



Local Land  
Services  
Central Tablelands

# Local Annual Report 2016



# Contents

Foreword	1
Central Tablelands region at a glance	2
2016 local achievements	3
Local Land Services goals	4
Local Land Services statewide goals	5
Resilient, self-reliant and prepared local communities	5
Biosecure, profitable, productive and sustainable primary industries	7
Healthy, diverse, connected natural environments	8
Case study: Groundcover incentive project	10
Case study: The prevalence of <i>Coxiella burnetii</i> in goats in the region	11
Case study: Creating superb homes for parrots	12
Case study: Queensland fruit fly surveillance	13
Office locations	14

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## Disclaimer

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of the report January 2016 to December 2016. However, 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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# Foreword

As we wrap up the third year of operation for Central Tablelands Local Land Services we can reflect positively on the broad range of services we have delivered.

These services are aimed to help producers raise productivity, improve natural resources, protect our agricultural industries from pests and diseases and respond with the community to regional and state wide emergencies.

This work has been supported by the delivery of projects funded by the NSW Government, ratepayer funds, Australian Government and non-government organisations.

The wide range of projects were highlighted at the Mudgee Small Farm Field Days with a launch of our incentives program and a broad range of information at the Australian National Field Days.

We continued our collaboration with landholder groups on feral animal control, with successful aerial and ground baiting of wild dogs on public and private land in the east of the region, along with this the cat tracking project has raised awareness of cats in the environment among the urban community in the Lithgow area. Across the region a total of 976,033 ha of land have been managed for pest animal control.

Our staff continue to support and assist the coordination of the Landcare networks across the region. Watershed Landcare Group are to be congratulated for organising and delivering another fantastic 'Green Day', engaging schools from across the region. The Agribusiness Today Forum in Blayney was supported by Central Tablelands Local Land Services and was attended by more than 200 people.

Early this year the founding Chair, Ian Armstrong retired from the Board and I (Ian Rogan) stepped into the acting chair role for the remainder of the year. Other board members Reg Kidd, Pip Job, Bruce Gordon, John Lowe, and John Seaman, along with our General Manager, Peter Sparkes have provided leadership to Local Land Services in our region.



Throughout the year the Board signed off on our priority investment plans for the region which provides the direction for future investments in priority service areas.

The year saw the regional weeds committee formed from a broad group of stakeholders and we commenced work on the Central Tablelands Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan under the chairmanship of Sean Richardson from the Mid-Western Regional Council.

The board is an integral part of our organisation, but the real strength of Central Tablelands Local Land Services is the staff.

As I move around the region I believe they genuinely enjoy what they do and recognise the connections with how it delivers on our strategic plan and supports the productive capacity and natural resources of our region.

**Ian Rogan**

**Acting Chair, Central Tablelands Local Land Services**



# Central Tablelands region at a glance



Our region has a fantastic complexity of people, land, water, production and biodiversity. We have vibrant communities which are enhanced by abundant natural resources and agricultural industries.

- an area of approximately 31,365 km<sup>2</sup>
- calls predominantly within Wiradjuri Aboriginal country
- home to more than 156,000 residents including an Aboriginal population of 7,012
- comprises three per cent of the Murray Darling Basin
- substantial urban growth and the development of large areas of peri-urban land. A large proportion of land surrounding major centres is now divided into small lifestyle blocks
- more than 13,000 ratepayers.

## Agriculture and industry

Agriculturally our region is highly diverse including horticulture, viticulture, livestock, cropping and forestry. Evenly spread summer and winter rainfall supports productive cropping systems.

Grazing is the most significant land use followed by broad acre crops and horticultural enterprises including areas of fruit and vegetable growing and viticulture.

The region contributes 4.2 per cent of NSW's annual value of agricultural production. It includes almost 10 per cent of NSW's agricultural business on 3.2 per cent of NSW's agricultural land. Approximately seven per cent of the region's population is employed in agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

Other significant industries across our region include mining operations which are focused around Orange, Lithgow and Mudgee and tourism particularly in the wine areas of Orange, Cowra, Canowindra and Mudgee.

