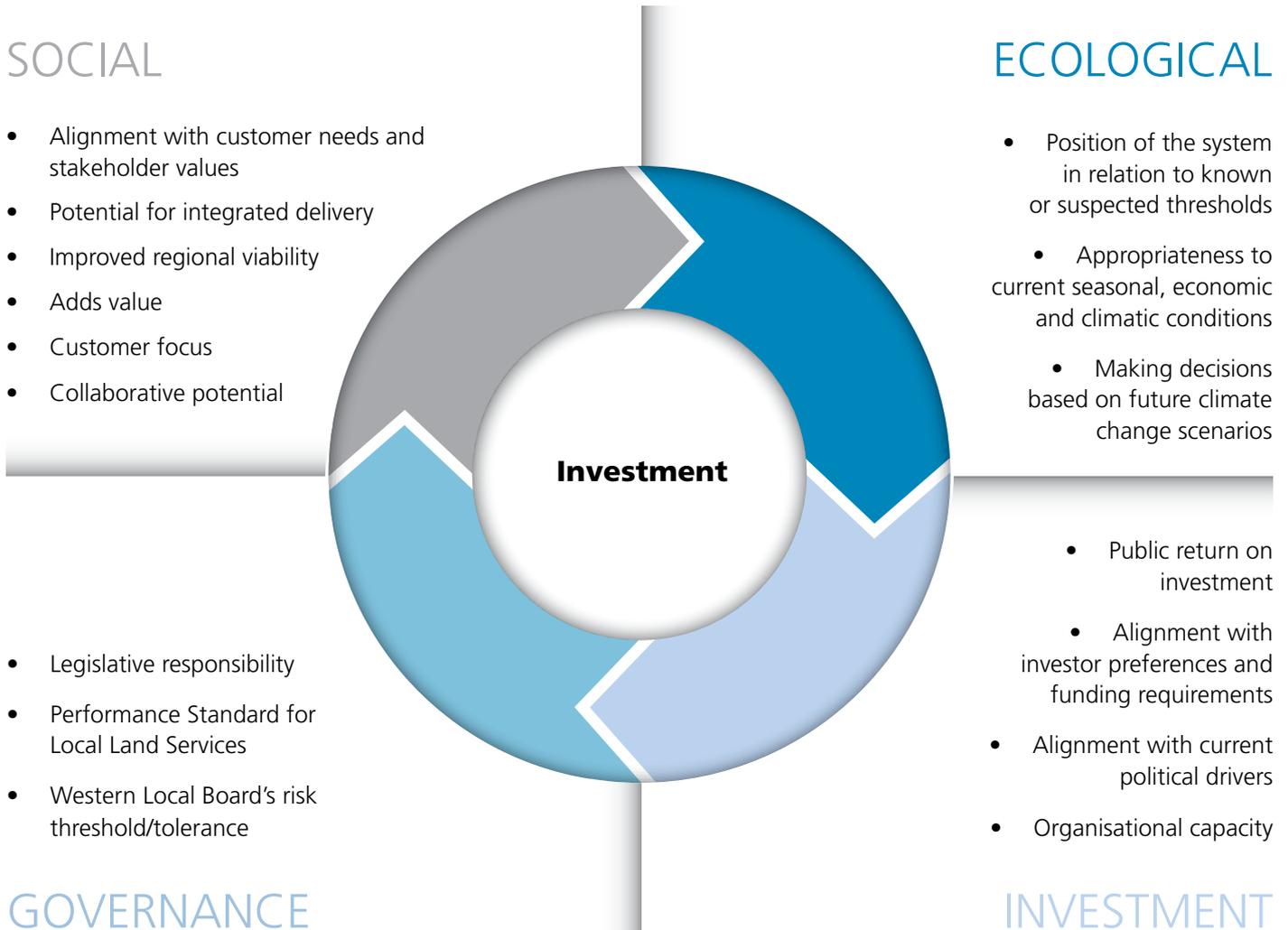


Figure 6: Factors guiding investment decisions.



## Inputs into the Western Local Strategic Plan

A number of sources of information have been drawn on to establish the goals, strategies, KPI's and actions in this plan. Western Local Land Services has obligations under the *Local Land Services Act 2013* and a number of State and Australian government plans which are reflected in the Western Local Strategic Plan.

