



**NORTHERN
TABLELANDS**

Local Strategic Plan
2021-2026

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT



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Northern Tablelands 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 August 2021. 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.

Contents

Contents.....	3
Acknowledgment of Country.....	4
Chair's Foreword.....	5
Our Plan.....	6
About Local Land Services	8
2021-2026 Significant Achievements.....	10
Strategic Direction 2021-2026.....	14
The Northern Tablelands Region.....	16
Concept of Operations	19
Priority Programs.....	21
Travelling Stock Reserves.....	22
Environment	24
Land Management - (Native Vegetation).....	26
Animal Biosecurity and Welfare.....	28
Pest Animals	30
Sustainable Agriculture and Plant Biosecurity	32
Emergency Management	34
Aboriginal Engagement	36
Strategic Services	40
Finance and Customer Service	42
People and Performance	44
Measuring Success.....	46

Acknowledgment of Country



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water, and community. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. Our region includes the Aboriginal nations of Kamilaroi, Anaiwan, Ngorabul, Kwiambal, Banbai, Thungutti, Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and the various tribes and language groups within those nations.

Obligations to care for Country remain integral to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lore, identity, culture, social and emotional well-being. Northern Tablelands Local Land Services has many Aboriginal cultural heritage sites of high value. Collaboratively, with the traditional custodians of this country, we must protect, preserve, and manage these sites. An increasing proportion of our programs now include participation by Aboriginal people, and we look forward to growing further cross-cultural collaborations.

Northern Tablelands Local Land Services will continue to build strong relationships with local Aboriginal communities seeking to understand their aspirations and ensuring they have input on our business activities. Through our Aboriginal Engagement Strategy and regular meetings with Elders through the established Aboriginal Reference Advisory Group, we commit to proactively developing local partnerships and exploring opportunities for greater collaboration.



Chair's foreword

On behalf of the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services board and staff, I am very pleased to provide to you - our customers, stakeholders and investors - the Northern Tablelands Local Strategic Plan Supporting Document.

This document outlines how the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services team will deliver the strategic direction set out in our new Local Strategic Plan.

The Northern Tablelands region is renowned for its livestock production as well as cropping, small pockets of viticulture and horticulture. We are rich in Aboriginal cultural heritage, are at the headwaters of the Murray Darling system and boast high conservation value biodiversity across public and private land. We have a responsibility to our region to maintain and improve these valuable assets.

In recent times, our communities have endured droughts and bushfires but, with resilience, support and drive to thrive, they are well on the recovery journey. Our local strategic plan fosters this resilience with a focus on preparedness, recovery and rehabilitation – of our farm businesses, our landscapes and communities.

We have consulted extensively about our strategic direction and your priorities and expectations. When you suggested better collaboration with other community groups and agencies to deliver our programs – we listened. When you requested clearer and more frequent communication – we listened. When you said biosecurity was crucially important for maintaining market access in our region – we listened, and we listened when you reminded us of the importance of being a good neighbour.

These points and many others have been incorporated into this supporting document so that we can reference your priorities and ensure we deliver our programs to meet your expectations. We are genuinely committed to being here when it matters for our customers.

When we work with our customers to build their capacity in landscape management, biosecurity, emergency management and primary production, we think of it as a partnership. We look forward to strengthening our partnership with you through the delivery of the Northern Tablelands Local Strategic Plan.

Grahame Marriott
Chair, Northern Tablelands Local Land Services



NORTHERN TABLELANDS | July 2021 - June 2026

Vision - To provide trusted, relevant and integrated services to ensure our region's primary industries and natural resources are resilient, sustainable and profitable.

Grow 	Protect 	Connect 	Support 
Our programs and partnerships grow primary industries productivity and healthy environments	Our services and partnerships play a vital role in helping to protect against pests, diseases and environmental threats	We connect with our community and connect our customers with the best services, advice and networks	We play a vital role in helping primary industries prepare for natural disasters and are on the ground to respond and support when they occur
LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT The natural and cultural resources of our landscapes, waterways and travelling stock reserves (TSRs) are managed to provide social, economic and environmental benefits. STRATEGIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage TSRs as a 'good neighbour' by being accountable and transparent stewards of public land Support landholders to better manage natural and cultural assets through partnerships, extension and incentives Support landholders to navigate native vegetation legislation through advice and approval pathways PRIORITY PROGRAMS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travelling Stock Reserves Program Land Management (Native Vegetation) Program Environment Program Regional Land Partnerships Program MEASURES OF SUCCESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing percentage of compliance with TSR permit conditions Increasing percentage customer satisfaction with vegetation management service Increasing area of the land and biodiversity enhanced, rehabilitated or protected Increasing investment in regional natural resource management 	BIOSECURITY Animal, pest and plant biosecurity threats are actively managed to safeguard agricultural industries, market access and the environment. STRATEGIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and deliver coordinated, nil-tenure control of pest animals Implement regional strategic plans for pest animals, weeds and animal biosecurity and welfare Prevent and detect emerging or exotic plant and animal pests and diseases through education, surveillance and compliance Increase adoption of best practice biosecurity through extension and compliance PRIORITY PROGRAMS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Program Plant Biosecurity Program Pest Animals Program Weeds Action Program MEASURES OF SUCCESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biosecurity risks and incursions are identified and controlled Increasing number of holdings participating in coordinated pest control programs Market access for livestock and product is maintained Review, evaluate and report on regional strategic pest, weed and animal biosecurity and welfare plans 	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT Our community, environment and economy are better prepared to respond and recover from natural disasters and biosecurity emergencies. STRATEGIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support primary producers in emergency preparedness through extension and education Provide incident management response to emergencies impacting on agriculture and animal welfare Support the recovery of communities, environment and the economy through extension, coordination and investment PRIORITY PROGRAMS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Management Program Agriculture and Animal Services Functional Area in natural disasters Support combat agency in biosecurity emergencies Partnerships to support interagency emergency management MEASURES OF SUCCESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All regional after-action review recommendations implemented Number of staff trained and capable for deployment to an emergency response role Local Land Services representation at all interagency emergency management meetings All regional recovery plan actions implemented 	PRIMARY PRODUCTION Our primary producers and local agricultural industries are innovative, profitable, sustainable and responsive to increasing climate variability and change. STRATEGIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support primary producers in decision making through extension and advisory services Connect primary producers to cutting edge research and development through partnerships with industry and research institutions Support primary producers in the adoption of new technology and farm innovations through extension and incentives PRIORITY PROGRAMS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Agriculture Program Regional Agricultural Extension and Innovation Strategy Drought preparedness and recovery Research and development partnerships MEASURES OF SUCCESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing practice or technology adoption arising from Local Land Services service offerings Increasing number of primary producers engaging in extension events and initiatives Number of effective industry and research and development partnerships
ENABLING Our business operations enable and support a highly capable, motivated and effective team of staff and local Board who live locally and are responsive to customer and stakeholder service delivery needs consistent with state Local Land Services standards and policies. STRATEGIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster a skilled, capable and safe workforce through structured and relevant learning and development opportunities Provide quality, relevant and people focused services to customers by developing strategic partnerships; active engagement and feedback with community and stakeholders Increase the capacity of Aboriginal communities through engagement and partnerships across all program areas The business is fiscally and operationally responsible, accountable and transparent through effective monitoring, evaluation, governance and risk management practices PRIORITY PROGRAMS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal Engagement Program Finance and Customer Service Program Strategic Services Program People and Performance Program MEASURES OF SUCCESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 per cent compliance with net cost of service 100 per cent of audit recommendations are implemented Number of opportunities for people to guide Local Land Services decision making Aboriginal procurement exceeds 4 per cent 			

Intent of this document – the Local Strategic Plan in context

The NSW Local Land Services State Strategic Plan sets the vision and goals for the next ten years (2020-2030) and outlines the strategies through which these will be achieved. The five-year Northern Tablelands Local Strategic Plan contributes to these goals through the alignment of local initiatives to the State direction, tailored to the specific needs of our region. Local decision making and accountability are the foundation of Local Land Services planning and operations and Northern Tablelands is one of 11 local regions responsible for service delivery. Through this planning framework we will transparently deploy our resources in a responsible manner and deliver services to address state and local priorities.

The Northern Tablelands Local Strategic Plan is a 'plan on a page' setting our broad vision and strategic focus for the next five years. Within the four theme areas of Landscape Management, Biosecurity, Emergency Management and Primary Production we have identified our strategies, the programs to deliver on these, and how success will be measured. The plan recognises our business is underpinned by enabling services and positive community relationships with an overarching emphasis on the provision of outstanding customer service.

This Local Strategic Plan Supporting Document provides background information and further details on how we deliver on our commitments over the 2021-2026 period. The intent is to demonstrate organisational readiness and the inclusion of stakeholder views obtained through extensive community consultation. A key role of the supporting document is to articulate how results will be conceptually structured and delivered. Detailed down to the program specific level are strategies and measures of success to meet the standards set in Land Management, Biosecurity, Emergency Management and Primary Production.

Our Operations Plan is developed annually and will reflect the directions embodied in the 2021-2026 Local Strategic Plan, aligned to the identified Priority Programs. The Northern Tablelands Local Land Services Annual Operations Plan provides direction to the General Manager, Leadership Team and staff, with all staff developing an individual Work and Development Plan thereby ensuring the focus of the business is maintained throughout all levels of planning.