## Natural assets

The Central Tablelands has numerous natural resource assets such as national parks, culturally significant areas and is home to a vast range of native fauna and flora.

Our region is home to the headwaters of the Macquarie, Lachlan and Cudgegong River valleys. Some of the streams and waterways are noted as being very close to pristine.

Many of the eastern areas of the region feature high value aquatic assets such as hanging swamps, nationally recognised wetlands and unique valley fill stream formations.

## 2016 local achievements

480

PROPERTY VISITS  
BY VETS AND  
BIOSECURITY OFFICERS



2,185

GENERAL CONSULTATIONS BY  
VETS AND BIOSECURITY OFFICERS



99

SALEYARD INSPECTIONS

84

LIVESTOCK EXPORT  
CERTIFICATES ISSUED



1,554

PARTICIPANTS AT  
TRAINING EVENTS



21,716

HECTARES MANAGED FOR NATURAL  
RESOURCE OUTCOMES



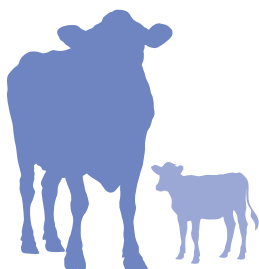
\$1.3 M

INVESTED IN COMMUNITY GROUPS AND  
ON-FARM ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION



275

PROPERTIES INVOLVED  
IN WILD DOG BAITING



16

PERMITS ISSUED  
FOR MOVING STOCK



976,033

HECTARES MANAGED FOR  
PEST ANIMAL CONTROL

# Local Land Services goals

Local Land Services aligns all of its work with its mission of being a customer-focused business that enables improved primary production and better management of natural resources. The strategic direction of Local Land Services is summarised in four organisational goals.



Resilient,  
self-reliant and  
prepared local  
communities

Biosecure, profitable,  
productive and  
sustainable primary  
industries

Healthy, diverse,  
connected  
natural  
environments

Board members  
and staff who are  
collaborative,  
innovative and  
commercially-focused



## Local Land Services statewide goals

The operations of Central Tablelands Local Land Services are aligned and integrated with the four statewide goals of Local Land Services. The Central Tablelands Local Strategic Plan describes each area of operation and outlines key strategies and activities that will achieve each statewide goal.

### Resilient, self-reliant and prepared local communities

*Central Tablelands Local Land Services is committed to making a significant contribution to the Central Tablelands region in order to see it thrive. Resilience, self-reliance and preparedness are vital ingredients in a thriving community, ensuring it is better able to withstand shocks or disturbances to the landscape, production of food and fibre and the economy, and still maintain its functions and structures.*

The following activities have been implemented by Central Tablelands Local Land Services in 2016 which was the second year of operation under the Central Tablelands Local Strategic Plan.

#### Emergency management and disaster relief

Emergency management is a shared responsibility that involves prevention and preparedness to minimise the impact of emergencies, responding to emergency events and conducting recovery operations to return communities, the environment and economy to business as usual.

In partnership with NSW Department of Primary Industries, we help manage livestock disease and emergencies such as drought, bushfires and floods and biosecurity events involving plants, animals and pest insects.

Some 45 per cent of Central Tablelands Local Land Services staff have received base-level biosecurity and emergency response training while nine per cent of staff have been trained beyond this level.

Trained staff have assisted in four emergency responses during the year.

Projects in the past year included support and assistance during the Central West flood emergency response.

#### Aboriginal communities

We support Aboriginal people to care for Country, share traditional land management knowledge and help protect and strengthen Aboriginal cultural heritage.

We're working to promote Aboriginal cultural awareness and enhance engagement throughout our region.

Our goal is to support Aboriginal communities in caring for Country, particularly through employment and training opportunities to build skills and capacity in land management.

