



Local Land
Services
Greater Sydney

Local Annual Report 2015



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Disclaimer

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of the report January 2015 to December 2015. 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

A message from Chairman of the Greater Sydney Local Land Services Board Terry Charlton

On behalf of the Greater Sydney Local Land Services Board and Management Team, it gives me great pleasure to note the many achievements of our organisation in 2015.

Greater Sydney Local Land Services provides advice and services to a range of land owners and managers both public and private.

Our region is the major gateway to NSW and the country bringing with it many challenges in appropriately supporting the management of the region's biosecurity risks.

The peri-urban zone that borders more than 4.5 million people is home to significant agricultural industries such as turf, poultry, nurseries and dairy. In fact more than a third of all vegetables grown in NSW are grown in the Greater Sydney region we serve.

The Board of Greater Sydney Local Land Services brings essential skills and experience along with direct representation of our 6,800 ratepayers through our three ratepayer elected directors.

Over the past year we focussed on adding value to and improving the productivity of producers, reducing the impacts of feral animals and administering both State and Federal funding programs aimed at improving and protecting the many natural assets of our region, particularly through the Australian Landcare Programme.

Our Board and Management Team are pleased to highlight the achievements of the past 12 months and look forward to continuing to deliver for our ratepayers, investors and stakeholders in 2016.



Greater Sydney region at a glance



Greater Sydney has a complex physical and social landscape. It is the largest urban area in NSW and is one of the fastest growing regions in the country, yet it retains outstanding natural values and important agricultural industries.

Greater Sydney is home to 4.6 million people, the largest urban population in Australia and representing 59 per cent of the population of NSW. 36 per cent of residents were born overseas. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population at the 2011 census was 54,747 or 32 per cent of the population in NSW. The Department of Planning and Environment projects the Central Coast population to increase from the 2011 census figure of 322,560 to 386,900 in 2031, while the Sydney metropolitan population is expected to reach 5.6 million, a total for the Greater Sydney of almost 6 million people by 2031.

This puts pressure on agricultural lands due to demand for new residential areas, higher land values and increasing incompatibility with adjoining land uses. Despite this, the Greater Sydney region is significant in food production, accounting for seven per cent of the value of NSW agriculture on only 1.5 per cent of the State's land area, and adding significant value to the NSW economy. The region produces 43 per cent of NSW's poultry, 31 per cent of egg production and 54 per cent of turf production. Additionally a third of all vegetable farms in NSW are in the Greater Sydney region. The highest value agricultural sectors are poultry, vegetables, nurseries and turf.

The priorities for the agricultural advisory services delivered are therefore focused on maintaining viability of agriculture within the region by increasing efficiencies in production and resource use.

The region is endowed with abundant natural areas in National Parks and reserves. These include the Royal National Park as well as the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and the Central Coast reserved lands. Water supply is harvested from the Blue Mountains, the Woronora River in Southern Sydney, the Nepean at Richmond and the Central Coast catchments of Mangrove Creek and Wyong Creek. Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay are working harbours while Sydney's international airport handles more than 35 million passenger movements and more than half a million tonnes of freight per year.

A September 2014 report by Destination NSW indicated over 8.5 million domestic visitors per year spend more than 23 million nights in the region and 3.0 million international visitors spent more than 63 million nights. This extraordinary movement of people and trade creates a major biosecurity risk. Despite Australia's strong border controls in recent years Greater Sydney has been the entry point for biosecurity threats including equine influenza and myrtle rust, fire ants and Asian spiny toads.

Greater Sydney Local Land Services has an important role in the post-border management of such threats and support Department of Primary Industries with management and response.

2015 local achievements

350

PROPERTY VISITS
BY VETS AND
BIOSECURITY OFFICERS



90

GENERAL CONSULTATIONS BY
VETS AND BIOSECURITY OFFICERS



30,062

SALEYARD INSPECTIONS

16

LIVESTOCK EXPORT
CERTIFICATES ISSUED



2,876

PARTICIPANTS AT
TRAINING EVENTS



103.6

HECTARES OF COASTAL
VEGETATION ENHANCED

6,799ha

BUSHLAND IMPROVED



936

PROPERTIES INVOLVED
IN WILD DOG SPRING BAITING

2,243 kg

PINDONE CARROTS
DISTRIBUTED FOR
PEST CONTROL



\$872,427

GRANTS ISSUED BY NATIONAL
LANDCARE PROGRAMME



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 the Greater Sydney Local Land Services are aligned and integrated with the four state-wide goals of Local Land Services. The Greater Sydney Local Strategic Plan describes each area of operation and outlines key strategies and activities that will achieve each state-wide goal.