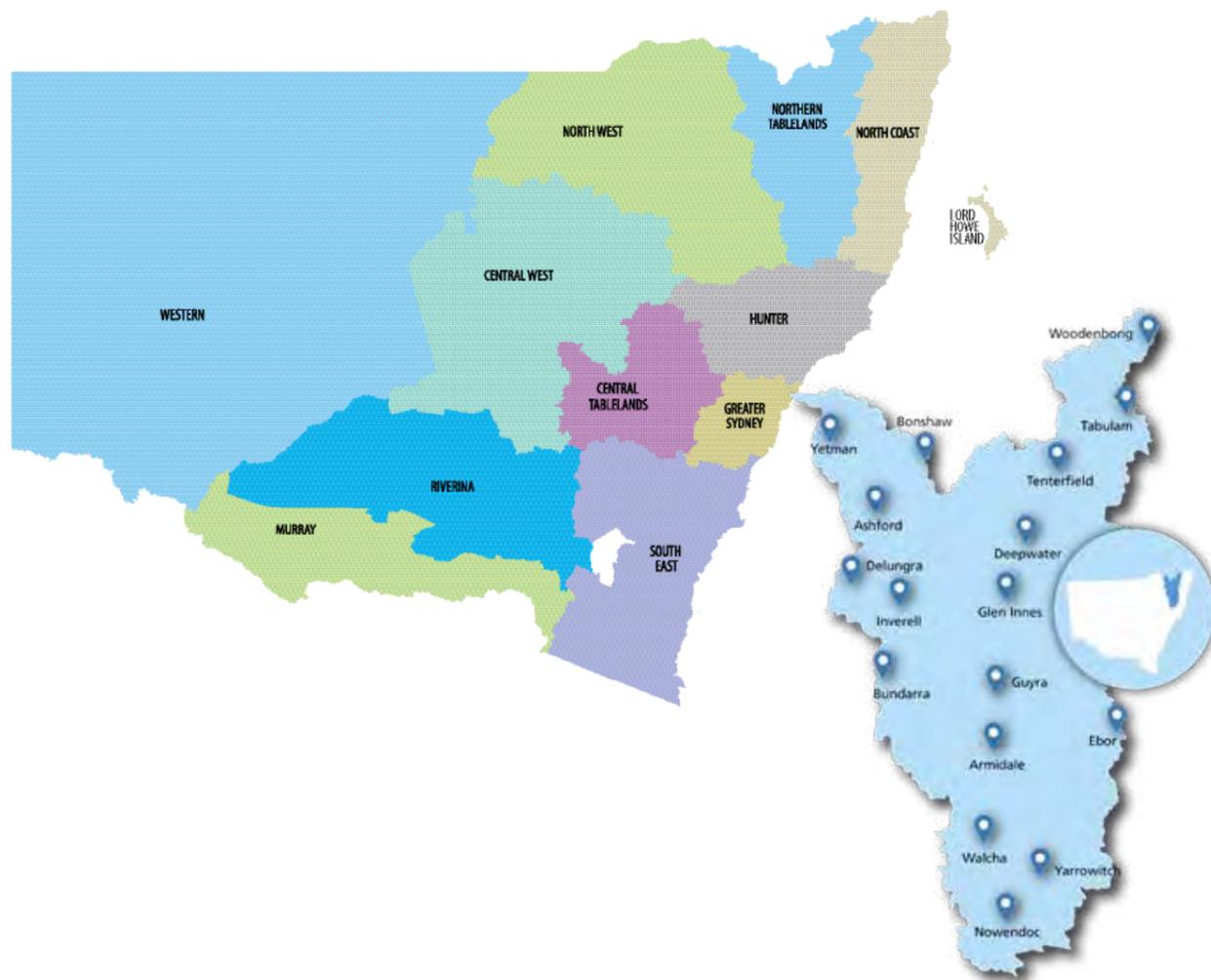
About Local Land Services

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.

Local Land Services is a regional-focused NSW Government agency delivering quality customer services to farmers, landholders, and the wider community across 11 different operating regions (Figure 1). We help people make better decisions about the land they manage and assist rural and regional communities to be profitable and sustainable into the future. We connect people with groups, information, support, and funding to improve agricultural productivity and better manage our natural resources.

Local Land Services is governed by a State Board, who are responsible for the performance of the organisation across NSW. Regionally, our Local Boards set the local strategic direction and are an important link to our communities.

Figure 1: The 11 Local Land Services regions.



2016-2021 reflection on our first Local Strategic Plan

The Northern Tablelands Local Land Services Local Strategic Plan 2016-2021 has been in place for five years, during which time the document has provided strategic direction to guide regional operations. Guided by the **Local Land Services Act 2013**, the Local Strategic Plan has been reviewed and changes at the State level required a more contemporary strategic regional approach, aligned to the State Strategic Plan, to better address the requirements of our customers, stakeholders, and investors.

During the 2016-2021 period, the region experienced climatic conditions and natural disasters having a significant impact on all our core program areas. A severe drought (2018-2019 were the hottest and driest since Federation) had a devastating impact on local producers and communities. In 2019-2020, destructive bushfires impacted 1,803 land holdings with over 480,064 hectares of private land burnt. In particular, the Emergency Management program engaged staff from across the business in responding to the bushfire emergency.

More generally, average property sizes in the region increased from 365 to 435 hectares and the population decreased by 4,000 people over the five-year period of the first Local Strategic Plan, showing that changes in the demographics of our region are constant.

The Local Strategic Plan was adaptively managed during its term and implementation was reviewed and modified over time. The Natural Resources Commission evaluated the progress against the Local Strategic Plan in 2019 with the findings being that all outcomes were on track to be achieved by 2021, except for 'commercial services' that had purposefully had a reduced focus. Areas for improvement related to setting realistic performance indicators across all activities in a new strategic plan.





2016-2021 Significant achievements

Significant achievements were realised by Northern Tablelands Local Land Services during the term of the first Local Strategic Plan.

A Business Priority was identified for each year of the Local Strategic Plan, with year one (2016 - 17) being to consolidate business operations and year five (2020 - 21) being review and adjust business direction for the future.

The embedding of an 'extension' service culture in the Local Land Services team and ensuring that we are a 'good neighbour' in the management of Travelling Stock Reserves continues to be relevant into the new Local Strategic Plan. Commercial service functions were tested as a year three (2018 -19) priority, however were found to be unviable in practice and inconsistent with service delivery operations.



94% of Northern Tablelands Local Land Services staff are trained to respond to an emergency.



1,500+ landholders in drought-stricken priority areas were contacted in 2019 to offer advice and information as were more than **2000 bushfire** affected landholders



1,378 on-farm livestock disease investigations were carried out to minimise production loss and ensure market access



Of these investigations, **50** were to exclude Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (mad cow disease)



220 footrot exclusions

77 residue related visits



40 swill feeding inspections

762 saleyard inspections and audits - as a result of which **723** warning or advisory letters were sent



Certification

541 export certificates were issued, contributing to the clean animal health status our producers currently benefit from



12,097 participants at awareness raising and capacity building events hosted by Northern Tablelands Local Land Services



2,472 landholders involved in aerial baiting programs targeting wild dogs and foxes



485 partnerships with landholders to carry out natural resource management projects on-farm



5,288 Travelling Stock Reserve permits were issued to producers for moving and grazing livestock



7,179 Ha of land in the Northern Tablelands region was managed to protect significant species and ecological communities

9,633 Ha of native vegetation was protected through **216** on-ground works projects



615 Km of stream bank was protected through fencing to limit livestock access and **202** off-stream watering sites were installed as alternative water sources for livestock



2,424 Ha of Aboriginal cultural heritage was protected through **19** projects



Helped over **2,150** endangered Bell's Turtle hatchlings make it into our waterways since the summer of 2017



Community and customer consultation

Community consultation afforded extensive opportunities for input to the Local Strategic Plan, taking place over many months and across a wide range of platforms. Our customers had opportunities to provide us feedback through staff at field days, workshops, and local agricultural shows in the region. A stakeholder public forum was held in June 2021 in Armidale and was attended by a broad cross-section of the community. Throughout the consultation period social media platforms, including the state-wide facilitated 'Have Your Say' website was open, monitored, and accessible at any time for those wishing to comment on our plan. In addition, direct conversations were had with key stakeholders by the Local Board and General Manager.

Service Area: Landscape Management

Stakeholders told us, in addition to prescribed uses of Travelling Stock Reserves (TSR), they are also thinking about these reserves as biodiversity linkages in the landscape and opportunities to access emerging agricultural markets like carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation. People would like to see a closer working relationship between local government and Northern Tablelands Local Land Services over publicly managed lands. Also, given the high visibility in some areas of TSRs, stakeholders made suggestions around greater public responsibility (including stricter guidelines) and to use social media more extensively in messaging the community. It was also recognised that Aboriginal people in the region have an interest in the cultural heritage on, and future management of TSRs.

When we asked about Natural Resource Management, we received strong feedback from landholders who are passionate about caring for their properties. Stakeholder comments indicated they see the next few decades are critically important in terms of addressing environmental challenges. Northern Tablelands Local Land Services, having an established long-term relationship with farmers, is seen as a key agency in promoting the value of increased biodiversity within the landscape. Quite a few landholders want more information about carbon sequestration and for us to draw on the research to help prepare the region for climate changes.

We recognise, from the feedback received on our statutory responsibilities around native vegetation laws, farmers value their rights as owners of land and that the rural landholders would prefer 'education rather than regulation'. Northern Tablelands Local Land Services understands complying with land management legislation and codes is complex and that clear and consistent information must be available to landholders. Community feedback included requests for greater clarity around timelines and what steps are involved in native vegetation management approval processes.



