



## Top 20 Frequently Asked Questions Local Land Services

May 2013

### Funding & rates

#### 1. Will I pay more for Local Land Services?

Local Land Services will be funded through a combination of funding streams from the Australian Government, NSW State Government and local ratepayers. It is likely around one-third of the funding will be provided by ratepayers, which is a continuation of what ratepayers currently contribute.

Local Land Services - revenue/funding (2014/15-2017/18)	
	\$M
<b>Biosecurity</b>	
existing LHPA rating system	140
<b>Natural Resource Management</b>	
NSW recurrent	105
Grants funding	
– NSW Catchment Action	112
– Commonwealth 'Caring for our Country'*	128
Agricultural advice	
<b>NSW consolidated fund</b>	22
Local Land Services efficiency dividend \$20m over 4 years**	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>507</b>

\* Commonwealth has provided Caring for our Country funding for 1 year, assumed continuation of funding for remaining 3 years at the current level

\*\* \$5m pa as a result of removal of duplication from LHPAs, CMAs and DPI

There will be no change to the rating system until after the NSW Government has fully considered the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal final report, a draft of which is due to the Government in August 2013.

## 2. Is the Government cost-shifting?

Local Land Services is not an exercise in cost shifting to ratepayers. The NSW Government is committed to investing in agricultural and natural resource management services as per the above budget, and there will be no change to the rating system until the Government has fully considered the IPART report.

If Local Boards and ratepayers see value and wish to pay for additional or new services, that will be a decision for that region.

Local Land Services will be a substantial organisation with fixed assets in excess of \$130 million. The consolidation of these assets, together with the revenue base, means that Local Land Services will have a strong and certain future.

## 3. What is the Local Land Services Future Fund?

The Local Land Services Future Fund is a consolidation of cash assets from the Livestock Health and Pest Authority and Catchment Management Authorities, in the amount of \$35 million.

These funds have been accumulated over many years and the interest of approximately \$1.5 million will be managed for, and made available to, Local Land Services Boards, on an annual basis, for priority projects.

## 4. Who will manage the Fund and how will dollars be distributed to Boards?

Local Land Services legislation will explain how funds are managed through the Board of Chairs.

## Services

### 5. Will I get the same level of service?

Each Local Land Services region will have employees with specific skills in agricultural extension, natural resource management or biosecurity. Agricultural advisory staff will also work closely with specialist research and development staff in DPI to ensure the latest results from agricultural research is being made available to farmers.

More Local Land Services employees will be trained in biosecurity and natural disaster emergency preparedness, response and recovery so that in the event of an incident, more people are available to provide assistance in the community.

The steps taken by the NSW Government to improve service delivery and reduce duplication will actually redirect \$5 million to frontline agricultural advisory and extension services each year, to be spent at the Local Boards' discretion.

As of January 2014, Local Land Services will have over 750 employees across the state.

The DPI will have a workforce of more than 3000 focussed on a range of disciplines including agriculture, R&D, biosecurity, fisheries, water, emergency disease detection, food security, land management, science and production. Forests NSW is now a State Owned Corporation separate to DPI.

### 6. How will Local Land Services deliver agricultural extension?

DPI will continue to do the technical work, partnering with Local Land Services to deliver to the farmgate. For example, DPI will continue to develop the Winter Crop Sowing Guide, a popular annual publication to help farmers manage possible weeds in crops. Local Land Services officers will work with farmers to apply this information on farm.

### 7. What services will be offered?

Local Land Services will deliver agricultural and biosecurity advice, administer natural resource management grants and projects, and assist with emergency and disaster preparation, assessment and response.

This means delivering valuable services like:

- Delivering advice and extension services through PROFarm courses, workshops and field days
- Working with DPI and other R&D providers to ensure farmers have the latest results or can take part in trials

- Livestock health, traceability and animal welfare services
- Coordinate programs for declared pests and nuisance animals
- Manage Travelling Stock Reserves
- Help to plan, deliver training and other activities to help communities prevent, prepare, respond to and recovery from emergencies

## 8. How will Landcare be involved in Local Land Services?

Landcare will remain an integral part of delivering services to rural and urban residents. Each Local Land Services will be required to develop and manage a strong relationship with its local Landcare groups, through its Local Community Advisory Group or groups.

