

## Governance for Local Land Services

This paper explains the Local Land Services Reference Panel's **initial thinking** about governance arrangements that could support the new Local Land Services (LLS). The panel would like your **input and views** to help develop this new structure.

### What will Local Land Services do?

Local Land Services is the state-wide structure being established by the NSW Government to deliver better and more integrated services and information to NSW landholders. The Local Land Services structure will consist of a Council of Chairs, and a number of regional Local Land Services Boards that will oversee the delivery of services and advice within specific regions. Local Land Service Organisations will deliver the range of services and information currently delivered by the Catchment Management Authorities, the Livestock Health and Pest Authorities, and some divisions of the NSW Department of Primary Industries (primarily agricultural advisory services).

Local Land Services Boards will be funded by a combination of funding from the Australian Government, the NSW State Government and local ratepayers, with approximately one third of the funding provided by ratepayers. LLS Boards will have the ability to levy ratepayers for some of their activities, as Livestock Health and Pest Authorities currently do,

Local Land Services Boards will be created to provide landholders and communities with **easy access** to services and the best available information from **one convenient source**. The Boards will provide services and advice on production for primary industries and farm business, biosecurity including plant and animal health, plant and animal pest control and natural resource management. The Organisations will also have responsibility for the agriculture and animal functional area emergency services response.

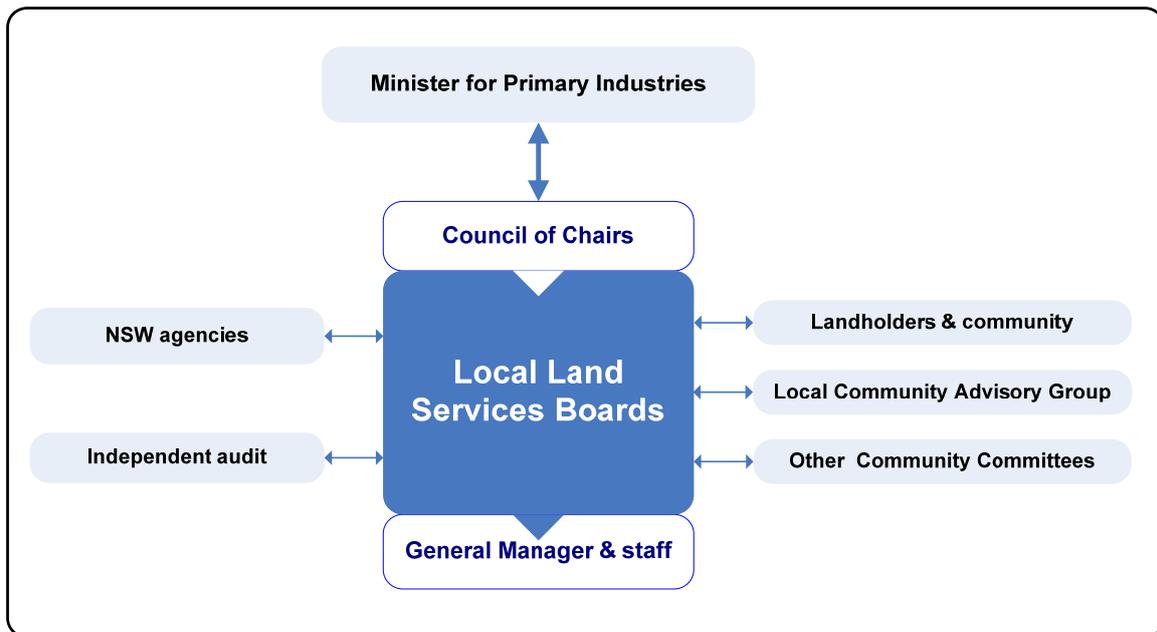
Local Land Services Boards will be **managed by local people** on local Boards. They will work closely with landholders and local communities to identify and **deliver services** that are relevant to their **local needs**.