The Western Local Strategic Plan has also been developed using scientific, technical and local knowledge. The Western Local Strategic Plan draws on the rigorous assessment and analysis undertaken by scientists, technical experts and the community in previous planning iterations, including the 2013-2023 Catchment Action Plans. Community values and vision for the Western region were captured in this planning phase and have been incorporated into the Western Local Strategic Plan. The Western Local Strategic Plan also draws on extensive monitoring and evaluation undertaken in the region over many years.

Along with existing natural resource management planning, the relevant sections of the NSW Biosecurity Plan, NSW Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Strategic Plan, the Agricultural Industry Action Plan and the NSW Emergency Management Business Plan are reflected in the Western Local Strategic Plan. This plan also draws upon the latest information about climate change projections, impacts and adaptation.

Land managers and stakeholders were further engaged in developing the Western Local Strategic Plan through public consultation which included input by the Local Community Advisory Groups (LCAG), Aboriginal Community Advisory Groups (ACAG) and through an online feedback system including the Catchment Action Plan landholder benchmarking survey (Western Local Land Services, 2015).



Figure 8: Inputs into the development of the Western Local Strategic Plan.

# Evidence supporting choice of strategies

The following tables document the evidence used to support the choice of strategies used.

Goal 1: Self-reliant, adaptive and prepared communities	
Strategies	Evidence
CC1: Build land manager's capacity to improve land management and agricultural enterprise productivity	<p>Landholders identified these top three reasons for increased production:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. grazing management</li> <li>2. genetics</li> <li>3. control of predators.</li> </ol> <p>Horticulturists identified several factors behind increased production, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. adjustments in nutrition</li> <li>2. improvements to infrastructure</li> <li>3. an increase in production area.</li> </ol> <p>An assessment of landholder responses against the five capitals of adaptive capacity indicated that the following capitals are the least commonly available to them when addressing natural resource management issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. natural (climate, seasons and property condition) capital</li> <li>2. financial (income) capital</li> <li>3. social (support from friends, neighbours, businesses) capital.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 per cent of landholders had undertaken agriculture, grazing or land management courses in the past two years</li> <li>• 22 per cent of landholders have a property management plan.</li> </ul>
CC2: Collaborate with stakeholders and industry to improve innovation, productivity and sustainability of primary industries.	<p>Access to water for agricultural purposes was considered a major problem by 51 per cent of landholders</p> <p>25 per cent of landholders are looking to make changes to their enterprise in the next five years mostly through improvements to livestock or pasture management practices or expanding, developing or increasing production.</p> <p>Top three reasons for increased production:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. grazing management</li> <li>2. genetics</li> <li>3. control of predators.</li> </ol>
CC3: Create opportunities for Aboriginal people to connect to Country and share traditional land management knowledge	<p>Aboriginal people identified the following areas for improvement in the management of cultural landscapes and involving their people in natural resource management and agriculture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the safekeeping and sharing of traditional ecological knowledge</li> <li>• transferring traditional ecological knowledge to young people</li> <li>• clear obligations for caring for cultural landscapes</li> <li>• training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in looking after Country</li> <li>• increased opportunities for Aboriginal people to connect to Country</li> <li>• increased opportunities for Aboriginal land ownership.</li> </ul>
CC5: Support land managers and collaborate with industry and government to adapt to climate change	<p>Landholders felt that the resources least available to them to address natural resource issues were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the knowledge of how to address the issue</li> <li>• practical skills to address the issue</li> <li>• support from neighbours and formal groups</li> <li>• support from business and contractors.</li> </ul> <p>These resources are vital for adapting to a variable climate.</p>

