

Information for rural landholders



**Local Land
Services**
Hunter

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Welcome

This brochure has information about the services we provide locally and the role we play across NSW. It also outlines your responsibilities as a landholder.

We encourage you to contact your Local Land Services office for more specific information about your area and how we can work with you for a healthier and more productive landscape.

Further information is available from our website

www.hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au

Subscribe to our e-newsletters, check our website or like us on Facebook for details of upcoming events.





About Local Land Services

Local Land Services is a customer-focused business that aims to improve primary production and management of natural resources.

We provide integrated and coordinated services across four broad areas of operation:

- Biosecurity
- Agricultural production
- Natural resource management
- Emergency management

Our work is focussed on developing productive, healthy and resilient landscapes and communities through the delivery of:

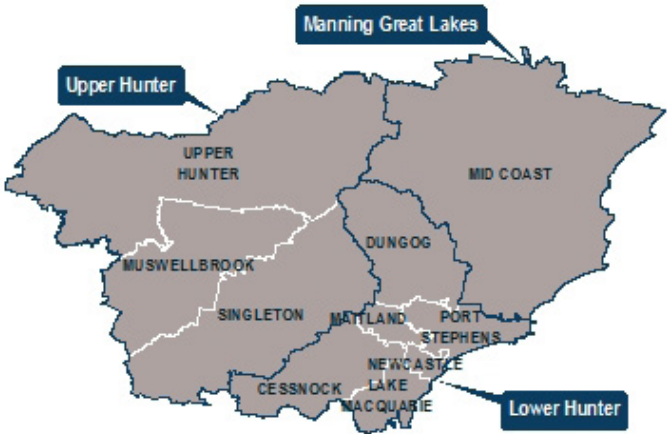
- information, training, workshops, field days and extension,
- funding to support sustainable production and a healthy environment,
- Aboriginal cultural heritage protection initiatives,
- native vegetation management and clearing consents.

We work with customers and partners to build community and productive resilience. Our stakeholders include the agricultural industry, local government, Landcare and the Aboriginal community.

We are a state wide organisation with 11 regions – covering vastly different landscapes, communities and industries.

Locally, we are governed by a Board of ratepayer elected and government appointed members.

We employ local people such as vets, biosecurity officers and agricultural advisory staff, who have a range of skills and expertise to support landholders with local issues.



Our region

The Hunter Local Land Services region covers an area of approximately 33,000 square kilometres. It takes in the local government areas of: Mid Coast, Port Stephens, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Cessnock, Dungog, Singleton, Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter.

There are around 670,000 people currently living in the Hunter Local Land Services region. More than 17,000 Hunter Local Land Services ratepayers directly invest in the biosecurity, animal welfare and emergency services functions of Hunter Local Land Services



Our funding partners

The services we provide are funded in a variety of ways.

The NSW Government provides funding through a Treasury grant to fund our core functions and through the Catchment Action NSW program (CANSW). Catchment Action NSW funding is provided to Local Land Services by the Office of Environment and Heritage. It offers regionally-delivered project funding to address state natural resource management priorities including support for biodiversity, native vegetation, threatened species and Aboriginal cultural heritage outcomes.

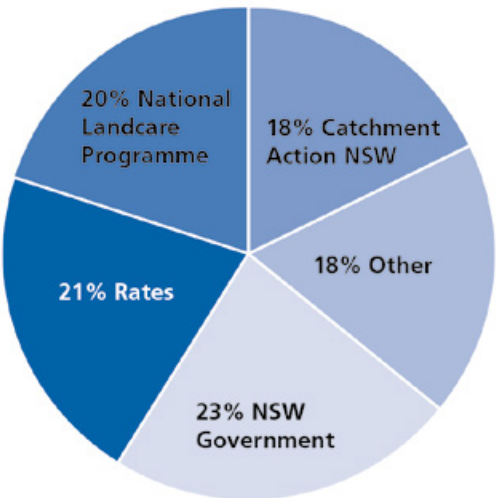
The Australian Government is an important funding partner, primarily through the National Landcare Programme (NLP).

The programme helps drive sustainable agriculture, as well as supporting the protection, conservation and rehabilitation of Australia’s natural environment.

Ratepayers (Rates) also contribute significantly to funding our biosecurity, livestock health and welfare services. Market access and healthy and productive industries rely on these services.