Local Land Services Boards will aim to support productive **primary industries**, protect the **health** of our plants and animals, improve the **well-being** of our communities and ensure our waterways, soils and vegetation continue to **function** and provide the **benefits** we seek from them. Local Land Services Boards will also contribute to state-wide policy settings on relevant issues.

### What is the panel proposing?

The panel's proposed structure for Local Land Services is set out in the diagram below. It shows how the key people and bodies involved in the LLS relate to each other.

The rest of this paper provides more detail about what the LLS will look like, the things that LLS boards will do and their responsibilities. A summary of this paper is attached for your convenience.



## Local Land Services Organisation Boards

The Panel proposes:

1. The **primary role** of Local Land Services Boards will be to:
  - Ensure good governance (for example risk and financial management) and strategic leadership of regional LLS Boards;
  - Establish decision making processes that are open and transparent to landholders and community;
  - Develop regional strategic (and other) plans that reflect landholder and community needs, integrate services and functions and deliver economic, social and environmental outcomes to landholders and community;
  - Contribute to the development and implementation of state and national policy;
  - Establish committees and other processes to meaningfully engage all members of their community; thereby empowering communities as active and valued partners in the design and delivery of services.
  - Ensure General Managers meet performance expectations for the day-to-day operations of regional Local Land Services.
  - Ensure decision making processes that balance economic, environmental & social impacts
2. **Local Land Services Authority Boards** will consist of elected and appointed members, with either:
  - A. Four ratepayer elected members and four Ministerial appointed members; or
  - B. Three elected members and four Ministerial appointed members.

The composition of the Board should be informed by localism, accountability and the proportionality of funding sources.

3. Each Local Land Services Board will be **accountable** to landholders and community:
  - A number of Board Members will be elected by local ratepayers;
  - Local community Advisory Groups will be established to provide input into decision making;

- Strategic plans will be prepared that reflect community values and expectations;
  - Boards will report annually to their regions on financial performance and outcomes; and
  - Each LLS Authority will be audited on performance, including return-on-investment on a periodic basis.
4. The Board members will nominate a **Board Chair** for approval by the Minister, who may then report to the Minister on matters relating to their Local Land Service Board.
  5. Board members will be appointed on a skills basis. It will be essential that each board has the necessary mix of **skills and expertise** across the services and advice they provide. A skills matrix is currently being developed by the Reference Panel.
  6. At least one of the Ministerial appointees will have significant senior experience in **local government** (for example, a Councillor or General Manager).
  7. All Board members should hold (or gain within a reasonable time) and maintain appropriate and **recognised qualifications for directorship**.
  8. **Board appointments** will be for three years and should be limited to two terms, and three terms in cases where a Board member has had a term as Chair.
  9. **Elected Board members** will be elected by ratepayers in a cost effective and transparent manner.
  10. **Local Community Advisory Groups** will review nominees for Board member elections against the skill set required and endorse nominees to ratepayers for election.
  11. **Voting rights** for elections for elected members are yet to be determined, but could be based on:
    - A. The amount (\$) of rates paid per ratepayer; or
    - B. The size (ha) of rateable area and holding; or
    - C. The type (e.g. animal, general) of rates; or
    - D. One vote per ratepayer regardless of the above.
  12. **Local Community Advisory Groups** will nominate temporary members to Boards in cases where an elected Board member has vacated their seat.
  13. Each **Chair** will oversee the selection process of nominations for Ministerial appointed Board members, for the Minister to consider and appoint.
  14. **Tenure** of elected members should be aligned with the election cycle, while tenure for Ministerial appointments should be on a rolling and staggered basis to minimise disruptions to Boards.
  15. The Minister may appoint **interim Board members** and an inaugural Chair to ensure that Local Land Services can function effectively on **1 January 2014**.
  16. Elections should be held as soon as practicable after the commencement of the Act (within 6 months), followed by a review of interim Ministerial appointments to ensure there is a suitable mix of skills between elected and appointed Board members.