Service Area: Biosecurity

Feedback on our operations for controlling wild dogs was overwhelmingly positive, whilst others want more attention given to tackling rising numbers of feral deer and pigs. Several stakeholders want Northern Tablelands Local Land Services to be better positioned to respond to plagues faster (including mice), with forecasts indicating that locusts and rabbits are a looming problem. Stakeholders asked that we 'get on the front foot' to meet emerging pest challenges. The use of barrier fences to control pest animal movements was a topic for many with a widespread view this needs to be a shared responsibility, but with divided opinion. We also heard landholders are frustrated by administration and regulations around restricted baiting products such as 1080 but, at the same time, others accepted such systems help protect people and retain access to such pest control tools.

Throughout consultation on this plan, landholders indicated that animal biosecurity is one of their biggest concerns. There was a general call for more information about the role of our District Veterinarians and the need to keep focusing on awareness raising in the community. Several stakeholders indicated the role of Northern Tablelands Local Land Services in awareness and education in biosecurity was 'huge' and continuing to have 'conversations' with farmers was essential.

There was a call to 'broaden the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services appeal to landholders' and that there be greater integration across service areas.

Service Area: Emergency Management

While universally appreciated by landholders impacted by fires in 2019 and 2020, we heard from stakeholders that this aspect of our work is not well known beyond those people directly impacted by natural disaster. We heard that both the community and Northern Tablelands Local Land Services would benefit from an ongoing public awareness campaign. It was suggested significant opportunities exist to build goodwill and relationships with landholders through the provision of assistance during times of hardship.

Service Area: Primary Production

Key messages from our stakeholders are that they would like to see closer collaboration with Landcare across the region, be open to new ideas (like regenerative agriculture) and ensure information is well-grounded in science. It was suggested that for many farmers, the adoption of new practices is going to be based primarily on financial considerations and that our programs will be most successful when they address this concern.

Another suggestion was to support leading farmers to demonstrate and model best practice to others in the region as an effective way to spread knowledge ... 'the answer is to concentrate more on education'.

Service Area: Enabling Services

The importance of maintaining a credible, relevant and customer service focus was emphasised throughout the feedback – Local Land Services must keep this as a high priority.

In consulting with the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services' Aboriginal Reference Advisory Group on this plan, we received a strong desire for greater consideration of Aboriginal interests in shaping the future management of the region's landscapes. The protection of culturally significant sites and creating opportunities for Aboriginal people in the agricultural sector, are priorities you would like Northern Tablelands Local Land Services to progress. Several stakeholders expressed the view there is a need to integrate Aboriginal interests throughout our business operations.

Local Land Services has a state vision for...

Vibrant communities in productive, healthy landscapes

Which is enhanced by the Northern Tablelands local vision...

To provide trusted, relevant and integrated services to ensure our region's primary industries and natural resources are resilient, sustainable and profitable.

The Northern Tablelands Local Strategic Plan is focused on the Northern Tablelands region, while having a direct line of sight to the Local Land Services State Strategic Plan 2020-2030. The State plan describes strategies in the areas of Service, Engagement and Organisation supported by four service areas of Land Management, Biosecurity, Emergency Management and Primary Production.

The State Plan, in both its 10-year timeframe and agency-scale outlook, serves as an anchor point for quality and consistency in standards for our local plan, with services aiming to grow, protect, connect and support primary producers, agriculture and the environment, being here when it matters for our customers.



Our programs and partnerships **grow** primary industries productivity and healthy environments



Our services and partnerships play a vital role in helping to **protect** against pests, diseases and environmental



We connect with our community and **connect** our customers with the best services, advice and networks



We play a vital role in helping primary industries prepare for natural disasters and are on the ground to respond and **support** when they occur

The Northern Tablelands Local Strategic Plan is represented by four Service Areas, consistent with the State Strategic Plan – Landscape Management, Biosecurity, Emergency Management and Primary Production, plus an Enabling Service representing capabilities that apply across the business operations of Northern Tablelands Local Land Services.

Service Area Objectives



Landscape Management: The natural and cultural resources of our landscapes and waterways and Travelling Stock Reserves are managed to provide social economic and environmental benefits.



Biosecurity: Animal, pest and plant biosecurity threats are actively managed to safeguard agricultural industries, market access and the environment.



Emergency Management: Our community, environment and economy are better prepared to respond and recover from natural disasters and biosecurity emergencies.



Primary Production: Our primary producers and local agricultural industries are innovative, profitable, sustainable, and responsive to increasing climate variability and change.



Enabling Services: Our business operations enable and support a highly capable, motivated, and effective team of staff and Local Board.

Within each of the Service Areas are a series of selected Strategies, Priority Programs and Measures of Success that emphasise the Northern Tablelands strategic direction over the next five years, without constraining service delivery within these boundaries.



Strategies: Represent the focus in approach to achieve the objectives set for each Service Area.



Priority Programs: Represent the program areas that will be the focus for further, discrete operational planning, resource allocation and service delivery by Northern Tablelands Local Land Services.



Measures of Success: Represent the headline performance indicators that will be monitored to ensure progress against achieving the objectives and vision of the Local Strategic Plan and operate in conjunction with a range of state and regional metrics for monitoring and evaluation.



The Northern Tablelands Region

The Northern Tablelands Local Land Services region is situated in northern inland New South Wales. The region has a diverse climate, ranging from temperate to sub-tropical, with considerable differences in climate between the east and the west, and great variety in its landforms, hydrology, vegetation, and soils. Natural resources and land use in the region reflect climatic and geographic influences.

Grazing predominates as the agricultural land use, with cropping occurring in the north-west of the region. Mixed farming, horticulture, viticulture, and other agricultural enterprises add to the regional diversity. The east of the Northern Tablelands is characterised by significant areas of public land, established for conservation. Major industries and town viability are focused around agricultural production.

Regional opportunities, risks and emerging issues

In the preparation of the Northern Tablelands Local Strategic Plan, the Northern Tablelands Local Board undertook a PESTEL analysis of the business. The PESTEL framework is widely employed to capture planning information relating to Political, Economic, Sociocultural, Technological, Environmental, and Legal (PESTEL) factors likely to impact an organisation. This exercise was completed to assist with building the new strategic plan.

Improving soil health, fertility, and groundcover to support livestock, cropping and other agricultural industries is central to maintaining a resilient region. Finding a balance between profitable agricultural production and the maintenance or improvement of natural ecosystems is a major challenge. Northern Tablelands Local Land Services plans to meet this uncertainty by connecting landholders to the latest research, technology, and best practice agricultural activities. New funding opportunities will be pursued through the design and implementation of local projects in all theme areas of the business.

Weather variability, and the projected impacts from climate change, mean droughts and extreme rainfall events are likely to be more common occurrences during the period of this plan 2021-2026. Providing the tools and skills for the community to buffer against these impacts via extension, training, and emergency management capabilities, is central to the delivery of this Local Strategic Plan. Our planning recognises climate change has and will continue to impact our region.

Our connection to Queensland, the coast and the plains means the Northern Tablelands region is at risk of plant pests and diseases through the movement of livestock, commodities, and other goods. Surveillance and reporting of weeds and disease outbreaks must be maintained and improved through strategic actions. Our region also has a high incidence of vertebrate pests impacting on the agricultural sector and environment. Impacts from feral pigs, wild rabbits, the widespread European red fox, and emerging threats such as wild deer, require active and coordinated management. Predation from wild dogs continues to have social and agricultural impacts and wild dog management will continue to be a key business undertaking for Northern Tablelands Local Land Services.

We recognise, in dealing with emerging threats in biosecurity, engagement with, and education of landholders is critical. Good planning, ensuring our programs rely on scientifically proven methods, the early adoption of technology, building industry partnerships and proactive relationship building are all key to managing threats and capitalising on opportunities in the next five years.



Top: Cattle per rateable hectare
Centre: Native vegetation priorities
Bottom: Townships on the Northern Tablelands

Regional profile



AGRICULTURE

- Grazing is the major land use at 56% of the region.
- Highest livestock carrying capacity of all regions of NSW.
- 90% of landholders have livestock on their property with 73% stocking cattle.
- 47,000 hectares of Travelling Stock Reserves (TSRs) within the region.
- Agricultural commodities produced in the region are worth over \$320M with 90% of this from beef, sheep and wool.
- Increase in diversification with cotton, cheese, truffles, glasshouse tomatoes, wine and olives produced successfully.



ENVIRONMENT

- 40,000 square kilometres is the total area.
- Height above sea level ranges from 1,536m at Round Mountain near Ebor, down to 257m at Yetman in the north west.
- High rainfall area with averages ranging from 650mm per annum on the western slopes to over 1,200mm on the eastern fall.
- 60% of total rainfall occurs in the summer.
- Coastal flowing rivers of the Clarence, Macleay and Manning have their headwaters on the eastern escarpment.
- Inland flowing rivers have their confluence with the Gwydir, Namoi and Macintyre river systems of the Murray-Darling Basin.
- 39% native woody vegetation cover.



PEOPLE

- Total population: 72,000 centred around the towns of Armidale, Glen Innes, Guyra, Inverell, Tenterfield, Uralla, Walcha and numerous small villages.
- Around 30% of landholders own most of the agricultural land (averaging 1,700 hectares per property).
- Property size varies from 10 to 9,518 hectares, averaging 365 hectares.
- Around 50% of landholders have 250 hectares or less.
- 25% of landholders surveyed had been involved with industry and/or Landcare groups.