## 9. How will people be serviced before January 2014?

Business services will continue as usual during the transition period.

The existing 14 LHPAs will remain in place until Local Land Services is operational in January 2014.

The 13 CMAs have been reduced to 11 and some DPI extension services have been moved across into the CMAs as part of the transition to the new organisation.

## 10. Where will the Local Land Services offices be located?

Current LHPA, CMA and DPI offices in 139 towns across NSW will initially be used to ensure that Local Land Services will function effectively on 1 January 2014.

Local Boards will be responsible for determining future office and employee locations, however for the first two years of operation, the Minister has requested a stay on office locations to enable the business time to establish.

## 11. What are the final boundaries based on?

The Reference Panel based the majority of boundary decisions on three principles:

- Use of Local Government boundaries where possible.
- Landform and landuse
- Community of interest

Amendments to the map were made based on feedback from the 22 consultation workshops, industry groups, councils and other stakeholders and 2000 online submissions to the Have Your Say website.

## 12. What happens to LHPA resources and assets?

Critical frontline services provided by the LHPA will be retained in Local Land Services when it becomes operational in January 2014.

Resources and assets of LHPAs will be transferred to Local Land Services.

'Back-office' support ie administrative functions including IT and payroll, will be provided by the Department of Trade and Investment.

## Appointments + recruitment

### 13. How will the Local Land Services Board members and Chairs be appointed?

Local Land Services will be governed by skills-based locally elected and Government-appointed Board members.

An interim Chair and Board members will be appointed by the Government in July and September 2013 to ensure that Local Land Services will function effectively on 1 January 2014.

A series of advertisements will run in June 2013 for these positions. An application process will be used based on the defined skills based criteria which include leadership skills, demonstrated experience in any of the four core functions of Local Land Services (agricultural advice; natural resource management; plant & animal biosecurity; emergency management) and corporate governance training.

Elections will be held in the first quarter of 2014 for elected board members to establish the full complement of members to each board.

Each Chair of the Local Land Services will be appointed to the statewide Board of Chairs, which will have an independent, Government appointed Chair.

#### **14. How will the boards be composed?**

In each Local Land Services there will be four Government appointed Board members, and three elected Board members, except in the Western Local Land Services where there will be a five:four ratio to account for the size of the region.

#### **15. How will Local Land services retain appropriately skilled staff?**

Local Land Services brings together committed staff from DPI, CMAs and LHPAs, who have extensive experience and networks in their areas of expertise.

Local Land Services will be responsible for appointing and retaining staff, including General Managers, according to local requirements and locally developed job descriptions.

### **Strategic Planning and Accountability**

#### **16. How will it be ensured that Local Land Services delivers its roles and functions?**

Each Local Land Services will be responsible and accountable to its ratepayers and community in the first instance.

Local Community Advisory Groups will be established to feed into decision making processes, strategic plans will be developed and boards will report annually to their regions

Also, the financial, performance records and Action Plans will be monitored and regularly audited by an independent body, such as the Natural Resources Commission and the NSW Audit Office.

#### **17. What happens to the CMA's Catchment Action Plans?**

Seven out of 11 CAPs have recently been updated and approved. The remaining four are in that process. The CAPs have a critical planning role.

The CAPS will form the basis of broader Local Land Services Action Plans that account for the four pillars of LLS responsibilities, and have a triple bottom line focus. These Plans will be the responsibility of the Local Board to develop once the full Board is appointed.

### **Other questions:**

#### **18. Will travelling stock reserves be affected?**

A broader review of NSW Crown Lands is currently being conducted with the findings due to be presented to the Government within the next few months. The issue of travelling stock reserves is being considered as a part of this review. In the meantime they will continue to be managed by the LHPAs.

#### **19. How will weeds be managed?**

General weed management will stay with local councils, however, there will be increased cooperation between local councils and the new Local Land Services.

This may be reviewed in the future.

The NSW Government has committed \$10.8 million to address problem weeds across the state.

#### **20. What is the role of the reference panel moving forward?**

The Reference has done the bulk of its work in setting up the framework for Local Land Services.

It will now meet on an as needs basis to discuss any outstanding issues.

The Reference Panel will hand over to the new Board of Chairs and Interim Boards who will begin to make the decisions for the next steps of developing Local Land Services.

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