**In particular, the Panel would like your views on:**

- The mix and number of Board members (as proposed in Point 2)
- The type of voting rights to elect Board members (as proposed in point 11)

### Council of Chairs

The Panel proposes:

17. The Local Land Services Council of Chairs would be responsible for state-wide issues such as aggregated reporting, providing policy advice to the Minister and promoting a consistent and coordinated approach across all Local Land Services where applicable.
18. The Minister will **delegate authority** to the Council of Chairs through the LLS Legislation.

19. The **Chair** of each Local Land Services Board would be **appointed to the Council of Chairs**.
20. The Minister may appoint an independent **Chair** of Council of Chairs as an additional member.
21. The Council of Chairs will establish **clear lines of delegation** to regional Local Land Services Boards to maintain the intent of local service delivery.
22. Where there is an identified need, the Minister may appoint **temporary members** for a specific purpose and fixed timeframe.

### Local Community Advisory Group

The Panel proposes:

23. Each Local Land Services Board will establish a **Local Community Advisory Group** to represent **community views** and provide advice to Local Land Services Boards (such as advice and input into strategic regional planning).
24. Local Land Services Boards should be able to establish additional **Local Community Advisory Groups** and other consultative mechanisms to seek representation and advice on specific matters and issues such as Aboriginal cultural heritage, natural resource management, livestock health and pest biosecurity if required.
25. The Boards should establish a charter for their **Local Community Advisory Groups** that reflects their local circumstances and needs.
26. Local Community Advisory Groups will have up to twelve members, comprising a **core of representatives** from stakeholder groups including community and industry groups (for example, representing farmers and natural resource management), Aboriginal Groups, local government, agency representatives (for example, Department of Primary Industries and NSW Office of Environment and Heritage) and other individuals nominated by the Board.
27. Local Community Advisory Groups will review the **credentials and skills** of people seeking **election by ratepayers** and make recommendations to ratepayers on whose qualifications and skills best fit the skills required for each Local Land Services Board.

#### In particular, the Panel would like your particular views on:

- The role and functions of the Local Community Advisory Groups could do (as discussed in Point 23)
- The type of representation and skills on Local Community Advisory Groups (as discussed in Point 26)

### Independent Audit

The Panel proposes:

28. An **independent body**, such as the Natural Resources Commission, will be responsible for auditing the performance, governance and results of Local Land Services Boards in meeting their core service delivery responsibilities of primary industries productivity, plant and animal biosecurity, natural resource management and emergency management. Recognising that external expertise will be required to assist with auditing in some areas.
29. The **NSW Audit Office** would audit financial performance as required under the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*.

### State Agencies

30. Relevant **NSW agencies**, in collaboration with Local Land Services, will develop and oversee state-wide policies for biosecurity, agricultural productivity, emergency response, natural resource management and any relevant supporting research and development.