Resilient, self-reliant and prepared local communities

Agricultural production

We assist our primary industries through advisory services and support to agriculture, including information on:

- farm management
- land capability
- cropping
- pastures
- mixed farming
- horticulture seasonal conditions.

Emergency management and natural disaster relief

In partnership with NSW Department of Primary Industries to help support livestock disease emergencies as well as supporting animal welfare.

We also work alongside other agencies to provide vital support in emergencies where agricultural industries are impacted, including natural disasters such as flood and bushfire.

We help build landholders' capacity to plan, prepare, respond and recover from biosecurity emergencies and natural disasters.

Drought assistance and other natural disaster relief

We help people to prepare for dry times and the impacts of climate change and play a key role in producing regional seasonal conditions reports.

Some of our achievements in Greater Sydney include:

- more than 2,400 hectares inspected for Red Imported Fire Ants
- 35 staff trained in emergency management response



Working with local growers, industry and the wider community to boost profitability and increase sustainability across the Greater Sydney region.

- responded to three emergency incidents
- 376 farmers engaged through our field days and trials
- 16 livestock export certificates issued.

Aboriginal communities

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

Some of our key partnership projects include:

- creation of Aboriginal cultural healing and learning spaces for schools and juvenile justice centres
- culture camps
- Aboriginal bushcare and cultural burning projects
- cultural heritage workshops for Landcare groups
- protection and conservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Biosecure, profitable, productive and sustainable primary industries

Biosecurity

Biosecurity is the protection of the environment, economy and community from the impacts of pests and diseases.

We work with landholders, industry and the community to minimise biosecurity risks and their impacts on agricultural production, international market access or environmental health.

Some of our achievements in Greater Sydney include:

- two Hendra incidents managed
- 38 general consultations by vets and biosecurity officers
- 18 Livestock export certificates issued
- 81 disease investigation visits
- 3,085 PICs issued.
- 161 sale yard inspections
- 20,138 cattle inspected at saleyards
- two investigations to exclude an emergency animal disease
- 33 percent of at risk pig properties inspected for swill feeding in the last four years
- one equivalent full time district veterinarian (as at 31 Dec 2015)
- two equivalent full time animal biosecurity officers (as at 31 Dec 2015)
- 50 per cent of staff with training in emergency management/biosecurity.

Protecting our agricultural industry

Our district veterinarians and biosecurity officers are empowered as stock inspectors in NSW.

Their role includes visiting saleyards to ensure compliance with the NLIS and educating producers about the importance of tracing livestock. 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.

Livestock health

We deliver front line livestock health and disease surveillance services in NSW.

Our district veterinarians and biosecurity officers deliver a range of national, state and local programs, all aimed at safeguarding market access and improving livestock productivity. Our focus with livestock health is:

- emergency disease prevention
- preparedness and response
- advisory and diagnostic services
- disease surveillance and reporting
- residue investigation and management certification
- traceability systems such as the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS).

Stock movement and identification

We administer permits for moving and grazing stock on public roads and travelling stock reserves (TSRs).

We also administer a variety of stock identification systems including property identification codes (PICs), branding, earmarking and advice on NLIS.

Delivering services on the front line to protect the economy, environment and community from the negative impacts of pests, diseases and weeds.





Local Land
Services
Greater Sydney

Pest animal and insect control

Pest animals and insects 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.

We provide education, training and support and help coordinate group control programs - bringing landholders together to control wild dogs, rabbits, foxes, pigs, plague locusts and other pests.

Some of our achievements in Greater Sydney include:

- 10 properties involved in wild dog spring baiting
- 936 dog baits issued
- 388,889 ha of pest animal control measures
- three wild dog management plans
- five training and workshop days aimed at building capacity of land managers to undertake effective invasive species management
- 60 land managers attended training and workshop days for invasive species management
- 2,243 kg of Pindone carrots distributed
- 350 property inspections for pest control.

Healthy, diverse, connected natural environments

Natural resource 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 help landholders and communities improve the quality of our land, soil, vegetation and water, through:

- grants and funding for on ground projects partnerships
- training and education.

