

Your rates at work

Local Land Services works with land managers and the community to improve primary production and better manage our natural resources across NSW.

We also work with rural and regional people and partner organisations to support profitable and sustainable regional communities.

We have around 800 staff across 11 local regions, providing frontline services to support our communities, primary industries and landscape.

Your rates fund the wide range of biosecurity services provided to landholders and communities in your region.

This newsletter provides an overview of what your rates and other funding sources deliver.



Floods, pests, disease ... all in a year's work

The flooding of large parts of the Murray region last spring prompted the activation of our emergency management function, which sits alongside biosecurity and animal health as a key area funded by rates.

As per our responsibilities, Murray Local Land Services plays a supporting role to the State Emergency Service in flood emergencies, and works with NSW Department of Primary Industries to coordinate the local response to animal welfare issues such as stranded or at-risk livestock.

With heavy, ongoing rain forecast for our river catchments we pre-emptively initiated a local control centre during September and October. Through this we:

- **directly contacted 651 landholders** to pre-warn them of the flood risk
- liaised with **185 landholders** on specific livestock risks
- conducted **17 aerial surveillance flights**
- organised **two fodder drops** to stranded livestock
- regularly **updated landholders** and the community on developments.

Since the event, we conducted two flood recovery meetings for landholders, and played a key role in publishing and distributing recovery advice booklets across the region.

More 'business-as-usual', but no less important, are our biosecurity and animal health functions.

During 2016, as in every other year, our veterinarians and biosecurity staff worked to minimise the impact of pests and diseases on the farming sector.

We targeted wild dogs, feral pigs, foxes and rabbits with baiting and trapping programs; inspected and audited stock sales at regional saleyards; and helped livestock owners with



Senior Biosecurity Officer Neale Whitsed with Jindera farmer Jonathan Scholz. Photo by Vera Hong.

footrot eradication programs, sudden death investigations and emergency animal disease exclusions. All of this was done to improve primary production within healthy landscapes.

We also undertook on-ground surveillance, sampling and advisory services to producers to help the state deal with reports of Russian wheat aphid and anthracnose in lupins.

Initiatives funded through external grant programs included a joint feral pig program with Western and Riverina Local Land Services regions, continuation of wild dog radio collar tracking with Riverina, and an electric exclusion fencing project with landholders in our wild dog management groups.

Biosecurity: It matters!

Good farm biosecurity can have a huge positive effect on profitability, but the term 'biosecurity' is not always well understood. Put simply, it means measures that prevent, control or eradicate pests and diseases. From vaccinating weaners on-farm to national quarantine and border inspections, biosecurity matters.

There are mandatory measures in place to protect herds and flocks and maintain our markets. These include the ban on feeding swill to pigs and prohibited feeds to ruminants; having a Property Identification Code on any stocked land; and reporting suspected notifiable diseases.

Biosecurity is a shared responsibility, and everybody involved has a role to play.

There are many tools to help you manage your biosecurity risks. A National Vendor Declaration or Travelling Stock Statement is required whenever sheep, cattle or goats move between properties.

National Sheep Health Statements and National Cattle Health Declarations are statutory declarations that are voluntary in most situations.

All of these documents contain important information that can be used to assess biosecurity risks when purchasing stock. More information, including instructions for completing a farm biosecurity plan, can be found at www.farmbiosecurity.com or your Local Land Services office.

There are five important diseases that sheep producers need to be aware of. These are lice, Johne's disease, drench-resistant worms, ovine brucellosis and footrot.

To manage these risks, treat newly introduced sheep on arrival with a drench containing at least four active ingredients. Where possible, keep the new animals separate for a spring and a shearing to ensure they do not carry lice or footrot.



Senior Biosecurity Officer Sally Osborne is focused on preventing disease in flocks and herds in the Deniliquin area.

Only purchase rams from brucellosis-accredited flocks, and make sure your boundary fences will keep stray sheep out.

Also, know your Johne's disease status. For producers in some areas it will be important to source low-risk sheep from Regional Biosecurity Area or Market Assurance Program flocks, while other producers should only buy vaccinated sheep.

Management of Johne's disease in cattle has recently undergone some significant changes. Government regulation has been replaced with industry self-management. While this will not affect most farmers, it is worth finding out what the changes will mean for your farm from the Animal Health Australia website (www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au).

Rabbit virus release

A new strain of the rabbit haemorrhagic disease virus (RHDV1) was released in March to help manage the rabbit population across Australia.

This new strain, known as RHDV1 K5, is not a new virus—it is a Korean strain of the existing RHDV1 virus already widespread in Australia. The new strain should work better in the cool-wet regions of Australia where the current strain has not been as successful.