More than 50 hectares of land holding Aboriginal cultural value was managed.

#### Projects in the past year have included:

- two land management grants for Aboriginal communities for natural resource management on Aboriginal managed land
- training events that have built awareness and connection of community to cultural ecological knowledge and traditional practices.



## Sustainable agriculture

Central Tablelands Local Land Services provides high quality advisory services to landholders in the region to improve the sustainability and resilience of the landscape, agriculture industries and communities. We have a strong team that provides credible, unbiased and trusted advice and extension services built upon sound scientific knowledge and evidence based practices.

We increased the capacity of land managers to improve primary production and natural resource management and trained more than 530 customers at training events. More than 23,000 hectares of land was managed for sustainable grazing in the region.

Major projects invested in during 2016 included workshops/seminars and training to provide the latest advice and research to landholders. These included: Prograze, paddock plants, soil biology, managing and improving lamb survival, bred well fed well, protecting pollinators as well as silver leaf nightshade, blue heliotrope and serrated tussock demonstrations and field days.

Collaboration with groups has also been a major focus with ongoing support and training offered to the Women in Productive Agriculture and Oberon Livestock groups as well as the formation of Bathurst Precision Agriculture in Pastures group.

*We increased the capacity of land managers to improve primary production and natural resource management and trained more than 530 customers at training events. More than 23,000 hectares of land was managed for sustainable grazing in the region.*





# Biosecure, profitable, productive and sustainable primary industries

*Effective biosecurity and animal welfare is insurance to maintain market access for Central Tablelands region livestock and crop producers, now and in the future. The Central Tablelands region produce is free of many of the pests and diseases found in other parts of the world and that's why Local Land Services works diligently with ratepayers to monitor herds, flocks, and crops across the region and shares up-to-date advice and information to boost productivity.*

## Animal biosecurity and welfare

Pest animals cause serious economic losses to agricultural production, pose a risk of exotic disease, threaten the survival of many native species and cause environmental degradation. We work with landholders to minimise the impact of pests on agricultural production and the environment. In the past year district veterinarians and biosecurity officers attended 2,185 general consultations along with conducting 365 disease investigations.

Projects in the past year have included:

- a brucella suis project
- an ovine brucellosis project in the Mudgee area.

## Invasive species and plant biosecurity

Invasive pests can impact significantly on the productivity and profitability of agriculture. We work with landholders to minimise the impact of pests on agricultural production and the environment. We provided 23 education and training workshops to build the capacity of 580 land managers and support and help coordinate group control programs — bringing landholders together to control wild dogs, foxes, pigs, deer, plague locusts and other pests.

Some 275 properties were involved in 1080 dog baiting over an area of 210,000 hectares across the region.

Another high priority is supporting land managers and producers to manage existing weeds such as pasture weeds and environmental woody weeds, and prevent the spread of new and emerging weeds which can impact negatively on agriculture. We're committed to improving the coordination of weed management in the region.

Projects in the past year have included:

- Queensland fruit fly monitoring project
- aerial baiting of wild dogs in the Mudgee area.

## Protecting our agricultural industry

To support primary producers we encourage and promote sustainable agricultural practices and increase the productivity of primary production. Our biosecurity officers are empowered as stock inspectors in NSW.

Good surveillance detects any problems early and ensures the quality and safety of NSW livestock and livestock products, and access to domestic and international markets. In the past year we undertook 49 investigations to exclude an emergency animal disease.

**Projects in the past year have included:**

- a Q fever prevalence survey
- a campylobacter vaccination trial
- an alpaca blood parasite project.

## Travelling stock reserves and stock management

Central Tablelands Local Land Services manages travelling stock reserves for multiple users in the common interest of the whole community.

We manage more than 3,960 hectares of travelling stock reserves and promote a balance of use for production, social, cultural and environmental outcomes and continuously work to maintain and improve the resource.