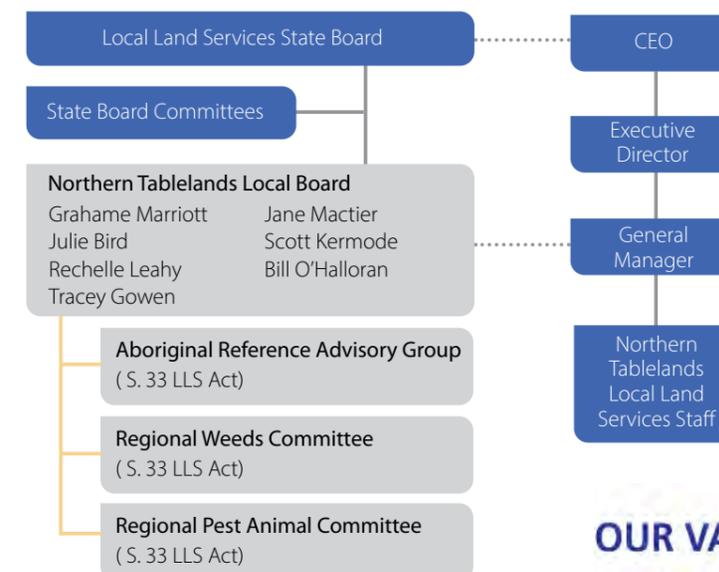
Concept of Operations

A Concept of Operation (CONOPS) describes the characteristics of a system from a user's perspective and at an organisational level, addresses the leadership's intended way of operating the organisation.

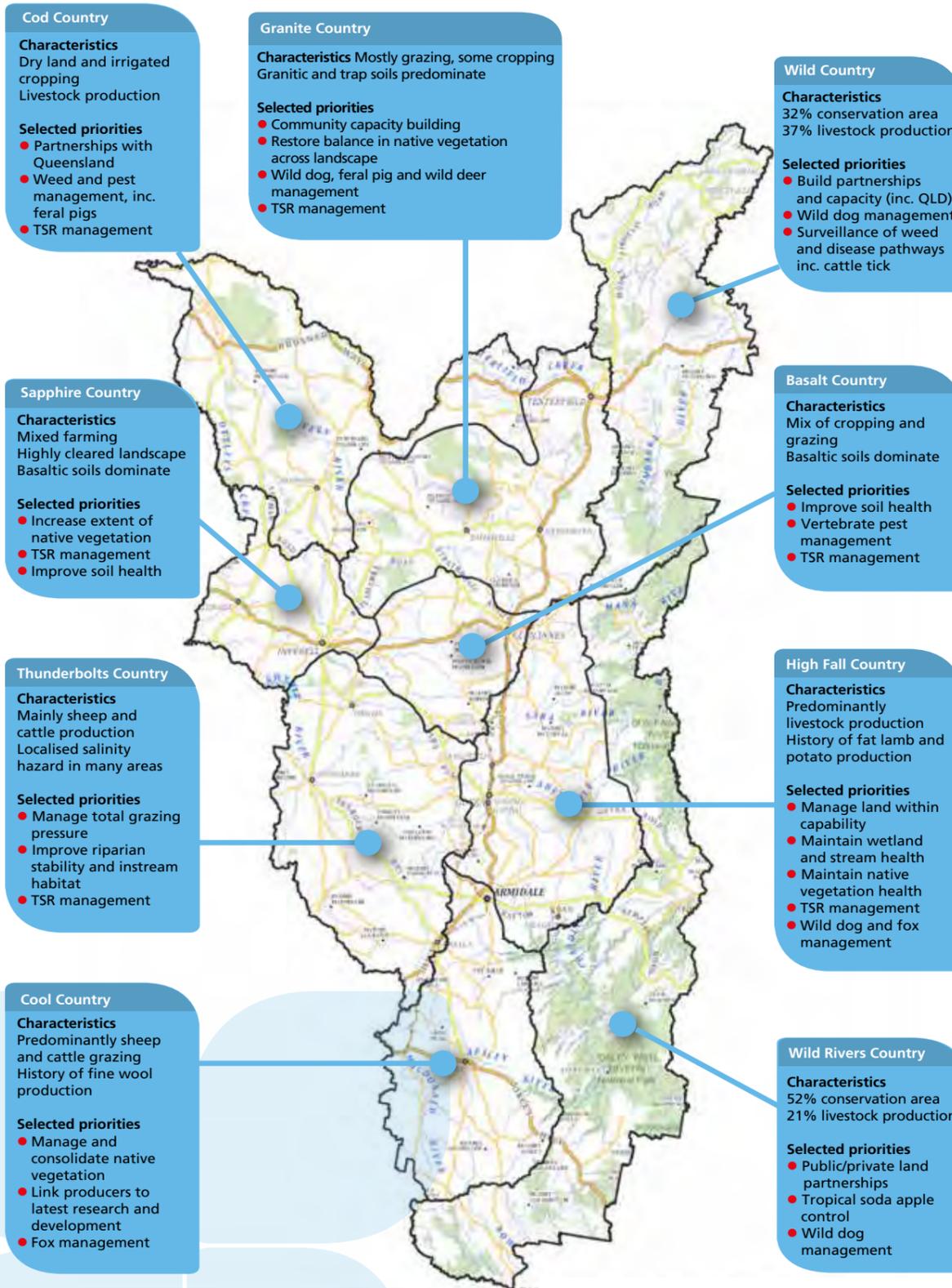
Fundamental to this is the engagement of a highly capable and motivated team of staff who operate consistent with the values of Local Land Services.

The key components of the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services operations are outlined as follows:

Mission Focus:	The Local Strategic Plan sets the vision, objectives, strategies, priority programs and measures of success for the business. Focus on the achievement of the Local Strategic Plan is the operational intent of the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services team and it will be reflected in all operational planning and delivery.
Customers, Stakeholders and Investors:	A key strategic objective of Local Land Services is to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction and to facilitate the transfer of knowledge to build long-term capacity. Customer opinions, feedback and needs are central to organisational planning and decision-making. Our customers are any land manager within the state, irrespective of whether they are private or public land managers, ratepayers or non-ratepayers. Our stakeholders are organisations that collaborate and partner with Local Land Services directly to support customer service delivery. Our investors are organisations or individuals who invest in Local Land Services and leverage outcomes from this investment
Local Governance:	The Northern Tablelands Local Board provides strategic direction, advice and advocacy on behalf of regional communities and Local Land Services and monitors the performance of Local Land Services in the region through the General Manager.



OUR VALUES | INTEGRITY | ACCOUNTABILITY
PERFORMANCE | COLLABORATION
SERVICE | INNOVATION | TRUST



Regional Leadership:	<p>Northern Tablelands Local Land Services prides itself on the quality of services and strives to be the lead authority in the region for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied natural resource and land management • Applied agricultural extension • Pest animal regulatory and advisory services • Travelling Stock Reserve management • Animal biosecurity and animal welfare • Emergency Management in animal disease and Agriculture & Animal Services Functional Area for natural disasters
Functional Model:	<p>Northern Tablelands Local Land Services operations are predominantly applied on a functional model. The key characteristic of this approach is that teams of specialist staff are aligned to focus on specific operational programs within Local Land Services (as identified in the Local Strategic Plan) supporting consistency and quality control in specific services. The Local Strategic Plan is aligned to four operational 'Service Areas' – Landscape Management; Biosecurity; Emergency Management; Primary Production but it is the functional programs that define delivery. Service delivery aligned to the Local Strategic Plan is provisioned via the following 'operational' programs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Travelling Stock Reserves 2. Environment 3. Land Management (Native Vegetation) 4. Sustainable Agriculture & Plant Biosecurity 5. Animal Biosecurity & Welfare 6. Pest Animals 7. Emergency Management (a capability, also aligned to Enabling theme) <p>The Local Strategic Plan has an Enabling Service Area, with internal and direct-to-customer support provided through four 'enabling', 'support' or 'capability' programs.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Strategic Services 9. Finance & Customer Service 10. Aboriginal Engagement 11. People and Performance <p>Variations to this will be reflected in annual Operations Plan.</p>
District and Regional Scale Services:	<p>While a functional model provides the point of management and quality control, services are deployed at a district scale operating from the four service centres of Tenterfield, Glen Innes, Armidale and Inverell. Specific staff or services are also deployed at a regional scale where resource limitations or customer needs dictate. All staff must have sufficient mobility and expertise to provide a regional (or State) service as required.</p>
Quality & Performance:	<p>Northern Tablelands Local Land Services embeds the Local Land Services Performance Standard throughout operations, having consideration for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Leadership • Evidence based decisions • Customer satisfaction • Community ownership • Collaboration • Risk management • Application of scale

The functional model of delivery is managed through Priority Programs as identified in the Local Strategic Plan. Several of these identified in the Local Strategic Plan are aggregated for operational service delivery as follows:

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT SERVICE AREA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Travelling Stock Reserves 2. Environment (incorporating Regional Land Partnerships Priority Program) 3. Land Management (Native Vegetation)
BIOSECURITY SERVICE AREA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Animal Biosecurity & Welfare 5. Pest Animals
PRIMARY PRODUCTION + BIOSECURITY SERVICE AREAS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Sustainable Agriculture & Plant Biosecurity (incorporating Weeds and all Primary Production Priority Programs)
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICE AREA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Emergency Management (incorporating all Emergency Management Priority Programs)
ENABLING SERVICE AREA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Strategic Services 9. Finance & Customer Service 10. Aboriginal Engagement 11. People and Performance



Travelling Stock Reserves

Service Area: Landscape Management

The 47,000 hectares of Travelling Stock Reserves (TSRs) are an important and high profile asset in the Northern Tablelands region. Highly utilised for recreation, cultural heritage, conservation and livestock production purposes, particularly during drought, the Northern Tablelands TSR network presents a challenge in active management for multiple uses, often in conjunction with management of road corridors.