RHDV1 K5, like other RHDV1 variants will not affect any other species except the European rabbit. While it will assist in reducing rabbit population numbers, it is not the silver bullet for rabbit eradication in Australia and an integrated approach is still required.

A vaccine to protect domestic rabbits against RHDV1 is available. For vaccination advice contact your private vet.



Develop your farm business skills: support available

Farmers in NSW can access financial support to complete pre-approved farm business skills courses, or apply to attend a course to develop skills in:

- risk management
- financial and business management
- farm business planning/drought preparedness.

The Farm Business Skills Professional Development Program is part of the NSW Government's \$300 million Drought Strategy to support farm businesses.

Approved participants can claim reimbursement of course costs upon completion, up to a maximum of \$5,000 over five years for any farmer.

Total reimbursements for each farm business are capped at \$9,000.

To see the pre-approved courses and for more information on how to apply, visit www.droughthub.nsw.gov.au and click on 'Skills and training'.

What does your local biosecurity officer do?

Rabbits, dogs, locusts, pigs and foxes ... for Murray Local Land Services biosecurity officer Stephen Wilson, each new week is an exercise in helping landholders reduce the impact of these pests on the landscape.

On any given day, Stephen will carry out a range of tasks that lead to the control of any of these invasive species, from inspecting properties for evidence of pest infestations, to working with partner agencies such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Forestry Corporation of NSW in organising wild dog control in the forested hills of the upper Murray.

Dog trapping also requires a close working relationship with pest animal controllers, who set up the traps at agreed locations.

Rabbits are a constant problem for landholders, and for Stephen a baiting program will involve preparing bait material for landholders to use.

The initial stage is called 'free feeding', where unpoisoned food is distributed in the affected area to establish a feeding habit and determine population size. This is followed by the use of poisoned bait.

A similar approach is used to trap wild pigs, where grain can be used to encourage pigs to feed in a certain area.

After a time, Stephen sets up the pig trap – essentially a large wire cage – and places the grain inside it to attract and trap the animal.

Stephen spends a lot of time travelling to locations throughout his area, as well as speaking on the phone with landholders wanting advice on controlling pests on their land.



Biosecurity Officer Stephen Wilson is kept busy controlling pest animals throughout the upper Murray area.

He also regularly issues 1080 fox baits to landholders as part of our spring and autumn baiting programs.

As you can see, Stephen is kept busy with his duties as a biosecurity officer at Murray Local Land Services.

He is one of a team of staff that works to reduce the number of pest animals in the landscape and contribute to the health and profitability of farms across the region.

What rates and other funds provide

Rates are used by Local Land Services to pay for **biosecurity and emergency services** to landholders.

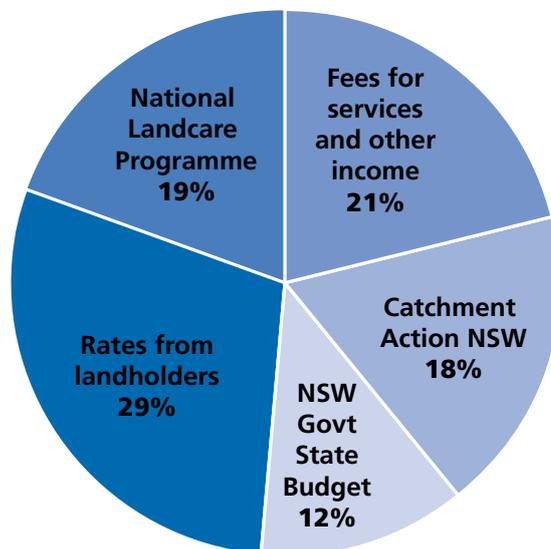
This includes:

- activities relating to the **control of declared pest animals and insects**
- the provision of **animal health and welfare services**
- support for stock identification systems
- emergency management assistance for drought and other natural disaster relief such as bushfires and floods.

Biosecurity services provide insurance against pests and disease, and help maintain vital market access for producers. Examples of biosecurity and emergency response projects in the past year include supporting the response and recovery efforts for widespread flooding and statewide wild dog management programs.

As well as rates, Local Land Services receives funding from the NSW Government through Catchment Action NSW, which provides on-ground programs to support **biodiversity, native vegetation, threatened species** and **Aboriginal cultural heritage** initiatives.

The Australian Government also contributes funding through the National Landcare Programme, which helps drive **sustainable agriculture**. This funding also supports the protection, conservation and rehabilitation of Australia's **natural environment**.



Budgeted funding structure of Local Land Services 2016-17

Understanding your annual rates notice

Notional carrying capacity

The notional carrying capacity of your property is calculated by Local Land Services in your region. It is based on the number of stock your property would normally carry in an average year if the property was used solely for livestock purposes.