<b>Goal 2 : Productive, biosecure and sustainable primary industries operating in resilient landscapes</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
LM1: Support land managers and stakeholders to manage threats to improve biodiversity outcomes.	A decline in the diversity of native plants and animals was considered a major issue that landholders felt they had low ability to address
LM2: Support land managers to implement practices that increase enterprise productivity and sustainability	<p>Only 19% of landholders used fire to manage landscape condition. INS management and managing Total Grazing Pressure were considered major issues that landholders felt they had a low ability to address.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 85% of landholders identified pest animals as a problem on their property.</li> <li>• 55% of landholders identified INS as a problem on their property.</li> <li>• 53% of landholders identified low groundcover as a problem on their property.</li> <li>• 51% of landholders identified controlling Total Grazing Pressure as a problem on their property.</li> </ul> <p>Access to water for agricultural purposes was considered a major problem by 51% of landholders.</p> <p>Wild dogs are being actively managed by over 80% of landholders.</p> <p>Total Grazing Pressure is being actively managed by over 80% of landholders.</p> <p>Over 80% of landholders who identified wild dogs as a problem are managing them.</p>
LM3: Support land managers and stakeholders to improve management of terrestrial and aquatic environments for ecological and agricultural outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 55% of landholders identified INS as a significant problem on their property.</li> <li>• 53% of landholders identified low groundcover as a significant problem on their property.</li> <li>• 51% of landholders identified managing Total Grazing Pressure as a significant issue for their enterprise.</li> </ul> <p>A decline in the diversity of native plant and animal species, INS management and managing Total Grazing Pressure were considered major issues which landholders felt they had a low ability to address.</p> <p>Total Grazing Pressure is being actively managed by over 80% of landholders.</p> <p>Soil erosion to riverbanks and soil erosion generally were considered by landholders as issues they didn't have the skills or resources to address.</p>
LM4: Deliver consent, compliance and enforcement activities that educate and protect Western communities and industries from biosecurity risks	<p>Roughly half of all landholders surveyed knew that Western Local Land Services was a provider of biosecurity services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17% of landholders have a biosecurity of access policy.</li> </ul>
LM5: Support land managers and stakeholder groups to identify, contain and manage pest, disease and weed risks to reduce impacts on landscapes and agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 85% of landholders identified pest animals as a concern on their property</li> <li>• 41% of landholders believe weeds are a significant problem on their property</li> </ul>
LM6: Support primary industries to maintain the integrity and traceability of plant and animal product to ensure containment of risks and market security of agricultural enterprises in the Western Local Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 54% of landholders thought that administering the National Livestock Identification System was the main activity of Western Local Land Services.</li> </ul>

### Goal 3: Effective, efficient, integrated service delivery and local decision making

Strategies	Evidence
AG1: Understand customer needs and deliver quality services that create value and promote innovation.	<p>We are going well but there is room for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>81% of landholders had heard of Western Local Land Services however understanding of the services Western Local Land Services can offer was limited.</li> <li>46% of landholders had made contact with Western Local Land Services within the six months prior to surveying.</li> </ul> <p>Of the landholders who had contacted Western Local Land Services 78% were satisfied with the service they were provided and 47% of people said they would recommend Western Local Land Services service.</p> <p>Many people are unaware of the full suite of services Western Local Land Services can provide. For example, amongst those landholders who had heard of Western Local Land Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>54% believed the main activity of Western Local Land Services was administering the National Livestock Identification System</li> <li>48% believed the main activity was funding programs for natural resource management projects</li> <li>47% believed it to be associated with administering rabbit baits.</li> </ul>
AG2: Involve local people in decision making to drive continuous improvement in the services, policies and projects provided by Local Land Services Western Region.	
AG3: Identify and act on opportunities to create value for customers and investors through integrated service delivery.	
AG4: Strengthen partnerships with customers, stakeholders and industry using principles of collaboration and local delivery.	
AG5: An adaptive approach to planning, implementation and service delivery is used by the Western Local Board to ensure ongoing improvement in service delivery.	



## Measuring success

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

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

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

The data collected and the results of evaluations are necessary tools for Local Land Service to make informed decisions about our priorities and investment decisions.

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

Key components of the framework include:

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

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

Western Local Land Services will measure and monitor the success of the strategic plan through the development of an adaptation strategy. This strategy will incorporate Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement planning (MERI) as well as a process for improving project and program design and delivery, and the process for reviewing and updating the strategic direction of the organisation. A series of triggers for project, program and strategy review will be documented in the adaptation strategy and it will describe how new knowledge will be captured and incorporated into planning and implementation.