With a significant number of properties neighbouring the TSR public land estate, biosecurity, equity of reserve access and maintenance of reserve values and infrastructure are an important service focus operating in a revenue constrained, cost recovery environment.

Objective:

The natural and cultural resources of our landscapes, waterways and Travelling Stock Reserves are managed to provide social, economic and environmental benefits.

Strategies:

- Manage Travelling Stock Reserves (TSR) as a 'good neighbour' by being accountable and transparent stewards of public land.

Measures of Success:

- Increasing percentage compliance with TSR permit conditions.

Strategic Environment:

- **Opportunity:** Technology application in managing the TSR estate.
- **Opportunity:** Collaboration with traditional owners.
- **Threat:** Biosecurity threats and illegal use of TSRs.
- **Threat:** Seasonally variable funding.

Key state linkages:

- Travelling Stock Reserves Statewide Plan of Management.
- Travelling Stock Reserves Management Agreement Permits.
- Statewide Advisory Group.
- Core Service Logic Models.



Program Direction 2021-2026

- ✓ All personnel are actively involved in Emergency Management Prevention Preparedness Response Recovery (PPRR) activities.
- ✓ Implement the Travelling Stock Reserves State-wide Plan of Management.
- ✓ Adopt and implement a customer service strategy for TSR users.
- ✓ Provide equitable access to Travelling Stock Reserves for a range of stakeholder groups.
- ✓ Maintain and improve environmental and agricultural values of the TSR estate.
- ✓ Deploy the long term Management Agreement Permit system to better support ongoing management and access for the region's TSRs.
- ✓ Utilise a single administrative system to enable monitoring of TSR use and management across the region.
- ✓ Identify Aboriginal cultural heritage on TSRs and complete due diligence in accordance with legislative requirements.
- ✓ Increase opportunities for Aboriginal community participation in identifying and managing cultural heritage located on TSRs.
- ✓ Categorise TSRs to enable informed management to achieve a balance between asset protection and use.
- ✓ Assess and monitor TSR infrastructure and prioritise ongoing repairs and maintenance through an Asset Management Plan.
- ✓ Promote and support public/private partnerships with interest groups or stakeholders to draw in additional investment to high value TSRs through external funding.

Program Metrics

- ✓ Area (ha) of land enhanced, rehabilitated or protected for biodiversity or Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- ✓ Increasing percentage of operational costs met by TSR permit generated revenue.
- ✓ Number of permits issued.
- ✓ Area (ha) of land treated or actively managed for weeds or pests.
- ✓ Increasing customer satisfaction.

47,000
hectares of Travelling Stock Reserves, an important and high profile asset in the Northern Tablelands region.



Service Area: Landscape Management

Our Environment Program services support and enable land managers to better manage natural resources - avoiding or reversing their decline, and maintaining land uses that are sustainable and productive.

The service recognises that people and their livelihoods rely on the health and productivity of our landscapes, and their actions as stewards of the land and environment play a critical role in maintaining this health and productivity.

Through our established connections with landholders and stakeholder networks and in partnership with investors such as the Australian Government through the National Landcare Program Regional Land Partnerships, we drive practice change and tackle priority threats to biodiversity and healthy and resilient landscapes.

Objective:

The natural and cultural resources of our landscapes, waterways and Travelling Stock Reserves are managed to provide social, economic and environmental benefits.

Strategies:

- Support landholders to better manage natural and cultural assets through partnerships, extension and incentives.

Measures of Success:

- Increasing area of the landscape enhanced, rehabilitated or protected.
- Increasing investment in regional natural resource management.

Strategic Environment:

- **Opportunity:** Integration of environmental and agricultural outcomes.
- **Opportunity:** Climate change resilience.
- **Threat:** Unsecure and variable funding for natural resource management.
- **Threat:** Climate variability.

Key state linkages:

- Local Land Services Natural Resource Management Framework.
- Statewide Advisory Group.
- Core Service Logic Models.



Program Direction 2021-2026

- ✓ Proactively manage investor relationships to retain/extend programs with funding through to 2026.
- ✓ Support landholders to better manage natural and cultural assets through partnerships, extension and incentives.
- ✓ Facilitate peer-to-peer learning opportunities, recognising that landholders 'are the experts' in many cases.
- ✓ Engage the community across a range of natural resource management projects.
- ✓ Identify collaboration opportunities with other stakeholders and community groups in the region.
- ✓ Incorporate innovative technology in environment projects.
- ✓ Evaluate biodiversity indicators to determine impacts of climate change and incorporate applied adaptation research to on-ground works.
- ✓ Facilitate environmental outcomes by enabling landholders to receive support to rehydrate the landscape.
- ✓ Increase customer awareness and identify opportunities in emerging markets such as carbon sequestration and biodiversity.
- ✓ Program and project service delivery is underpinned by evidence based planning.

Program Metrics

- ✓ Area (ha) of land or wetland enhanced, rehabilitated or protected.
- ✓ Length (km) of waterways enhanced, rehabilitated or protected.
- ✓ Number of stakeholder partnerships.
- ✓ Number of landholder advisory consultations.
- ✓ Number of extension events.

Support and enable land managers to better manage natural resources



Land Management - (Native Vegetation)

Service Area: Landscape Management

The focus of the Land Management Program is to provide guidance and assistance to landholders in decision making regarding native vegetation management. This is done by providing consistent advice on the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code 2018 and the *Local Land Services Act 2013*. Advice is provided on allowable activities and authorisations are issued for applications meeting legislative thresholds. We also refer landholders to other agencies and programs to help improve both the agricultural productivity and environmental values of properties within the region.

Objective:

The natural and cultural resources of our landscapes, waterways and Travelling Stock Reserves are managed to provide social, economic and environmental benefits.

Strategies:

- Support landholders to navigate native vegetation legislation through advice and approval pathways.

Measures of Success:

- Increasing percentage customer satisfaction with the vegetation management service.
- Increasing area of the landscape enhanced.

Strategic Environment:

- **Opportunity:** Integrated farm business planning.
- **Opportunity:** Valuing environmental assets on private land.
- **Threat:** Economic drivers for clearing.
- **Threat:** Loss of biodiversity.

Key state linkages:

- Local Land Services Natural Resource Management Framework.
- Statewide Advisory Group.
- Core Service Logic Models.



Program Direction 2021-2026

- ✓ Facilitate landholder understanding of the Land Management Priority Program through education and extension initiatives.
- ✓ Foster community and stakeholder connections to optimise the effectiveness of service delivery.
- ✓ Ensure that landholders are informed of land management application timeframes and processes.
- ✓ Provide consistent advice and referral to other program areas to support an integrated service at the farm scale and build confidence in Local Land Services.
- ✓ Support landholders farm planning to incorporate long-term land management goals.
- ✓ Process incoming notifications within five business days.
- ✓ Customer enquiries obtain a response in three working days.

Program Metrics

- ✓ Number and area (ha) of notifications.
- ✓ Number and area (ha) of certificates.
- ✓ Area (ha) of set asides.
- ✓ Number of landholder advisory consultations.
- ✓ Number of extension events and participants.

Provide consistent advice and referral to other program areas to support an integrated service at the farm scale and build confidence in Local Land Services.



Animal Biosecurity & Welfare

Service Area: Biosecurity

Animal biosecurity and animal welfare services and activities deployed in the Northern Tablelands are aligned with the collaborative planning direction set by the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Local Land Services at the state level. As Commonwealth and State legislation and plans set the benchmarks and standards to be followed to mitigate biosecurity threats to the agriculture sector, this local plan conforms to their requirements. The community benefits from a coordinated and responsive deployment of government resources where animal health and welfare concerns arise. The Northern Tablelands Local Land Services Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Program, through the increasing expertise of its workforce, will assist stakeholders to understand and meet their obligations and offer support to jointly secure animal biosecurity and maintain welfare in the region.

Objective:

Animal, pest and plant biosecurity threats are actively managed to safeguard agricultural industries, market access and the environment.

Strategies:

- Implement regional strategic animal biosecurity and welfare plans.
- Prevent and detect emerging or exotic plant and animal pests and diseases through education, surveillance and compliance.
- Increase adoption of best practice biosecurity through extension and compliance.

Measures of Success:

- Biosecurity risks and incursions are identified and controlled.
- Market access for livestock and product is maintained.
- Review, evaluate and report on regional strategic animal biosecurity and welfare plans.

Strategic Environment:

- **Opportunity:** Proactive communication and extension in prevention and preparedness.
- **Opportunity:** Engagement of stakeholders in regional strategic planning.
- **Threat:** Emergency and Notifiable Animal Diseases.
- **Threat:** Drought and natural disaster impacts on animal welfare.

Key state linkages:

- NSW DPI/Local Land Services Animal Biosecurity & Welfare Business Plan.
- Statewide Advisory Group.
- Core Service Logic Models.