As reference, a 40 kg sheep of any breed represents one stock unit and a 400 kg steer of any breed represents 10 stock units.

It is applied to the below base charge and four rate types to work out your rates.

Base charge

This base charge is applied to each of the four rate types levied on a property.

General rate

This rate is calculated using the notional carrying capacity of your property.

Animal health rate

This rate is calculated using the notional carrying capacity of your property.

It is payable if your annual land and stock return showed at least 50 units of stock on your property.

This charge also applies if you did not lodge a 2016 land and stock return by the due date.

Meat industry levy

This levy is collected on behalf of the NSW Food Authority. It is calculated using national carrying capacity and is not retained by Local Land Services.

Pest insect special purpose levy

This levy is collected for the NSW Department of Primary Industries to cover the cost of plague locust control campaigns. It is not retained by Local Land Services.

LOCAL LAND SERVICES ACT 2013 - Part 5

2017 RATE NOTICE
TAX INVOICE

 Local Land Services
ABN 57 876 455 969

Region:

Name
Address
Town NSW 2840

Invoice No:123456
Customer Reference No:123456789
Date of Issue:00/00/0000 Payment
Due Date:00/00/0000

Occupier ID and Name:12345678 / L Andholder
Holding Name:
Holding Address:Station Station
Address NSW 2840

Associated Holdings: Property 1, Property 2, Property 3

Area of Land (hectares): 103084.1000 X Stock Units/hectare: 0.2015 = Notional Carrying Capacity: 20771.44615000

Item Description	Qty	Unit Price	GST	Amount (excl GST)
RATES-GENERAL (BASE CHARGE \$45.00 +) 20775.55 Units 9.619000 Cents per Unit	1 EA	\$000.00	\$0.00	\$0000.00
RATES-ANIMAL HEALTH (BASE CHARGE \$30.00 +) 20775.55 Units 4.406400 Cents per Unit	1 EA	\$00.00	\$0.00	\$00.0
LEVY-MEAT INDUSTRY (BASE CHARGE \$5.00 +) 20775.55 Units 0.600000 Cents per Unit	1 EA	\$000.00	\$0.00	\$00.00
SPECIAL PURPOSE RATE - PEST INSECT (BASE CHARGE \$16.70 +) 20775.55 Units 3.825200 Cents per Unit	1 EA	\$000.00	\$0.00	\$00.00

All rates and charges are exempt from GST under Division 81 of the Goods and Services Tax Act 1999 unless indicated otherwise.

The carrying capacity of this holding is calculated as the rateable area multiplied by the stock units per hectare which equals the notional carrying capacity. Where holdings are associated for rating, these figures are the cumulative total of all associated holdings.
The Meat Industry Levy is a statutory levy collected on behalf of the NSW Food Authority.
The Pest Insect Special Purpose Rate is collected for DPI NSW to cover cost of plague locust control campaigns.
An interest rate of 11.31% will be charged on overdue rates.

SUBTOTAL	\$0000.00
GST TOTAL	\$0.00
CREDIT BALANCE	
ARREARS	\$0.00
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE	\$0000.00

SAMPLE ONLY

Note: The amounts shown here are indicative only. Actual amounts will vary, depending on where you live.

Preferred payment methods

Our preferred payment methods are:

- online at www.lls.nsw.gov.au
- using BPay by phone or internet
- by phone using credit card on 1300 738 070.

A 0.4% surcharge applies to payments by Mastercard or Visa.

Changes to this year's rates

There have been some increases in base and variable rates charges as part of a continuing move towards a more consistent and standardised rating structure.

The 2017 increases also ensure that Local Land Services can continue to meet community expectations for managing pest animals and providing biosecurity, animal health and welfare and emergency management support.

Base General rate

Where the 2016 Base General rate was below \$60, the 2017 Base General rate has been increased to \$60.

Where the 2016 Base General rate was greater than \$60, the 2017 Base General rate will increase in line with CPI, consistent with previous rating periods.

Base Animal health rate

The base component of the animal health rate has increased from \$30 to \$35 across NSW.

Variable General and Animal Health rates

The variable component of the General and Animal Health rates will be increased by five per cent.

Stock ID fees

This fee supports stock identification systems and administration costs and has been standardised at \$70 across all regions. The stock ID fee is levied on holdings less than 10 ha where a landholder has a brand or earmark or former landholders who wish to retain their brand or earmark.

For more information about Local Land Services

Visit: www.lls.nsw.gov.au/Murray

Call: 1300 795 299

Email: admin.murray@lls.nsw.gov.au

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