Local Land Services works with land managers and the community to improve primary production within healthy landscapes.

These case studies highlight the integration of services across the organisation and the diversity of partnerships and projects being undertaken.
Site assessments identify local culture
Riverina Local Land Services is currently implementing a pilot project using the skills of the local Wiradjuri community to undertake site assessments on travelling stock reserves (TSRs).

The assessors locate sites of cultural significance on TSRs and make recommendations if the sites are in danger of damage or desecration.

Senior Land Services Manager Greg Packer says preserving Aboriginal cultural heritage is an important element of land management. “Working with local land services staff, the assessors travel to TSRs and record sites of cultural significance.”

The pilot project is a two-fold success; it has identified important areas of local culture and provided employment opportunities for local community members.

Funding partner: Catchment Action NSW

From bitumen road to groundcover for pork producer
Central West Local Land Services is working with Eumungerie pork producer Michael Hicks to improve the native vegetation and groundcover on his land.

Through Local Land Services funding, Michael and wife Alex have been able to improve their grazing management and carry out a major tree and shrub planting program. This work will improve the landscape's resilience by reintroducing a range of native species and structure. This will in turn provide habitat for a range of animals for generations to come.

The property was heavily stocked in the decade before Michael and Alex took ownership. “There was essentially no feed on offer. It was more like a bitumen road than a farm,” Michael said. “Local Land Services has been a key part in achieving some of the things we want to achieve here.”

Funding: Australian Government’s Biodiversity Fund

Pro-active communities in the north west
The work of six young Aboriginal people who took part in a broader Green Army project was showcased at a community day at Terry Hie hie reserve, north of Moree. The day provided an opportunity for the young people to show their families and the local community the work they had undertaken as part of the project, which included identifying and preserving artefacts and identifying significant sites.

A smoking ceremony started the day and was followed by a tour of the sites. One of the highlights was the crafting of coolamons, a multi-purpose carrying vessel traditionally used to collect grains and fruit and to carry babies. The trees used to create collamons on the day stand near others that bear very old coolamon scars from use by local Aboriginal people and show some of the regions rich cultural history.

Encouraging results from statewide customer survey
Local Land Services conducted a comprehensive customer satisfaction survey to establish a benchmark to track customer service performance over time, in keeping with our strategic direction. The telephone survey was undertaken by an independent research company in October 2015 and asked 2,300 randomly-selected land managers what they thought of our services.

The results show that we are well and truly delivering integrated customer services. Local Land Services was recognised by 89 per cent of private land managers and 97 per cent of the public land managers who responded. Of those surveyed, 79 per cent had dealt with us recently and 75 per cent of land managers were extremely satisfied or satisfied with their most recent use of Local Land Services.
Ovine brucellosis program a victory for cooperation

A program aimed at eradicating ovine brucellosis from sheep farms in the central Murray region has been hailed as a victory for cooperative problem solving. The voluntary program has so far included 53 properties in the Corowa-Oaklands area, with 10 testing positive. The initiative came about after Murray Local Land Services district veterinarians diagnosed several cases of the infectious reproductive disease across multiple properties.

Ovine brucellosis causes chronic infection in rams and can significantly reduce lambing percentages. While eradication is straightforward on a single farm, multiple infected properties increase the risk of reinfection. A community meeting near Corowa helped raise awareness of ovine brucellosis, its effect on sheep production and the benefits of eradication. Landholder support was positive, with attendees joining a voluntary eradication program. The program is on track for successful completion and will roll out into other areas during 2016.

Wild dogs research at Coffs Harbour

North Coast Local Land Services has brought together research scientists from NSW DPI, Gumbaynggirr Green Teams, Coffs Harbour City Council, National Parks and Wildlife Service, NSW Forestry Corporation and interested landholders to learn about wild dog activity in peri-urban areas.

Most wild dog research has been undertaken on the tablelands, slopes and western plains and very little in coastal areas - including peri-urban areas - except at the Gold and Sunshine Coasts in Queensland. This is despite reports of wild dog impacts now occurring along the east coast of NSW from the Hunter Valley to Kingscliff on the Tweed Coast.

The boundary between urban and rural areas is now blurring due to urban expansion, larger house blocks, rural lifestyle blocks and hobby farms, working farms, production forests and conservation reserves. These changes in land use in peri-urban areas can result in an increased potential for conflict and negative impacts from wild dogs.