Native vegetation

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

We work with land managers to develop native vegetation clearing consents.

Some of our achievements in Greater Sydney include:

- 6,799 ha of bushland improved through partnership agreements
- 1,340 ha of endangered plant communities protected
- 4.01 ha of terrestrial native vegetation enhanced/rehabilitated
- 20.48 ha planted to terrestrial native species
- 12.33 ha of riparian native vegetation protected by fencing
- 3.05 km riparian vegetation protected (streambank)
- 89.92 ha of coastal native vegetation enhanced/rehabilitated.

Supporting community-driven projects on the ground to protect and preserve our precious environment through funding, expert advice and training.





A turf producer on the Hawkesbury has reaped the benefits of our support and professional advice by generating greater profit through a more efficient operation.

Anthony Muscat owns and operates Greener Lawn Supplies at his 70 ha Freemans Reach property and said despite more than 25 years in the business, he had never really understood the true cost of growing, delivering and installing turf.

"The Agriculture team at Greater Sydney provided me with one on one technical support and training in breaking down the true cost of production," he said. "It was shocking to discover the true expense of our outlay, especially when we often sell below cost."

Greater Sydney Senior Land Services Officer (Irrigation/Turf) Matt Plunkett said Anthony had recorded a 15 per cent increase in profits despite selling 20 per cent less product. "With our support Anthony was to accurately assess which turf varieties give the best returns and change his farm cropping program to increase profitability."

In our community

Showcasing remote farm management

The challenge

Nutrient run off from intensive industry both on and off farm are issues which face farmers. We wanted to demonstrate to the nursery industry and similar intensive industry sectors, the benefits of using the latest Wi Fi monitoring systems with integrated controllers, sensors and readers.

Work undertaken

- Monitored nutrient loads (pH,EC, N & P) as well as water quality parameters such as temperature, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, pH, ORP, turbidity and dissolved ions.
- Monitoring soil moisture, soil temperatures ,leaf wetness, atmospheric pressure, UV and evaporation.
- Control of pump/s, solenoids and filters (including data logging).
- On-going data monitoring and whole of operating system evaluation.
- Field days/ farm walks.

Benefits

- Showcasing long term sustainable advantages to reduce run off and farm labour costs.
- Encouraging farmers and industry to adopt innovative technology.
- Enhancing productivity through better farm monitoring practices.

Location

Cameron's Nursery
Arcadia NSW 2159



Key achievement

Improved farm productivity through better monitoring practices which encouraged and promoted behavioural change.

Farmers adopted practices based on whole farm management, benchmarking, nutrient loading as well as data monitoring to give our farmers a competitive edge.

In collaboration with

- Australian Government
- Cameron's Nursery

"Since installing this technology we are able to monitor our water and on site weather anywhere and anytime. Our productivity has improved, we can react quickly and reduce crop spoilage. "

- Sonja Cameron, Cameron's Nursery

Carving it up for conservation

The challenge

Raising awareness of the value of tree hollows in a landscape that has seen tens of thousands of trees disappear due to housing developments and public safety concerns. More than 150 native species in NSW are obligate hollow users.

Work undertaken

Greater Sydney Local and Services has led the way in introducing habitat stag chainsaw techniques on the Cumberland Plain, demonstrating that trees can be rendered safe while retaining and enhancing habitat values. Five Council reserve demonstrations are showcasing new pruning practices to a wide range of practitioners and the public. More than 150 people have come to the first four events.

Benefits

- Showcasing innovations in reinstating hollow habitat in urban spaces.
- Improving hollow habitat for a range of native species including parrots and micro-bats.
- Capturing interest and increasing public awareness through widespread media coverage.
- Encouraging councils and other land managers to retain hollows for local wildlife.
- Increasing longevity and improving the thermal properties and of artificial hollows.
- Bringing council staff, Bushcare volunteers, land managers, Green Army teams and arborists together.
- Building on the strong interest created at hollows for habitat forums.
- Introducing other arborists to ecologically-sensitive tree management options for their own businesses.

Location

Camden
Parramatta
Blacktown
Fairfield



Key achievement

Greater Sydney Local Land Services is proud to have led the way in introducing habitat stag chainsaw techniques on the Cumberland Plain, demonstrating that trees can be rendered safe while retaining and enhancing habitat values. New pruning practices are being showcased at five council reserve demonstrations.