The Hunter Catchment Contribution (HCC) levy has been in place since 1956, and is raised in the Hunter Catchment only. It is the basis for funding flood mitigation maintenance and constructions costs as well as catchment activities.

Private industry partnerships and investments also contribute to our work. This model ensures each group gains maximum value from their investment.



Funding structure of Local Land Services 2014-2015



Our Services

Biosecurity

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

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

We provide biosecurity services relating to animal and plant pests and diseases including prevention, management, control and eradication; preparedness, response and recovery from animal and plant pest and disease emergencies; chemical residue prevention control and management; and control and movement of stock.

We all have a part to play in biosecurity and your role is vital.

Australia is in the enviable position of being free from many of the more harmful and serious animal diseases such as:

- foot and mouth disease
- mad cow disease
- rabies
- screw worm fly

These would have a devastating effect on our industry. We must work together to keep such diseases out of our country.

You can help. Be on the lookout for unusual symptoms. Contact a vet if things don't seem right with your livestock.

Our district veterinarians and biosecurity officers are prepared for emergency animal disease events. Our staff are trained to assist should an emergency response be required.

Our district veterinarians investigate disease of a herd or flock nature, such as:

- deaths
- sick stock
- illthrift (failure to grow or maintain weight in good conditions)
- reproductive issues such as abortion

We are involved in national, state and local disease control programs and can provide advice on local diseases and conditions.

Pest animal and weed control

Pest animals and weeds can cause serious economic losses to agricultural production, pose a risk of exotic disease, threaten the survival of many native species and cause environmental degradation.

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* repeals the *Noxious Weed Act 1993* and provides regulations with specific legal requirements for state and regional level priority weeds and high risk activities. The Hunter Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan outlines state and local regional priority weeds and the strategies for weed management in the region.

By controlling weeds on your property you can help support agricultural production, environmental health and stop the spread of weeds in our local area.

Contact your Local Weeds Officer based at council for further information.

Under the *Local Land Services Act 2013*, all land managers in NSW, whether on public or private land, have an obligation to control declared pest species on their land.

Current animal species declared pests in NSW include wild rabbits, wild dogs, feral pigs, foxes and a number of plague locust species.

We can provide access to baits, traps, chemicals; management advice and training in control methods such as baiting and trapping. We also coordinate group control programs, bringing stakeholders together to control invasive pests across all land tenures.

While there is no obligation for a landholder to control pests that are not declared, we can provide advice and support in controlling them.

In addition, we work with landholders and government agencies to develop vertebrate pest management plans and cooperative management programs.

Contact your nearest Local Land Services office for advice and assistance in control methods.

Reporting sightings of pest animals, including stock attacks or damage to your nearest Local Land Services biosecurity officer helps provide useful information for the control of pest animals in your local area.



Zoonotic diseases

Zootonic diseases are diseases that may pass from animals to humans. These diseases can be caused by viruses, bacteria, parasites, and fungi. Disease can be passed between animal species such as from pigs to dogs or bats to horses and then to people.

It is wise to know what diseases may pose a risk to your health and that of your family and workers.

Diseases that pass from animals to humans include:

- Q fever
- Leptospirosis
- Hydatids
- Swine brucellosis
- Hendra virus is an especially serious disease for horse owners

Make yourself familiar with recommended precautions and guidelines which you should follow to protect yourself, your family and animals from zootonic disease risks.

Agricultural production

We support primary industries by providing advisory services and support on:

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

We provide information that supports producers in decision making while building knowledge and networks through regular field days and events.

You can find out what's happening by subscribing to our newsletter <http://hunter.ils.nsw.gov.au/resource-hub/newsletters>

Our staff work with landholders to develop effective partnerships and projects using relevant best practice to help implement improved production systems.

We enable primary industries to access a range of national, state and local programs that lead to improved economic, social and environmental outcomes.

We provide support and advice in times of drought and play a key role in the regional seasonal conditions report process.

We provide services and support to livestock industries through advisory services.

Visit our us on Facebook or at www.hunter.lhs.nsw.gov.au to find out more about our field days, information sessions and funding opportunities.

Livestock health and management

We deliver frontline livestock health and disease surveillance services in NSW.