Mobs of travelling stock are common throughout the Central Tablelands with 16 walking permits issued in 2016 for stock movements.

To control the movement of stock, Central Tablelands Local Land Services monitors the National Livestock Identification Scheme for compliance by undertaking saleyard audits and inspections and completed 99 inspections during the year.

Some 84 livestock export certificates were issued from the Central Tablelands during 2016 ensuring our stock are free from livestock health and disease problems.

To protect market access, Central Tablelands Local Land Services manages the Property Identification Scheme (PIC), with 298 issued during the year.



## Healthy, diverse, connected natural environments

*Central Tablelands Local Land Services' team works hard to bring landholders and our customers the best available research, knowledge and skills to assist producers to be more profitable and to ensure that natural resources are available for future generations.*

*We support healthy environments and biodiverse ecosystems across the Central Tablelands region by assisting landholders and communities to improve the quality of their land, soil, vegetation and water through grants and funding for on-ground projects, partnerships and training.*

### Land management

Healthy ecosystems underpin successful, productive primary producers and communities. Through investment from the NSW and Australian governments, we support a healthy ecosystem across the landscapes of NSW.

We're focussed on implementing landscape-scale approaches to address threats to the natural environment. In particular, we are supporting land managers to rehabilitate degraded habitat, manage weeds and pests, and contribute to the recovery of threatened ecological communities.

In the past year 129 voluntary conservation agreements were negotiated, protecting and conserving for biodiversity enhancement 21,716 hectares of land and 13,138 hectares received support for measures to better manage sustainable grazing.

#### Projects in the past year have included:

- soil and pasture health training
- property management planning
- groundcover incentives to encourage the use and benefits of stock management areas.

### Biodiversity

Native vegetation benefits both on farm production and environmental health. Healthy native vegetation can increase land values and productivity while reducing operating costs.

We're aiming to improve the condition of native vegetation and riparian areas, extend habitat for threatened flora and fauna, and enhance existing wetland vegetation extent and quality. To achieve this, we have enhanced and rehabilitated 27 hectares of wetland.

Sound management of native vegetation to rehabilitate, enhance and protect remnants and to increase the area of native vegetation in the landscape is a key objective for land managers in the Central Tablelands region. In the past year we have enhanced and rehabilitated 4,343 hectares of land and protected 1,494 hectares of vegetation through fencing.

With better knowledge and improved land management techniques, soil is protected by native vegetation to reduce its susceptibility to erosion. Native vegetation is also critical for maintaining and improving habitat for many threatened flora and fauna species and for sustaining the health and function of local ecosystems, we planted 457 hectares of native species to assist in regeneration.

#### Projects in the past year have included:

- the Tuena Threatened Species project
- the Booroolong Frog project
- the Targeted Ecosystems project.

### Investment and partnerships

We support and engage new and existing Landcare networks and groups, community and industry partners, to undertake on-ground works and capacity building activities.

Working with Landcare NSW and NSW Government, we're aiming to improve land and water ecosystem management, soil health, and native vegetation protection.

Central Tablelands Local Land Services has allocated more than one million dollars for the operation of local Landcare networks and the delivery of regional Landcare facilitator functions for the three-year period from 2015 to 2018.

#### Collaborative projects in the past year have included:

- small grants to individual Landcare groups
- ongoing support and training to the five key Landcare networks.

A major 'Landcare driving sustainable land use' project also saw \$80,000 invested across three networks to carry out on-ground works and activities in sustainable agriculture.









# Groundcover incentive project

*"It gives you another tool in a non-drought situation where you have better management of your land and better production which means more money in your pocket and helps everybody."*

- Canowindra landholder.

## Location

Central Tablelands region.

## The challenge

Maintaining adequate rates of groundcover through adverse weather / declining seasonal conditions has multiple benefits. These include:

- rapid recovery of the pasture base following a seasonal break
- minimising soil and nutrient loss from bare ground
- maintaining perennial pasture composition and density for extended periods of time.