In collaboration with

- Local councils
- Sydney Arbor Tree Services

"Alive or dead, trees containing hollows are habitat for all manner of organisms. It is time for us to rethink our approach, not all trees are hazardous."

- Arborist Michael Sullings:

Fire ant management program

The challenge

Red Imported Fire Ants are a serious exotic pest, aggressive in behaviour and able to inflict painful bites on humans, pets and livestock. In extreme cases, allergic reaction in humans can result in death. In November 2014, a nest of Red Imported Fire Ants was detected at Port Botany. Greater Sydney Local Land Services has been leading the on-ground response.

Work undertaken

- Two rounds of active surveillance within two km radius of original detection site.
- Five applications of insect growth regulatory (bait) within 500 m radius of detection site.
- 2,300 residential premises inspected and more than 1,300 entered and inspected.
- 748 ha (non-residential) inside two km zone inspected twice.
- 155 ha high-risk sites inside two km zone inspected by odour detection dogs.
- 575 ha of high-risk areas (parks, reserves, golf courses and open spaces) in 2-4km zone inspected.
- Additional 1.5 ha tracing site at Menangle inspected by odour detection dogs.
- Total of more than 2,400 ha inspected.

Total hectares inspected workings

Two x 748 ha (two km zone).
Two x 185 ha (2-4 km zone originally planned).
155 ha (odour detection dogs).
One x 389 ha (additional 2-4 km zone second round).
1.5 (Menangle).
2,411.5 ha inspected in total.

Benefits

The campaign is expected to soon be declared over. In the 14 months to date more than 2,400 hectares have been inspected, involving coordination and co-operation right across the community, including hundreds of industrial and commercial enterprises and local residents. Dozens of suspect ant samples have been collected and sent for testing.

Key achievement

No further infestation has been detected.

In collaboration with

- NSW DPI
- Biosecurity Queensland
- Other Local Land Services regions
- Randwick and Botany Bay Councils

Location

Port Botany, Sydney



"The success of this campaign is down to a whole of team effort by staff right across Local Land Services and DPI. I take this opportunity to thank again all those who supported the important work at Port Botany in dealing with the Fire Ant emergency."

- David Hogan General Manager

Dung Beetles maximising pasture production

The challenge

Dung beetles are a valuable resource for farmers but many do not even know if they have dung beetles or how to identify them. Learning to identify any existing dung beetle populations and adding new species can have many benefits for farmers.

Work undertaken

Thirty five people attended a series of half day workshops with dung beetle expert John Feehan. John spoke about the history of using dung beetles in Australian farming, how to identify dung beetles and the benefits of dung beetles to farming systems.

Benefits

- Recognising the signs of dung beetle activity.
- Understanding how to preserve and promote dung beetle activity on farm.
- Benefits include nutrient cycling, soil aeration and manure management -the beetles do the work.
- Encouraging opportunities to collaborate with neighbours to maximise species diversity and share costs.

Location

Richmond
Upper Mangrove, NSW



Key achievement

Empowered landholders to better identify dung beetles and the benefits of promoting dung beetles activity on farm.

In collaboration with

- National Landcare Programme

"The training sessions are a great opportunity to improve land management practice and build community links. I always come away inspired (rather than simply overwhelmed!)."

- Workshop participant,
Upper Mangrove

Office locations

Penrith

Level 4, 2-6 Station Street
Penrith NSW 2750

PO Box 4515
Westfield Penrith 2750

Ph: (02) 4724 2100

Fx: (02) 4724 2198

Wyong

3/34-36 Pacific Highway
Wyong 2259

PO Box 600
Wyong NSW 2259

Ph: (02) 4355 8200

Fx: (02) 4355 8298

Camden Saleyard

Staff are available at the Camden Saleyard on sale days (Tuesday and Wednesday) between 8am and 11am.

The Camden Saleyard is located at 30 Edward Street Camden NSW.

Please send PIC applications, change of address forms, ear tag requests or rates queries to the Penrith office. Alternatively you can email them to gs.service@lls.nsw.gov.au

General enquiries or feedback can be emailed to admin.greatersydney@lls.nsw.gov.au

Greater Sydney Local Land Services

www.greatersydney.lls.nsw.gov.au

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