Our district veterinarians and biosecurity officers deliver a range of programs all aimed at safeguarding market access and improving livestock productivity.

Our district veterinarians focus on preventing, preparing for and responding to emergency disease outbreaks. They diagnose flock and herd health issues, and undertake disease surveillance and reporting.

They also focus on chemical residue investigation and management; and certification traceability systems.

Our district veterinarians assist animal welfare agencies with livestock welfare issues and deal with livestock concerns during emergencies such as bushfires and floods.

They also provide animal health and livestock feeding advice.





Stock movement and identification

Our district veterinarians and biosecurity officers are empowered as stock inspectors in NSW. Their role includes visiting saleyards to ensure compliance with the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) and educating producers about the importance of tracing livestock. The NLIS is Australia's way of identifying and allowing traceability of livestock including cattle, sheep and goats.

If you own livestock it is important for you to understand and comply with the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS).

Good surveillance detects any problems early and ensures the quality and safety of NSW livestock and livestock products.

We administer permits for moving and grazing stock on public roads and TSRs.

We also administer a variety of stock identification systems including:

- Property Identification Codes (PICs)
- National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) advice and compliance
- stock identification registration (e.g. brands and earmarks).

Protect your animals

Simple things you can do to help protect your herd or flock:

- check stock under your care regularly and report anything unusual
- when buying stock, request a national vendor declaration (NVD) and animal health statement
- ensure stock are identified according to the NLIS and update the NLIS database if you buy directly from another producer
- quarantine introduced animals for 7-10 days
- monitor them for any signs of disease

Stock owners have responsibility to provide stock with:

- sufficient food and water
- shelter
- necessary treatment for injury or disease

Contact your nearest Local Land Services office for details of your local district veterinarian and biosecurity officer.

Maintain fencing

Make sure your fences are adequate for the stock you keep and avoid livestock straying. Check fences regularly, especially after floods or fires.

Travelling stock reserves

We manage a network of over 500,000 hectares of travelling stock reserves (TSRs) throughout NSW. These networks of crown land provide invaluable fodder reserves and important landscape, ecological functions and public recreation.

TSRs can be especially beneficial in times of drought, bushfire or flood.

Local Land Services:

- issue permits to graze or walk stock on TSRs and public roads
- provide advice about feed/water availability for travelling stock on TSRs
- supply transported stock statements (TSS)
- issue apiary site and other reserve use permits

Natural resource management

Healthy ecosystems underpin successful, productive agricultural businesses and communities.

Through investment from the NSW and Australian governments, we support healthy ecosystems across the Hunter region.

We help landholders and communities to improve the quality of our land, soil, vegetation, water and places of Aboriginal cultural heritage. We do this through:

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

To find out about current opportunities in natural resource management, visit our website or call your nearest Local Land Services office.

Native vegetation management

Native vegetation is vital for the health of our landscape, supporting native animals and agriculture and protecting soils and water.

From July 2017 the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* and the *LLS Amendment Act 2016* will inform native vegetation management in NSW

There are types of clearing that need formal approval through an assessment, while other types of clearing do not require approval or can be self-assessed (including Exempt Activities and codes of practice).

We provide advice on what clearing requires approval on rural land.

Thinking of clearing native vegetation go to www.landmanagement.nsw.gov.au

Emergency management

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

We also work alongside other agencies to provide support in emergencies where agriculture industries are impacted, including natural disasters such as floods and bushfires.

We work with the community to build the capacity of landholders to prevent, prepare, respond and recover from biosecurity emergencies and natural disasters.

Plan for emergencies

A flood or fire plan organised before an event makes the experience much less stressful for you and your stock.

If your property is flood prone, your flood plan should include details of:

- where you will move your stock
- how you will move them
- what the trigger is for moving them

If your property is at risk from fire, your fire plan should also highlight the need to move stock to less fire prone paddocks on days of extreme fire danger.

Contact your nearest office and request a copy of our Farm Flood Readiness Kit to help you make your property flood ready and develop a flood plan.

Ensure you have property identification codes

It is compulsory in NSW for any property running livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, horses, pigs, alpaca, llama, deer, 100 or more poultry or 10 or more emus) to have a property identification code (PIC).

A PIC is a unique identifier for land used for keeping livestock. This is essential part of managing biosecurity, emergencies and supporting the NLIS for cattle, sheep, goats and pigs.