## Work undertaken

A package of financial incentives and training were offered to landholders throughout the Central Tablelands region to construct farm infrastructure (stock management areas).

Incentives were offered to eligible landholders to construct stock management areas to improve grazing management and ground cover outcomes.

Attendance at two training days (confined stock management and 'Stockplan') was a prerequisite for landholders receiving an incentive.

## Benefits

- Landholders trained on the benefits of maintaining groundcover and logistics around setting up and commissioning stock management areas.
- Infrastructure constructed to allow landholders greater flexibility to destock grazing areas during various times of the year.
- Landholders were assisted and contracted to prevent degradation of natural resources by ensuring adequate ground cover is maintained across their property during drier seasonal conditions.
- According to 'The Grove' farm manager (Rob Atkinson), funding and training provided by the Central Tablelands Local Land Services has improved livestock management flexibility, groundcover and pasture recovery on their mixed farming operation at Canowindra, NSW.



## Key achievement

- 16 Landholders contracted
- 23,059 ha of grazing land protected, ensuring groundcover is maintained at above 70 per cent
- 25 landholders trained in 'Stockplan'
- 30 Landholders trained in confined stock management training.

## Total investment

- \$157,216 plus training costs.

## In collaboration with

- 16 landholders.
- This project was supported by Central Tablelands Local Land Services through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme.

# The prevalence of *Coxiella burnetii* in goats in the Central Tablelands

*"Providing reliable prevalence data within animal populations is relevant to both human and animal health and public policy makers."*

- Lucienne Downs, District Veterinarian, Central Tablelands Local Land Services.

## Location

Central Tablelands region.

## The challenge

Q fever is a serious disease in humans and can cause abortions, stillbirths, infertility and weak offspring in ruminants (including sheep, cattle and goats). Infection in both humans and animals may cause no symptoms. Cattle, sheep and goats are the main sources of human infection. Q fever is caused by *Coxiella burnetii* (Cb), a small bacterium. The prevalence of livestock exposure to the organisms is largely unknown in Australia.

## Work undertaken

An investigation into Cb in goats is being undertaken by Central Tablelands Local Land Services. In 2015 and 2016 samples from 552 goats were collected from 27 herds in the Central Tablelands to determine the level of herd exposure to Cb. The herds were selected at random and producers were invited to participate.

## Benefits

The impact of Cb on human and animal health can be reduced by increasing awareness of Q fever. Vaccination, personal hygiene and biosecurity measures by at-risk individuals can be promoted. Providing reliable prevalence data within animal populations is relevant to both human and animal health and public policy makers. Reliable detection of Cb is critical to understand the disease.

## Key achievement

Overall, the number of herds exposed to Cb was high, with 86 per cent of properties having at least one positive animal. This prevalence indicates that the organism is endemic in the region and is higher than the prevalence reported in other countries.

The investigation had additional outcomes. Discussions about best practice to control worms in goats, while reducing the development of resistance, were valuable. Biosecurity was addressed in the survey and in discussions with producers.

The investigation also uncovered a large number of properties with iodine deficiency, causing goiter and mortality in newborn kids. Supplementary iodine was recommended.



## Total investment

Four weeks work for district veterinarians to test goats, assisted by biosecurity officers.

Funding for testing was provided by a compact fund from the organisations below.

## In collaboration with

- The University of Sydney
- Department of Primary industries (EMAI laboratory).



# Creating superb homes for parrots

*"There are five Councils that are part of this program. It shows innovation and collaboration; and it clearly shows that the environment extends beyond Council boundaries."*

- Hon. Paul Toole, Minister for Local Government

## Location

Bathurst, Blayney, Cabonne, Cowra and Orange local government areas.

## The challenge

The Superb parrot is a listed threatened species under both Federal and NSW legislation.

These parrots require large hollows to breed that are within a proximity to healthy box-gum grassy woodland vegetation communities.