Improved access to TSR dam at Boorowa

Access to a Travelling Stock Reserve (TSR) dam at Boorowa has been improved, thanks to the combined efforts of neighbouring property owners, NSW Rural Fire Service volunteers, a fishing club and South East Local Services. Land manager, Gary Johnson approached Local Land Services about having the dam cleaned to improve water supply for stock and to enable the dam to be used more efficiently. The proposal also presented an opportunity to create better access for emergency services to water supplies in the event of fire. Six local rural fire brigades and a local fishing club each donated $100 towards cleaning the dam and for road gravel, with Local Land Services contributing $3,000 towards cleaning, desilting and expanding the dam’s capacity. This project will benefit both land managers moving and grazing stock and the wider local community. Boorowa TSRs have linkages with the Riverina TSR network and beyond.

Putting mesquite on the map

Western Local Land Services is trialing an innovative new technique to map infestations of one of the most aggressive weeds in the Western Region – mesquite. The trial is being carried out at a site north of Broken Hill and involves the capture of high resolution, geo-referenced imagery using a fixed wing drone. This imagery will be analysed by the University of Sydney using specialist software to determine if mesquite plants can be identified.

It’s challenging to identify the location of weeds like mesquite in the Western Region using current methods due to the large expanses of land and the difficulty of accessing some areas. The use of a drone will overcome these access and scale issues.

If the method is successful and cost effective, landholders will be able to better target their weed control activities, which will significantly reduce the labor costs for treatment.

Funding partner: University of Sydney
Floating island sanctuary a first for regional NSW

In a first for regional NSW, a floating island has been installed near Orange to attract and provide habitat for migratory birds.

The habitat pontoon was installed on the reservoir at the Gosling Creek Reserve as a joint project between Orange City Council, Central Tablelands Local Land Services and the Environment and Waterways Alliance.

Nigel Hobden from Orange City Council said this was a new and innovative project. “It is a crucial and unique step in restoring water fowl habitat for a range of migratory bird species.”

The project will engage Citizen Science with the establishment of sign posted photo points where people can use their smart phones or cameras to record pictures of the island. Over time this will provide a record of activities occurring on the floating island.

**Funding partner:** Australian Government’s National Landcare Programme

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Bush corridor brings birds and blocks winds at Walcha

Walcha grazier Grant Barton has established a four-kilometre-long bushland corridor that runs the entire length of his 240 hectare property. The property is right at the top of the Great Dividing Range where the winters are harsh so wind breaks are important for protecting stock against cold wind and frosts.

The tree corridor also links a reserve to the south of the property to further bushland in the north, providing habitat for native plants and animals and greater movement through the landscape.

“We particularly wanted to encourage birds and other natural predators to keep problem grubs and insect pests in check,” Mr Barton said. “We have gained great satisfaction in seeing the project completed. We might not have been able to finish this without the support of Local Land Services.”

The Biolinks project aims to establish, restore and protect critical native vegetation corridors linking the tablelands, slopes and plains.

**Funding partner:** Australian Government’s Biodiversity Fund

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The problem with plastic - clearing Hunter waterways

Hunter Local Land Services is supporting community groups and volunteers in removing harmful debris from the region’s waterways. At the same time, staff are involved in a project that records what has been collected to provide a clearer picture of the problem with plastic pollution in the Hunter.

Hunter Local Land Services has teamed up with Tangaroa Blue Foundation to establish the Hunter Region Marine Debris Monitoring Program, under the umbrella of the Australian Marine Debris Initiative.

According to records collected in Tangaroa Blue’s National Marine Debris Database, around 22 tonnes of debris has been removed from the Hunter in recent years and more than 170,000 items have been recorded. Among the 10 most common items of rubbish recorded under the project are pieces of plastic, glass bottles, cigarette butts, plastic drink bottles, food packaging and fishing line.

**Carving it up for conservation**

Greater Sydney Local Land 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 have showcased new pruning practices to a wide range of practitioners and the public, with more than 150 people attending the first four demonstrations. Land Services officer Jenny Schabel said the project was about educating the community on the importance of tree hollows for wildlife.

“The high rate of population growth in the region can result in habitat destruction for native wildlife. Rather than just cutting dead or dying trees down we can create homes for native animals including endangered species,” she said. Arborist Michael Sullings performed the demonstrations and said dead and decaying wood was a food source for insects and other invertebrates, which were in turn food for reptiles and mammals and birds.