The PIC is printed on NLIS devices and national vendor declarations.

To get a PIC, contact your nearest Local Land Services office or visit: www.hunter.lis.nsw.gov.au/livestock/pics

Legal responsibilities as a landholder

There are a number of legal responsibilities which come with being a landholder.

Lodge an annual land and stock return

If you are a Local Land Services rate payer or you have a Property Identification Code you are required by law to lodge an annual land and stock return. You are required to lodge a return each year even if you don't have stock.

Land and Stock returns contain information regarding stock numbers, property details and other data which can be vital in the event of an emergency animal disease outbreak.

Let us know of changes in address, occupancy or ownership

Ratepayers are required to let us know of a change of address or other details.

Pay rates

Rates notices are sent out each year. Interest is charged on overdue rates.

Property identification code

It is compulsory in NSW for any property running livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, horses, pigs, alpaca, llama, deer, 100 or more poultry or 10 or more emus) to have a property identification code (PIC). Contact us to find out how to obtain your PIC

Control pests

Under the Local Land Services Act 2013, all land managers in NSW, whether on public or private land, have an obligation to control declared pest species on their land.

Identify stock

You have legal responsibilities for stock identification. There are a number of different types of identification which may apply. Your Local Land Services office can advise you further.

Report notifiable diseases

You are legally obliged to report any notifiable disease to Local Land Services or the NSW Department of Primary Industries. For information on notifiable diseases contact your nearest Local Land Services office.

Organise permits if moving stock

If you are planning to move stock on a public road or TSR (either by vehicle or walking) you must organise the appropriate paperwork with your Local Land Services office and observe certain safety requirements. When walking stock, appropriate stock warning signs must be displayed.

Control weeds

The Biosecurity Act 2015 repeals the Noxious Weed Act 1993 and provides regulations with specific legal requirements for all landholders to act to control, prevent and eradicate state and regional priority weeds and manage high risk activities. Seek further advice from your local weeds officer at council or www.hunterregionalweeds.net.au

Protect Aboriginal cultural heritage

It is an offence to harm or desecrate an Aboriginal object or declared Aboriginal Place in NSW. It is important that landholders seek advice regarding potential places of Aboriginal significance on their land prior to making any farm developments. Contact the Office of Environment and Heritage for more information.

Water Use

For information about all regulated, unregulated and ground water activities including water licensing, surface and ground water use go to WaterNSW.

Web www.watarnsw.com.au

Watercourses

Works on or near a watercourse will often require formal approval. Seek further information from DPI Water at www.water.nsw.gov.au

Managing native vegetation

Approval or certification is required for some types of native vegetation clearing. Make sure you check that any native vegetation control works comply with the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and LLS Amendment Act 2016*.

web www.landmanagement.nsw.gov.au

Annual rates

The rates you pay allow us to fund a number of the services we provide and contribute to important statewide functions.

General rate

A general rate is levied on all rateable land (i.e. land over a certain number of hectares). It has a base charge and an amount payable on the notional carrying capacity of the land.

The general rate assists with pest animal control activities, general administration and in some cases the maintenance of the TSRs.

Animal health rate

This is a rate levied on rateable land on which 50 or more stock units (or dry sheep equivalents) are run.

This rate also applies if you fail to submit your previous years' annual land and stock return on time.

The animal health rate is used to fund the animal health services we provide.

Special purpose rates

At times, we may raise a special purpose rate. An example of this was a special purpose pest insect levy on behalf of the State Government to help fund the plague locust campaign of 2008-09, which helped save millions of dollars in agricultural production.

We may at times also collect statutory levies on behalf of other authorities (e.g. the NSW Food Authority).

Paying your rates

Rates are levied each year for the period 1 January to 31 December.

Rates notices are sent out early in the year. There are a number of payment options, including online payment.

For more information, contact your nearest Local Land Services office.



Frequently asked questions

How does Local Land Services work?

We are a statewide body with 11 regions covering NSW.

How are you financed?

Local Land Services is funded through Australian government, NSW government, ratepayers and private investment.

See page 6 (our funding partners) for more detail.

Is Local Land Services part of the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI)?

No, we are separate. There is a close working relationship between the two organisations.

Who are Local Land Services responsible to?