Program Direction 2021-2026

- ✓ Raise awareness of biosecurity requirements and support landholders to adopt biosecurity practices.
- ✓ Encourage industry and the community to recognise and report animal disease incidents to prevent emergency animal disease outbreaks.
- ✓ Work with enterprises and industry groups to develop biosecurity plans.
- ✓ Investigate and manage notifiable diseases or significant animal biosecurity events.
- ✓ Continuous review for new or emerging biosecurity hazards. Undertake surveillance to identify and exclude notifiable diseases.
- ✓ Undertake inspection activities at saleyards to monitor animal welfare and NLIS compliance.
- ✓ Conduct education and training in the community on emergency animal disease prevention.
- ✓ Communicate and deliver animal health and welfare extension material to landholders to increase knowledge and awareness on animal health, welfare endemics, surveillance activities and general biosecurity.
- ✓ Increase engagement with key industries and build partnerships across the sector (e.g. landholders, saleyard and abattoir managers, stock and station agents and transporters, and online sale platforms).
- ✓ Track trends in the spread of diseases due to changing climatic conditions.

Program Metrics

- ✓ Number of animal disease and surveillance investigations.
- ✓ Number of residue investigations.
- ✓ Number of animal welfare interventions.
- ✓ Number of extension, education and training events and participants.
- ✓ Number of landholder advisory or compliance consultations.

Assist stakeholders to understand and meet their obligations and offer support



Service Area: Biosecurity

The Northern Tablelands region maintains a strong focus on managing pest animals as their impacts on the agricultural sector and the environment are widely acknowledged. Impacts from vertebrate pest species such as feral pigs, wild dogs, wild rabbits, wild deer, the European red-fox, and other emerging threats (like locusts) require active and coordinated management. The region has a comprehensive Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plan to guide and inform on-ground operations. The Plan, due for review in 2023, guides and supports the effective delivery of best practice management of pest animals in the region.

Objective:

Animal, pest and plant biosecurity threats are actively managed to safeguard agricultural industries, market access and the environment.

Strategies:

- Support and deliver coordinated, nil-tenure control of pest animals.
- Implement the Regional strategic Pest Animal Management Plan.
- Prevent and detect emerging or exotic plant and animal pests and diseases through education, surveillance and compliance.
- Increase adoption of best practice biosecurity through extension and compliance.

Measures of Success:

- Biosecurity risks and incursions are identified and controlled.
- Increasing number of holdings participating in coordinated pest control programs.
- Review, evaluate and report on regional strategic pest animal management plan.

Strategic Environment:

- **Opportunity:** Enhanced collaboration with other government agencies.
- **Opportunity:** Increased participation in coordinated control programs.
- **Threat:** Absentee landholder ownership of pest animal management duties.
- **Threat:** Customer service demand exceeds organisational capacity.

Key state linkages:

- 1080 Pesticide Control Order.
- Statewide Advisory Group.
- Core Service Logic Models.



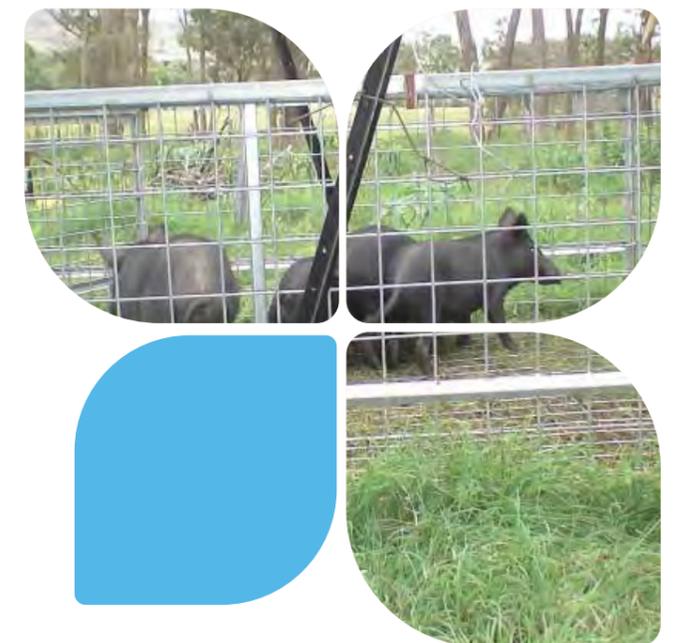
Program Direction 2021-2026

- ✓ Implement and review the Northern Tablelands Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plan 2018-2023. Support an effective Regional Pest Animal Committee.
- ✓ Facilitate increased participation in pest control programs by land managers across all land tenures.
- ✓ Support stakeholder and customer compliance with the Biosecurity Act 2015. Ensure landholder obligations are communicated and, where necessary, enforced.
- ✓ Improve the capacity of land managers to implement best practice pest management techniques.
- ✓ Support accurate and timely reporting of pest species via FeralScan.
- ✓ Collaborate with stakeholders in control program delivery for efficiency in resourcing and funding.
- ✓ Partner with industry research and extension bodies to coordinate on-ground extension and landholder education programs.
- ✓ Evaluate and where socially, environmentally and economically viable, progress property and landscape scale exclusion and barrier fencing infrastructure for pest management.
- ✓ Implement systems to enable customers to access technical knowledge and participate in responsive pest management programs.
- ✓ Secure and implement grant funding opportunities to improve the viability and effectiveness of pest management groups.

Program Metrics

- ✓ Number of pest animal management plans developed and reviewed.
- ✓ Number of landholders engaged in implementing pest animal management plan activities.
- ✓ Number of landholders deploying bait products as part of control programs.
- ✓ Number of groups undertaking coordinated control programs.
- ✓ Area of land treated with bait products as part of control programs.
- ✓ Number of community engagement, extension and training products or activities.
- ✓ Number of property scale compliance inspections undertaken.

Guides and supports the effective delivery of best practice management of pest animals in the region.



Sustainable Agriculture & Plant Biosecurity

Service Areas: Primary Production Biosecurity

The Sustainable Agriculture and Plant Biosecurity Program delivers a significant number of well-established and popular programs to landholders. Weed management, plant biosecurity and sustainable agriculture extension services are so interconnected that they are aggregated as a coordinated service. Agriculture is the main industry in our region and the service seeks to support landholders with best practice advice and scientifically robust solutions to agricultural challenges. Working in partnership with primary producers, we always actively seek to collaborate and build productive and sustainable farms.



Objective:

Our primary producers and local agricultural industries are innovative, profitable, sustainable and responsive to increasing climate variability and change.

Animal, pest and plant biosecurity threats are actively managed to safeguard agricultural industries, market access and the environment.

- Number of effective industry and research and development partnerships.
- Biosecurity risks and incursions are identified and controlled.
- Review, evaluate and report on the Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan.



Strategies:

- Support primary producers in decision making through extension and advisory services.
- Connect primary producers to cutting edge research and development through partnerships with industry and research institutions.
- Support primary producers in the adoption of new technology and farm innovations through extension and incentives.
- Implement Northern Tablelands Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2017-2022.
- Prevent and detect emerging or exotic plant pests and diseases through education, surveillance and compliance.



Strategic Environment:

- **Opportunity:** Increased extension partnerships with research and development providers.
- **Opportunity:** Adoption of agri-technology in service delivery and extension programs.
- **Threat:** Drought and natural disaster recovery.
- **Threat:** Climatic variability.



Key state linkages:

- Local Land Services Sustainable Agriculture Framework.
- NSW DPI and Local Land Services Memorandum of Understanding.
- Statewide Advisory Group.
- Core Service Logic Models.



Measures of Success:

- Increasing practice or technology adoption arising from Local Land Services service offerings.
- Increasing number of primary producers engaging in extension events and initiatives.



Program Direction 2021-2026

- ✓ Maintain and support networks within public, private and industry groups with an effective flow of research, knowledge, and innovation.
- ✓ Create a strong team that will provide a credible, un-biased and trusted advisory and extension service built upon sound scientific knowledge and evidence-based best practices.
- ✓ Deliver integrated farm planning programs to provide best practice knowledge to producers in a 'peer-to-peer' learning environment.
- ✓ Support individuals and communities in restoration and recovery (drought and bushfire).
- ✓ Deliver knowledge, leadership, and skill development programs with strategic partners.
- ✓ Establish local networks with public, private and industry groups to support information delivery.
- ✓ Increase involvement of young people in agriculture.
- ✓ Deliver an agronomy and livestock extension service to enable and support new innovations and technology adoption in agricultural production.
- ✓ Support landholders to have a greater capacity to manage climate change challenges, such as drought, through informed decision-making and application of technologies and innovation.
- ✓ Reduce the environmental and economic impacts from invasive weed species.
- ✓ Implement and report against the Northern Tablelands Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2017-2022.
- ✓ Plant biosecurity risk is assessed and new invasive species and plant health incursions have plans of management in place.



Program Metrics

- ✓ 80% of participants in farm planning and extension projects report an uptake of on ground practice change.
- ✓ Number of landholders engaging in advisory services increases by 5% each year.
- ✓ Number of effective research and development partnerships.
- ✓ Trending increase in sustainable production in Local Land Services benchmarking groups.
- ✓ 100% of investor funds are delivered as per contract.
- ✓ Number of extension events and participants.
- ✓ Area (ha) of land managed for improved agricultural production or condition.
- ✓ Area (ha) of weed management.
- ✓ Number of investigations for plant pests or diseases.

Extension and advisory services support practice change



Emergency Management

Service Area: Emergency Management

The Northern Tablelands Local Lands Services Emergency Management Program prepares for and responds to events where people, their animals and agricultural industries need immediate support. The program focuses on emergency prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery (PPRR) to build readiness and capacity within the organisation to enable a coordinated response at short notice. The team collaborates with a wide range of stakeholders to fulfil the motto **'Here When It Matters'**.