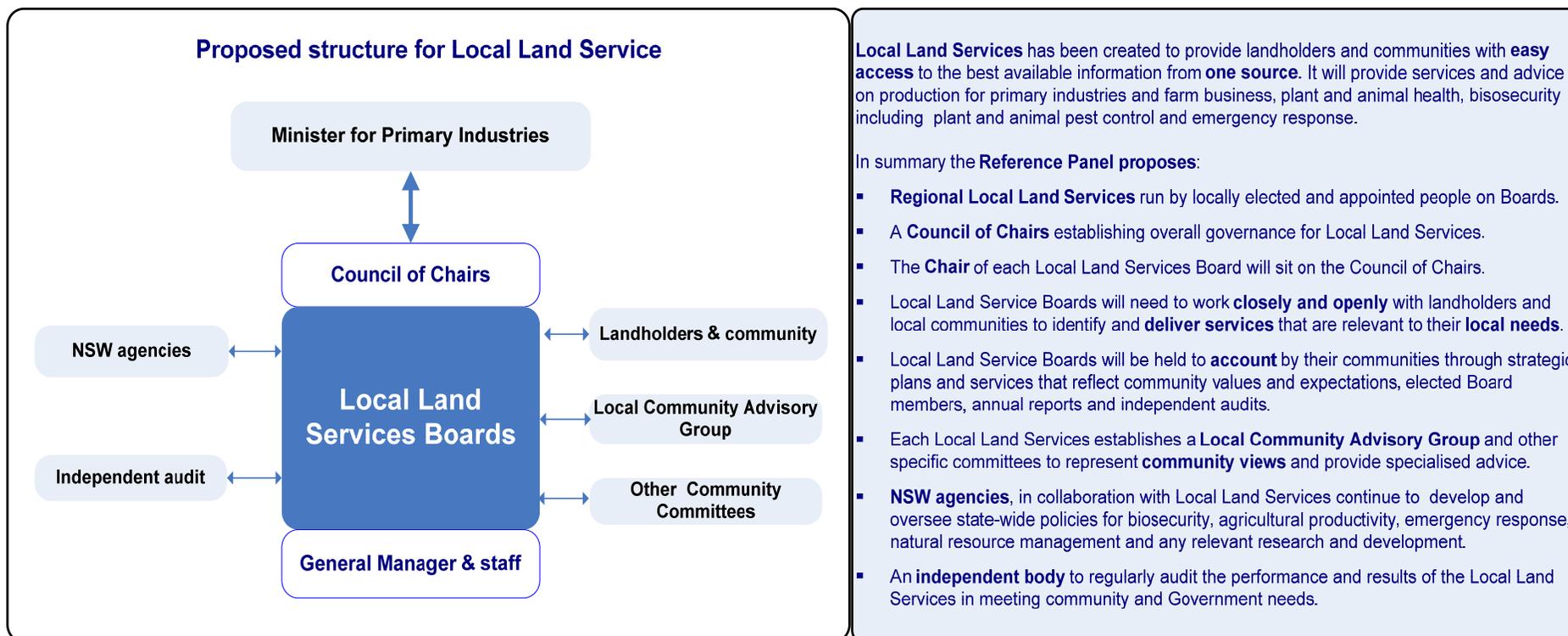
## What happens next?

You can tell the Reference Panel what you think about these proposals by:

- Answering the questions on the 'Have your say' website  
<http://haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/locallandservices>
- a letter to Local Land Services Feedback, Department of Primary Industries PO BOX 865, Dubbo 2830
- Fax: Attention Local Land Services – 6881 1295
- in-person, at one of the many meetings the Reference Panel will be holding across NSW (for locations and dates check

[http://haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/locallandservices?module=survey&survey\\_tool\\_id=118#tool](http://haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/locallandservices?module=survey&survey_tool_id=118#tool)

### Proposed structure for Local Land Service



**Local Land Services** has been created to provide landholders and communities with **easy access** to the best available information from **one source**. It will provide services and advice on production for primary industries and farm business, plant and animal health, biosecurity including plant and animal pest control and emergency response.

In summary the **Reference Panel** proposes:

- **Regional Local Land Services** run by locally elected and appointed people on Boards.
- A **Council of Chairs** establishing overall governance for Local Land Services.
- The **Chair** of each Local Land Services Board will sit on the Council of Chairs.
- Local Land Service Boards will need to work **closely and openly** with landholders and local communities to identify and **deliver services** that are relevant to their **local needs**.
- Local Land Service Boards will be held to **account** by their communities through strategic plans and services that reflect community values and expectations, elected Board members, annual reports and independent audits.
- Each Local Land Services establishes a **Local Community Advisory Group** and other specific committees to represent **community views** and provide specialised advice.
- **NSW agencies**, in collaboration with Local Land Services continue to develop and oversee state-wide policies for biosecurity, agricultural productivity, emergency response, natural resource management and any relevant research and development.
- An **independent body** to regularly audit the performance and results of the Local Land Services in meeting community and Government needs.