We are responsible to the NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Land and Water. We operate under the *Local Land Services Act 2013*.

Which region am I in?

When you receive your rates notice, the name of your Local Land Services will appear on the notice.

Alternatively regional maps can be found on the Local Land Services website www.lls.nsw.gov.au

How are my rates calculated

Rates are charged on a two-tier basis, involving a general rate paid by all landholders and a supplementary animal health rate.

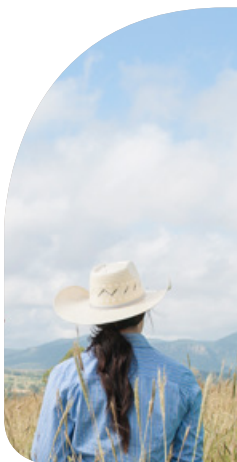
Rates are approved by the Minister for Primary Industries or our statewide Chair.

What's a notional carrying capacity and who works it out?

The notional carrying capacity is an estimate, worked out by your Local Land Services, of the number of stock a property would normally carry in an average year. It is based on stock units per hectare.

What if I disagree with the notional carrying capacity assessment?

You can lodge an appeal with us at any time, however this will only affect rate amounts if received within 28 days of receiving your rates notice.



I'm not rural - council zoned my property as residential. Do I still have to pay rates?

Local government zoning is not relevant to Local Land Services districts.

How do I find out the latest farm management information?

We work closely with DPI and other bodies carrying out research to share best practice information with the community.

Visit our website and sign up to our newsletter to find out more - www.hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au

If I pay rates, do I get baits and other things free?

Most merchandise (e.g. baits, stock signs) are charged on a cost recovery basis.

What support is out there to help me improve my land?

We run a variety of grant programs to support natural resource management and sustainable agricultural production.

To find what is currently available visit our website or call your nearest Local Land Services office.

We also run regular workshops and have a range of fact sheets, publications and videos available to support you. These are available from our website.

Why do I need to use a private vet when my Local Land Services has a district vet?

Our district vets provides a herd/flock health service whereas private practitioners are responsible for treating individual animals.

What is an Annual Land and Stock Return? Why is it important?

Annual returns gather information about stock held on the land as at 30 June. They contain information essential for livestock disease control and surveillance.

The return takes only a few minutes to complete but is invaluable in the event of a disease outbreak. The due date for lodgement is 31 August each year.

You are required to lodge a return each year even if you don't have stock.

How do I have a say in how Local Land Services is run?

As a ratepayer, you are eligible to nominate to become a Board member in your Local Land Services region.

Board elections are held every four years and current Board member details are on our website.

We also facilitate a number of community advisory groups. Visit our website or call your nearest Local Land Services office to find out more.

Keep up to date

Ensure you keep up to date with the latest Hunter news, information and events by subscribing to our e-newsletters. To subscribe, visit our website, call 1300 795 299 or email us at admin.hunter@lls.nsw.gov.au

Let us know if your contact details change so we can update our records.

Be sure to also check out our facebook page [HunterLLS](#)





**Local Land
Services**
Hunter

Contact us

If you have any enquiries please contact your nearest Local Land Services office or email **admin.hunter@lls.nsw.gov.au**

Kooragang

Ph: 4964 9308

Maitland Saleyards

Ph: 4932 8866

Merriwa

Ph: 6548 2175

Paterson

Ph: 4930 1030

Scone

Ph: 6540 2400

Singleton

Ph: 6572 2944

Taree

Ph: 6551 8994

Total

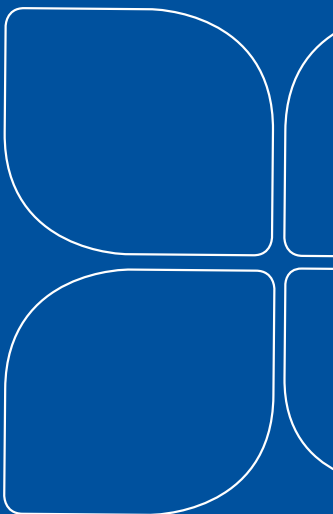
Ph: 4939 8967

Wingham

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Wyang

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Follow us at: [HunterLLS](#)

***‘Local people, delivering high quality,
integrated services for healthy productive
landscapes.’***

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1300 795 299

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