Hollows are at a premium due to historic land clearing, removal for firewood, competition from feral birds and honey bees and clearing of woodland vegetation.

## Work undertaken

An experienced arborist utilised the 'hollow augmentation' technique to cut hollows into standing trees using a chainsaw.

This method was first demonstrated in our region at the Hollows for Habitat Forum hosted in April 2016.

The hollows created utilising this method provide a much more natural and durable hollow than simply installing nest boxes which Superb parrots are reluctant to utilise. Additionally, revegetation works occurred in partnership with an education campaign.

## Benefits

- more than 200 hollows created across the region to provide nesting habitat for Superb parrots
- more than 2,000 native plants known to be habitat species for the Superb parrot planted by volunteers and school groups
- partnership with five local government areas to implement the works – Bathurst, Blayney, Cabonne, Cowra and Orange
- five community planting days hosted to provide an opportunity for members of the public to assist in the conservation of this species
- posters, fact sheets, flyers and stickers produced and distributed as part of the education campaign
- a thesis study will be completed on this project by a student from the University of Wollongong to provide scientific backing of the use of the 'hollow augmentation' technique.



## Key achievement

This landscape scale project has created nesting habitat for Superb parrots that will last in excess of 50 years.

This will result in long term conservation outcomes for one of our highest profile threatened species.

## Total investment

- \$71,000.

## In collaboration with

- Environment and Waterways Alliance
- Bathurst Regional Council
- Blayney Shire Council
- Cabonne Council
- Cowra Council
- Orange City Council
- Orange Field Naturalist and Conservation Society.



# Queensland fruit fly surveillance

*The project gave biosecurity staff a better understanding of the local horticulture industry. This will assist Local Land Services in providing services to the horticulture industry across the region.*

## Location

Orange area.

## The challenge

Biosecurity staff had previously had minimal liaison with orchardists in the Orange area except for some advisory work regarding managing rabbit populations that can impact on young trees.

## Work undertaken

Biosecurity officers monitored 33 Queensland fruit fly traps in eight cherry orchards in the Orange area from budburst in early September to completion of harvest in mid-January.

Any trapped flies were submitted to a NSW Department of Primary Industries entomologist at Orange Agriculture Institute for identification on the day of collection.

If they were confirmed as Queensland fruit fly, NSW Department of Primary Industries notified the relevant producers.

## Benefits

The project allowed exposure of three biosecurity officers to a local horticulture industry that biosecurity staff had minimal understanding of. They gained a better understanding of its scope and diversity.

The monitoring provided independent evidence of the presence or absence of Queensland fruit fly through the fruit development stage to post harvest.

This data is used to assist in decision making regarding timely treatment of the orchards by producers.

This science-base evidence of low pest prevalence is then used by the NSW Government to facilitate commercial cherry growers' access to profitable export markets under our new free trade agreements with Asia.



## Key achievement

A large number of orchards were monitored in a short period of time. The monitoring enabled Local Land Services staff to not only help with gathering very useful data and broadening their knowledge of the industry but also built connections between orchardists and Local Land Services.

## Total investment

- \$8,100.

## In collaboration with

- NSW Department of Primary Industries
- local cherry growers.

# Office locations

## Bathurst

66 Corporation Avenue  
Bathurst NSW 2795  
Ph: 02 6333 2300

## Lithgow

3 Ordnance Avenue  
Lithgow NSW 2790  
Ph: 02 6350 3110

## Mudgee

112 Market Street  
Mudgee NSW 2850  
Ph: 02 6378 1700

## Cowra

30 Lynch Street  
Cowra NSW 2794  
Ph: 02 6341 9300

## Molong

36 Bank Street  
Molong NSW 2866  
Ph: 02 6366 8505

## Orange

Orange Agricultural Institute  
1447 Forest Road  
Orange NSW 2800

Central Tablelands Local Land Services  
[www.lls.nsw.gov.au/centraltablelands](http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/centraltablelands)  
1300 795 299