Objective:

Our community, environment and economy are better prepared to respond and recover from natural disasters and biosecurity emergencies.

Strategies:

- Support primary producers in emergency preparedness through extension and education.
- Provide incident management response to emergencies impacting on agriculture and animal welfare.
- Support the recovery of communities, environment and the economy through extension, coordination and investment.

Measures of Success:

- All regional after-action review recommendations implemented.
- Number of staff trained and capable for deployment to an emergency response role.
- Local Land Services representation at all interagency emergency management meetings.
- All regional recovery plan actions implemented.

Strategic Environment:

- **Opportunity:** Enhanced relationships and communications through Local Emergency Management Committees.
- **Opportunity:** Engage community in prevention and preparedness for biosecurity and natural disaster emergencies.
- **Threat:** Increasing biosecurity risks and incursions.
- **Threat:** Increasing incidence of extreme weather events.

Key state linkages:

- NSW State Emergency Management Plan.
- Concept of Operations.
- NSW DPI & Local Land Services Emergency Management Plan.
- Local Land Services Core Service Logic Models.
- Statewide Advisory Group.



Program Direction 2021-2026

- ✓ All personnel are actively involved in Emergency Management PPRR activities.
- ✓ Increase situational awareness of Emergency Management PPRR.
- ✓ Promote a lessons management, continuous improvement culture.
- ✓ Maintain strong, effective relationships with other Emergency Management stakeholders across the Northern Tablelands and at the state level.
- ✓ Adequately resource the Emergency Management Program to meet the increasing requirement for emergency response activities.
- ✓ Deliver biosecurity related prevention and preparedness messaging to landholders.
- ✓ Work with Local Emergency Management Committees to maintain appropriate Local Emergency Management Plans.

Program Metrics

- ✓ 100% of staff attend a response/exercise in a two-year period.
- ✓ 100% of recommendations from After Action Reviews implemented within the assigned timeframe.
- ✓ 100% of staff trained in Emergency Management fundamentals.
- ✓ 20% of staff trained in an Incident Management Team role.
- ✓ Quarterly participation in all Local Emergency Management Committees.
- ✓ Increasing stakeholder and community understanding of our role in Emergency Management.
- ✓ Agriculture & Animal Services Functional Area (AASFA) responsibilities included in 100% of Local Emergency Management Plans.

A highly engaged, prepared and capable workforce



Aboriginal Engagement

Service Areas: Enabling Landscape Management

Consultation with local Aboriginal people in preparing the Local Strategic Plan identified a strong desire on their part to become more involved in Northern Tablelands Local Land Services programs. At the same time, non-Aboriginal staff are seeking more information about Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Developing these interests will boost understanding and increase collaboration between all parties and will assist Northern Tablelands Local Land Services in building relationships with Aboriginal communities. The 2021-2026 Local Strategic Plan seeks to ensure that Aboriginal voices are heard and acted upon.

Objective:

The natural and cultural resources of our landscapes, waterways and Travelling Stock Reserves are managed to provide social, economic and environmental benefits.

Our business operations enable and support a highly capable, motivated and effective team of staff and local Board who live locally and are responsive to customer and stakeholder service delivery needs consistent with state Local Land Services standards and policies.

Strategies:

- Support landholders to better manage natural and cultural assets through partnerships, extension and incentives.
- Increase the capacity of Aboriginal communities through engagement and partnerships across all program areas.

Measures of Success:

- Increasing area of the landscape enhanced, rehabilitated or protected.
- Number of opportunities for people to guide Local Land Services decision making.
- Aboriginal procurement exceeds 4 per cent.

Strategic Environment:

- **Opportunity:** Meaningfully engage and involve Traditional Owners in Local Land Services programs.
- **Opportunity:** Increase employment of Aboriginal people in Local Land Services.
- **Threat:** Loss of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and connection to Country.
- **Threat:** Lack of understanding of Aboriginal people's rights, obligations and roles as traditional custodians of the land and waterways.

Key state linkages:

- Local Land Services Aboriginal Engagement Strategy.
- Statewide Advisory Group.



Program Direction 2021-2026

- ✓ Increase the capacity of Aboriginal communities through engagement and partnerships across all program areas.
- ✓ Increase the number of employment opportunities for Aboriginal communities through participating in Local Land Services program delivery.
- ✓ Promote greater recognition of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage among Local Land Services staff.
- ✓ Maintain an effective Aboriginal Reference Advisory Group to ensure that Northern Tablelands Local Land Services strategic focus and program delivery considers the needs of Aboriginal communities.
- ✓ Aboriginal Cultural competency training is completed by all Local Land Services staff.
- ✓ Preserve Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in the landscape.
- ✓ Increase Traditional Aboriginal Ecological Knowledge within the region through education and extension.
- ✓ Relationships between Northern Tablelands Local Land Services and Local Aboriginal Land Council staff are developed and strengthened.
- ✓ Regional Aboriginal Engagement Strategy developed and implemented.

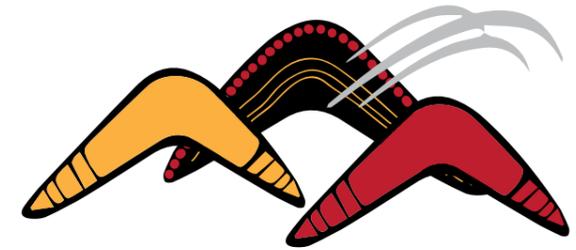
Program Metrics

- ✓ Number of opportunities for people to guide Local Land Services decision making.
- ✓ Number of Aboriginal employment opportunities created.
- ✓ Number of education and extension events.
- ✓ Increasing satisfaction ratings with Aboriginal Reference Advisory Group meetings.
- ✓ Number of Aboriginal people involved in Local Land Services programs and events.

Developing these interests will boost understanding and increase collaboration



Aboriginal Nations of the Northern Tablelands



PEOPLE CULTURE HERITAGE
HERE WHEN IT MATTERS



Strategic Services

Service Area: Enabling

The Strategic Services Program is a small, yet vitally important Priority Program for Northern Tablelands Local Land Services. Ensuring that risk management underpins all operations and planning supports the delivery of our services, are fundamental aspects of the Program. Compliance with legislative obligations and standards through internal audit, monitoring, evaluation and reporting drives continuous improvement and provides assurance to our customers, stakeholders and investors.

Objective:

Our business operations enable and support a highly capable, motivated and effective team of staff and local Board who live locally and are responsive to customer and stakeholder service delivery needs consistent with state Local Land Services standards and policies.

Strategies:

- The business is fiscally and operationally responsible, accountable and transparent through effective monitoring, evaluation, governance and risk management practices.

Measures of Success:

- 100 per cent of audit recommendations are implemented.
- Number of opportunities for people to guide Local Land Services decision making.

Strategic Environment:

- **Opportunity:** Increase adoption of technology in service delivery.
- **Opportunity:** Partnerships with industry and community.
- **Threat:** Machinery of Government changes and variable revenue.

Key state linkages:

- Local Land Services Service Delivery Strategy.
- Local Land Services Innovation, Improvement and Business Sustainability Strategy.
- Local Land Services Business Improvement Strategy
- Local Land Services Stakeholder Engagement Strategy



Program Direction 2021-2026

- ✓ Effective planning systems support the delivery of all programs.
- ✓ Decisions are informed by the best available information.
- ✓ Risk management underpins all operations.
- ✓ Monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems drive continuous improvement.
- ✓ Internal audit controls are in place for priority activities.
- ✓ Internal and external regulatory compliance standards are effective.
- ✓ Reporting meets the expectations of the target audience.
- ✓ Spatial mapping and geographic information systems support effective decision making and service delivery.
- ✓ Accountability to Local Board and State Local Land Services is maintained.
- ✓ Opportunities for commercial ventures and value-add partnerships are actively pursued.

Program Metrics

- ✓ Value of new revenue generated through investment, partnerships or commercial operations.
- ✓ Number of completed audit actions.
- ✓ Number of effective partnerships.

Our business operations enable and support a highly capable, motivated and effective team of staff



Service Area: Enabling

Northern Tablelands Local Land Services has a finance and customer service focus to ensure accountability and transparency in the investment of rates and government funding. The business systems that are in place across our organisation mean that outcomes are delivered consistently and efficiently, and outcomes can be repeated over and over.

Northern Tablelands Local Land Services exists to provide valuable, practical and relevant services to our customers. We are committed to delivering an outstanding service to everyone we work with and tailor our services to meet the needs of the local community. Local Land Services adapts service delivery methods to ensure our customers have access to the most up to date advice and information to help them make on-farm decisions. We will continue to adapt to the needs of our customers and deliver services in ways that are relevant and most accessible for them.

Objective:

Our business operations enable and support a highly capable, motivated and effective team of staff and local Board who live locally and are responsive to customer and stakeholder service delivery needs consistent with state Local Land Services standards and policies.

Strategies:

- The business is fiscally and operationally responsible, accountable and transparent through effective monitoring, evaluation, governance and risk management practices.
- Provide quality, relevant and people focused services to customers by developing strategic partnerships; active engagement and feedback with community and stakeholders.

Measures of Success:

- 100 per cent compliance with net cost of service.

Strategic Environment:

- **Opportunity:** Increase connectivity with community and customers.
- **Opportunity:** Customer experience informs service delivery.
- **Threat:** Social disconnection through online engagement.
- **Threat:** Uncertainty of future forward budget projections.