The success of the implementation of the plan will be measured using key performance indicators (KPI's). Some benchmarks for measuring change or progress in the KPIs already exist while some additional benchmarks will be established. A summary of existing and planned benchmarking activities for each KPI are identified in this plan. More detailed information on the methods of benchmarking will be outlined in the adaptation strategy which will be established within six months of Plan approval.

Western Local Land Services has put an emphasis on measuring outcomes that are quantifiable as a result of the implementation of the strategic plan, such as the influence the organisation has on facilitating land management changes. Some exceptions to this include measuring the level of groundcover using Landsat imagery and assessing the condition of vegetation across the region.

## Learning and development

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

A triple loop learning approach is applied to evaluate for adaptive management and drive continuous improvement at different scales of planning: annual plans, business implementation plans, strategic plans and governance. Each loop entails progressing to more specific levels of questioning.

The first loop of evaluation and learning occurs frequently, at least annually, and involves regular monitoring, auditing, evaluating and reporting of actions. This level of learning leads to incremental changes in projects and actions.

The second loop of learning focuses on challenging, and potentially reframing, strategies and objectives, as well as examining evidence and assumptions that underpin our strategic approaches, regional objectives and the projects that underpin them.

The third loop of evaluation and learning focuses on challenging, and potentially transforming governance arrangements, value systems, vision and mission, and other high level processes. This level of learning can lead to changes in our direction and goals (e.g. transforming our business to accommodate climate change adaptation needs).

While learning at the second and third loops typically occurs at longer intervals than at first loop, learning at all levels will occur when the need arises. This approach allows us to review our efforts on a number of scales by asking key questions and making decisions using best available evidence at each point.

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



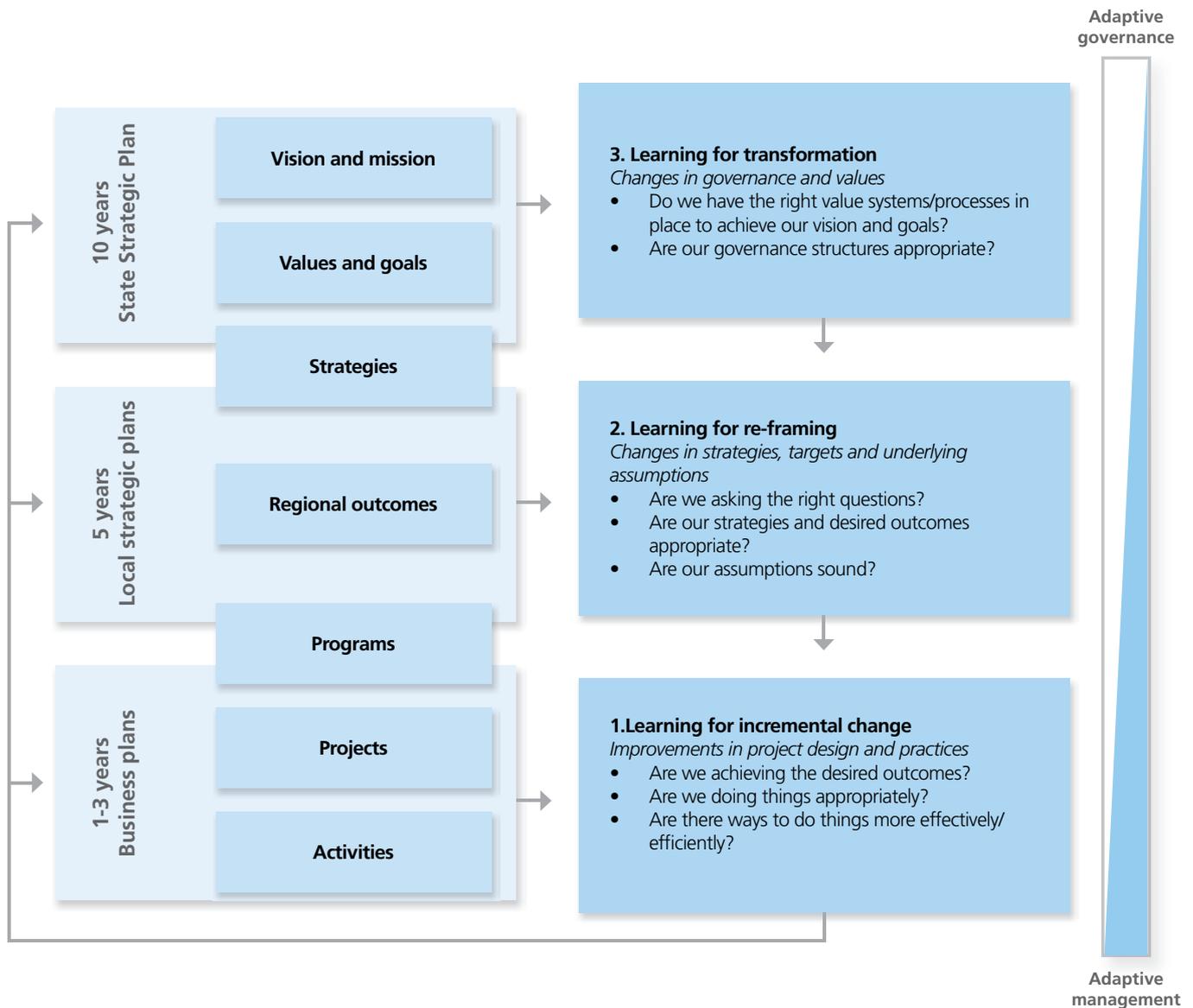


Figure 9: Triple loop learning applied to the Local Land Services planning framework (adapted from Murray Catchment Action Plan 2013).

# Legislation and guiding influences

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

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

In addition, a range of NSW and Australian Government legislation, policies and plans have influenced the development of the State Strategic Plan.

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

## National

Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper 2015  
Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030  
Australian Weeds Strategy 2007  
Close the Gap 2014  
Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999  
International agreements such as:  
China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement  
Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement  
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands  
Republic of Korea-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement  
National Landcare Programme  
National Plant Biosecurity Strategy 2010  
*Quarantine Act 1908*  
*Water Act 2007*

## State

NSW making it happen: Premier's Priorities and State Priorities  
Portfolio commitments and priorities  
*Local Land Services Act 2013*  
Local Land Services Regulation 2014  
Local Land Services State Strategic Plan 2016  
*Biosecurity Act 2015*  
*Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*  
*Government Sector Employment Act 2013*

*Native Vegetation Act 2003*  
*Noxious Weeds Act 1993*  
*Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*  
*Water Management Act 2000*  
Agricultural Industry Action Plan 2014  
Catchment Action Plans  
Department of Planning and Environment Regional Plans  
NSW Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Strategic Plan 2013-15  
NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2013-2021  
NSW Invasive Species Plan 2008-2015  
NSW State Emergency Management Plan 2012  
NSW State of the Environment 2012  
NSW Wetland Policy 2010  
NSW Wild Dog Strategy 2012-2015  
Ochre Strategy 2013  
Performance Standard for Local Land Services—Natural Resources Commission 2015  
State Agriculture and Animal Services Functional Area Supporting Plan 2011

## Regional

Environmental planning instruments  
Customer and stakeholder feedback - online  
Customer and stakeholder feedback via Local Community Advisory Groups and Local Aboriginal Community Groups  
Engagement with Local Community Advisory Groups  
Engagement with Local Aboriginal Community Groups  
2013-23 Catchment Action Plans (Western, Lachlan, Murray)

# Glossary

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

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

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

**Carbon farming:** A farming method that reduces greenhouse gas emissions or captures and holds carbon in vegetation and soils.

**Carbon mitigation:** A human intervention to reduce our impact on the climate system. It includes strategies to reduce greenhouse gas sources and emissions as well as enhancing greenhouse gas sinks.

**Carbon sequestration:** The process by which carbon is captured and stored in vegetation and soil.

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

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

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

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

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

**Land manager:** Any "entity" that manages land. This may include farmers, graziers, irrigators, cultural and environmental land holders, councils, sporting or community groups and government agencies.

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

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

**Travelling stock reserve:** Means

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

**Triple bottom line:** Refers to the economic, social (including cultural) and environmental impact and outcomes of government policies and programs (Net Balance Management Group 2013).