Key state linkages:

- Local Land Services Service Delivery Strategy.
- Local Land Services Innovation, Improvement and Business Sustainability Strategy.
- Local Land Services Business Improvement Strategy.
- Local Land Services Financial Guidelines.



Program Direction 2021-2026

- ✓ Enable a shared finance services model with neighbouring regions to maximise efficiencies.
- ✓ Improve integrity and auditability of investment dollars.
- ✓ Improve internal customer service through full integration of administration and customer related services.
- ✓ Continuous improvement in customer service standards.
- ✓ Mentoring program is implemented for customer service staff.
- ✓ Maximise service to customers using systems and online platforms.
- ✓ Increase in the percentage of annual land and stock returns received each year.
- ✓ Systems are managed to reduce waste.
- ✓ Customers access electronic systems to support interaction with Northern Tablelands Local Land Services.

Program Metrics

- ✓ Customer satisfaction exceeds 85%.
- ✓ Increasing net promoter score.
- ✓ Increasing customer trust.
- ✓ +/- 2% net cost of service.

Continuous improvement in customer service standards.



Service Area: Enabling

The people that form the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services need to operate as a unified and effective team, with the skills, capacity and adaptive response to meet evolving challenges, within a safe operating environment. To support excellence in customer service, our people and performance will continue to be an internal business focus, including continued integration of Aboriginal cultural awareness across all operations.

Our values of integrity, service, accountability, trust, performance, collaboration and innovation must be at the forefront of the way we do things as part of the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services team with every staff member home safe and well every day.

Objective:

Our business operations enable and support a highly capable, motivated and effective team of staff and local Board who live locally and are responsive to customer and stakeholder service delivery needs consistent with state Local Land Services standards and policies.

Strategies:

- Foster a skilled, capable and safe workforce through structured and relevant learning and development opportunities.

Measures of Success:

- Increasing People Matter Employee Survey engagement results.

Strategic Environment:

- **Opportunity:** Local, motivated, skilled and passionate staff.
- **Opportunity:** Development of skills in technology relevant to customers.
- **Threat:** Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Threat:** Service demand exceeds resource capability.

Key state linkages:

- Local Land Services People and Culture Strategy.



Program Direction 2021-2026

- ✓ Workplace Health and Safety Committee is supported and effective.
- ✓ People Matter Working Group is supported and effective.
- ✓ Engagement and communications with staff is effective and supportive.
- ✓ Staff training and development meets professional requirements.
- ✓ Ensure that the Local Board is supported and effective in its governance and advocacy role.
- ✓ Continue to develop and support an effective team of leaders with common standards consistent with the values of Local Land Services.
- ✓ Ensure effective coordination of training and development needs across the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services team.
- ✓ Bring all staff together on a single site within Glen Innes.
- ✓ Complete any initiatives and actions arising from the People Matter Employee Survey.
- ✓ Ensure training in customer service is provisioned to all staff.
- ✓ Ensure effective inductions are deployed for new staff.

Program Metrics

- ✓ Increasing staff engagement score.
- ✓ 100% of staff home safely every day.
- ✓ 100% of staff complete mandatory training.
- ✓ 100% of staff have Work and Development Plans in place.
- ✓ 100% incidents reported and investigated within state Key Performance Indicator.

A skilled, capable and safe team of passionate staff



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.

Northern Tablelands Local Land Services has tailored its Local Strategic Plan so its outcomes can be measured with tools from three accountability frameworks:

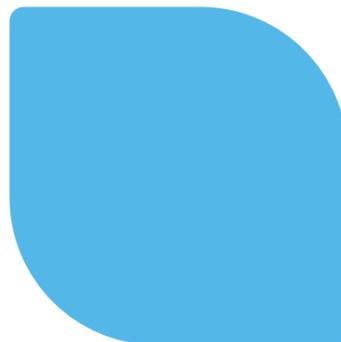
1. Performance Standard for Local Land Services
2. Core Service Logic Models
3. Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Framework

Performance Standard for Local Land Services

The Natural Resources Commission (NRC) developed the Performance Standard for Local Land Services to give assurance to investors, ratepayers and other stakeholders that investment of funds will deliver practical landscape management outcomes that reflect regional priorities and provide a triple bottom line return on investment. The standard provides principles and expectations for organisational performance, framed by eight interdependent components which, when applied successfully and together, will inform Local Land Services business decisions and activities:

- Governance
- Leadership
- Customer Satisfaction
- Community Ownership
- Understanding Scale
- Collaboration
- Risk Management and
- Evidence-based Decisions

This guidance was employed in the development of the 2021-2026 Northern Tablelands Local Strategic Plan.



Core Service Logic Models

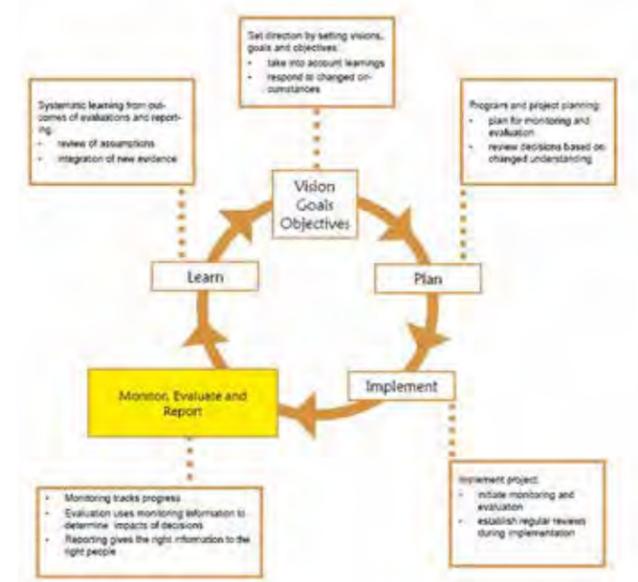
Local Land Services developed a Core Service Logic Models guide in 2021. This guide considers a range of Local Land Services business processes, legislation, codes, schedules, strategies, and action plans. To complement the Core Service Logic Models, a 'State-wide Metric Guide' has been developed. The Metric Guide directs the application of standard metrics (or 'output measures' as referred to in the logic models) for the purposes of organisation wide reporting. The output measures have been adopted in regional annual business plans and provide a link from state to regional planning and reporting processes.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Framework

Northern Tablelands Local Land Services uses a Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) framework for assessing the state and trend of asset condition 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.

MERI is a form of adaptive management and Northern Tablelands 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.

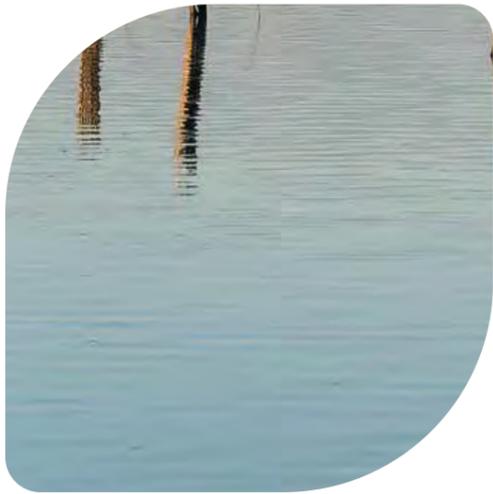
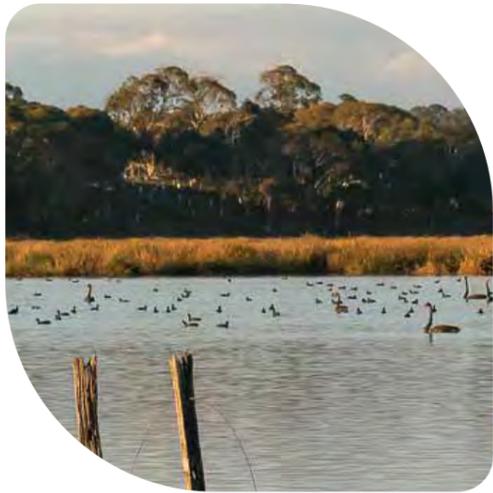
Each step in the adaptive management cycle is linked, to ensure continuous improvement over time.



The Adaptive Management Cycle

The Local Strategic Plan Supporting Document will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect adaptive management and changes that may occur in strategic direction.

This approach will result in Local Land Services continually improving the way we deliver services to our customers, stakeholders, and investors.



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Key Legislation and Guiding Influences

The Northern Tablelands Local Land Services Local Strategic Plan sits within the context of Federal, State and Local government legislation (and subordinate instruments), plans and policies, including (but not limited to):

National

Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
Quarantine Act 1908
Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030
National Landcare Program

State

Local Land Services Act 2013
Local Land Services Regulation 2014
Biosecurity Act 2015
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979
Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997
Crown Land Management Act 2016
Natural Resources Commission Act 2003
Local Land Services Core Service Logic Metrics (2021)
Local Land Services State Strategic Plan 2020-2030
Local Land Services Aboriginal Engagement Strategy (2021)
Local Land Services Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Handbook

Regional

Climate Change on the Northern Tablelands: Adaptation and mitigation for profitable agriculture and resilient landscapes (2016. Addendum to the Northern Tablelands Investment Plan 2025)
Northern Tablelands Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plan 2018-2023
Northern Tablelands Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
Northern Tablelands Local Land Services (2015), *Northern Tablelands Investment Plan 2025 A Plan for Profitable Agriculture and Resilient Landscapes*.