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

## List of Abbreviations

**ACAG** Aboriginal Community Advisory Group

**Av** Average

**BMP** Biodiversity Management Plan

**CMA** Catchment Management Authority

**COAG** Council of Australian Governments

**DPI** NSW Department of Primary Industries

**Ha** Hectares

**INS** Invasive native species

**KPIs** Key performance indicators

**LCAG** Local Community Advisory Group

**LSP** Local Strategic Plan

**MERI** Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement

**MOU** Memorandum of understanding

**NRC** Natural Resources Commission

**NRM** Natural resource management

**NLIS** National Livestock Identification Scheme

**PHA** Plant Health Australia

**R&D** Research and development

**RD&AS** Research, development and advisory services

**TGP** Total grazing pressure

**TSR** Travelling stock reserve

**WH&S** Workplace health and safety

# Appendices

## Identified threats to communities, landscapes and agriculture in the Western region

Unmanaged total grazing pressure is a significant threat across the majority of the region. Contributors to total grazing pressure include domestic stock, goats, kangaroos, emus and rabbits. The result is reduced groundcover, which can contribute to loss of production, landscape function, increased wind erosion, sedimentation, increased potential for Invasive Native Species (INS) and loss of species diversity and abundance. Populations of certain native species, particularly kangaroos, continue to grow relatively unabated and have a significant impact on total grazing pressure.

Prior to European settlement, Aboriginal people used fire in the landscape as an integral land management tool. Alteration to the fire regime (e.g. intensity, frequency) since European settlement continues to have an impact on the structure and composition of vegetation and agricultural productivity. Fire is considered a key method for controlling the spread and density of INS and regeneration of desirable species.

Pest animals continue to be a significant threat across the region. Unmanaged goats, rabbits, pigs, foxes, cats and wild dogs threaten agricultural productivity, groundcover and native plants and animals. They impact animal welfare and agricultural productivity, compete for habitat and available forage, predate upon vulnerable species and are an uncontrolled disease vector. Pest animals are a particular concern in the Western region given the scale of properties, sparse population of land managers and the significant investment needed to achieve measurable improvement.

Similarly, increases in the extent and abundance of invasive plant species threaten native plant diversity, compete for resources and impact agricultural productivity. The region is under particular threat from prickly shrubs and cactus species as well as pastoral weeds. Given the scale of the region, emphasis remains on early detection and control of infestations. There is a range of potentially invasive species not yet present in the region that pose significant threats.

Aquatic systems are threatened by barriers to the flow of water, both within a river or stream and across the landscape in floodplains and wetlands. Obstructions to flow affect the ability of native fish and other aquatic species to access habitat and breeding opportunities. They can also cause drying out of refugia and lead to the loss of aquatic and riparian vegetation diversity. Aquatic systems in the region are dominated by relatively short periods of very high flow and long periods of medium to low flow. The integrity of aquatic systems is also threatened by increasing periods of low to nil flow due to upstream diversions and the impact of climate change. Water quality issues include salinity, turbidity and blue green algal blooms.

Aquatic pests and weed species impact on the availability of habitat, compete for resources and predate upon native species. Major pests include carp and mosquito fish, while the risk of other invasive species such as tilapia entering the river system is high.

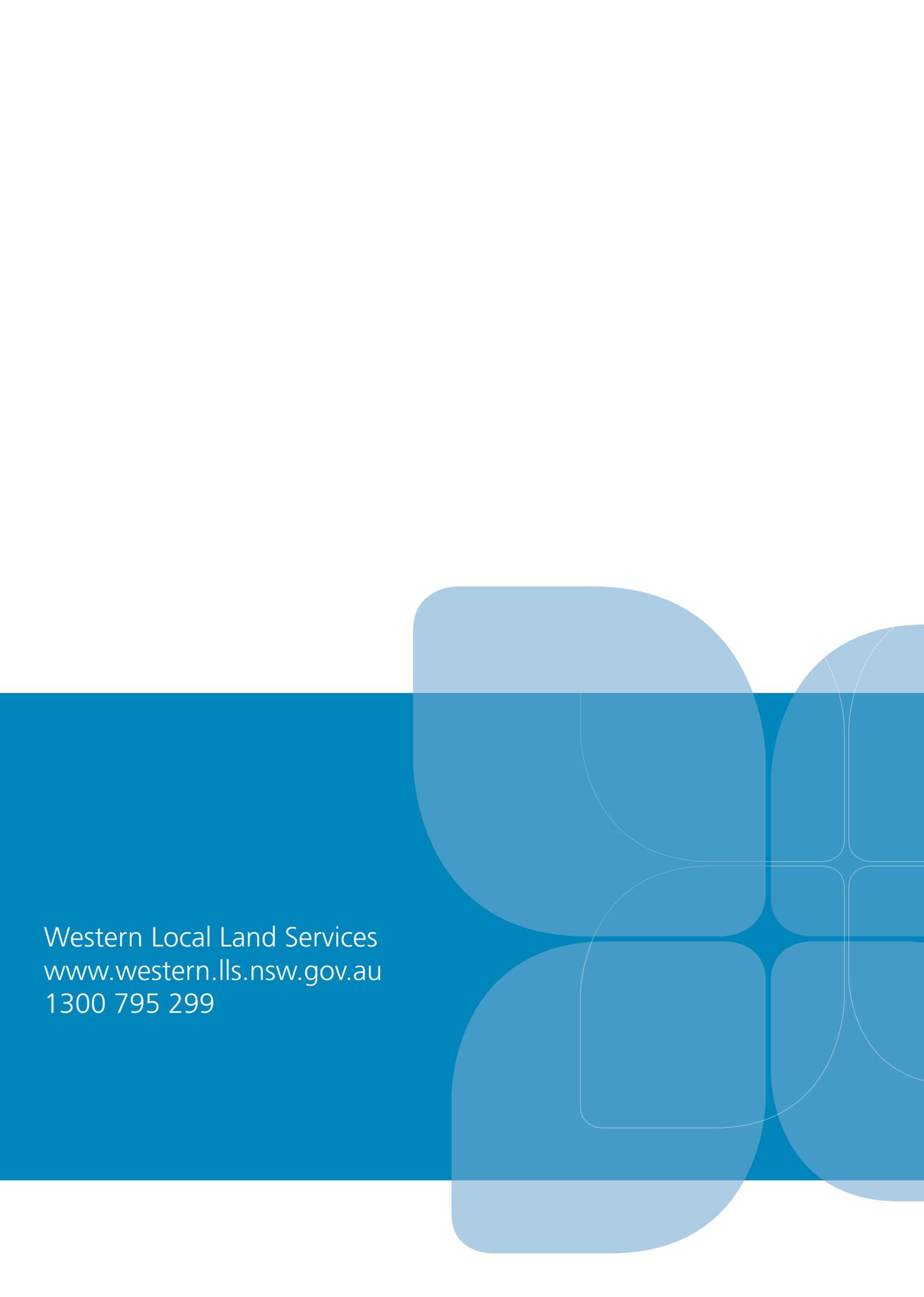
The capacity of Aboriginal people to practice and pass on traditional ecological knowledge has been identified as a key issue. It is hindered through limited opportunities to practice traditions, access to Country and engagement with youth. Passing on knowledge and respect for traditional customs is an issue identified by many Aboriginal people in the region. Similarly the notion of links between healthy functioning natural resources (for example healthy river systems) and a resilient Aboriginal communities are also commonly raised.

Pressure on the agricultural industry due to commodity prices, input costs and declining terms of trade continue to have an impact on the economic productivity of properties in some parts of the region. Climate variability, loss of groundcover and landscape function, and increasing INS add to this pressure. Access to sufficient skilled labour on properties is often difficult. This ultimately results in declining services, further decline in labour availability and a loss of community connectedness. These effects can be distorted by factors such as higher labour demands from mining centres within and outside the region. There are also concerns about the viability of towns across the region.

## Benchmarking for key performance indicators

For each key performance indicator (KPI) identified within the Strategic Plan a benchmark has been established or will be established within six months of Plan approval. Below is a brief summary of the existing and planned benchmarking activities for each of the KPIs. More detailed information on the methods of benchmarking will be outlined in the Western Local Land Services MERI Plan.

- #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.

The image features a white background with a solid blue horizontal band at the bottom. On the right side, there are several overlapping, rounded rectangular shapes in various shades of blue, creating a modern, abstract graphic design. The text is positioned on the left side of the blue band.

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