

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 that are in keeping with local strategic plans.

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, as well as programs delivered in your region in the past year.



Biosecurity – new name for ongoing fight

By Scott Ison and Dan Salmon, District Veterinarians

Biosecurity is a new word trying to find its place in the world. It was once all about stopping the spread of infection, but it now means “*the prevention of damage due to living things*” and covers everything from working on the Hendra vaccine to poisoning rabbits.

So it is really a new name for what we’ve been doing for 150 years – dealing with living things that cause death and destruction to stock and land. We all have to be up to speed on how they behave, how they spread, how they reproduce, what will kill them, what will stop them from spreading and how to reduce the damage they cause.

But what do we actually do?

Surveillance

One key role is **surveillance for notifiable disease**, which is a requirement for interstate and global market access. It can be either passive, where we respond to notification of suspected disease, or active, where we visit farms to inspect stock, or undertake community engagement to improve disease awareness. Another example is the testing of brain samples from eligible sheep and cattle autopsies to confirm Australia’s freedom from mad cow disease. Farmers are paid an incentive for submitting samples.

Among the diseases we deal with is **footrot**. We monitor, diagnose and assist with on-farm eradication as part of the successful NSW Footrot Program, which has reduced infected sheep flocks to below one per cent.

We are also vigilant on **foot and mouth disease** to help ensure Australia remains free of this virus. Prohibited pig feed is the most likely avenue for foot and mouth to become established. We aim to identify every piggery in the region and audit for swill feeding every four years.



Murray Local Land Services vet Scott Ison (right) and local farmer Murc Schoen, take a blood sample from a ewe.

Animal health advice

We investigate for significant diseases on flocks and herds, often collaborating with private vets, and provide targeted written advice through newsletters and other media. We also support producer groups with technical advice and administration support.

Pest control

We coordinate control programs for foxes, rabbits, wild dogs and feral pigs, including baiting, biological control (calicivirus), burrow destruction, trapping and activity monitoring. We also trial and implement new pest animal management techniques.

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Bushlinks connects with eastern Murray landholders

A total of 160,000 native trees have been planted and almost 170 km of direct seeding undertaken in a major revegetation project in the eastern Murray region.

The Bushlinks project has revegetated and restored more than 900 ha of land across 174 sites under agreements with 82 landholders in the region.

Bushlinks is managed by the Holbrook Landcare Network on behalf of the Slopes2Summit and Great Eastern Ranges Initiative, with support from Murray Local Land Services.

The project is funded by the Australian Government's Biodiversity Fund until June 2017 and is now open for the final round of funding (see below).

Bushlinks provides incentives for eastern Murray farmers to revegetate their land for habitat connectivity and carbon sequestration, prioritising projects that connect existing vegetation patches.

What is Slopes2Summit?

Slopes2Summit is a partnership under the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative and is governed by a working group comprising Holbrook Landcare Network, Murray Local Land Services, the Nature Conservation Trust of NSW, Charles Sturt University, Australian National University, Parklands Albury-Wodonga, Albury Conservation Company, CSIRO and the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage.

The group has an interest in managing and protecting biodiversity in the eastern Murray region.

Emergency management – what is our role?

By Mark Corrigan, Team Leader Animal Biosecurity & Welfare

The corporate literature about Murray Local Land Services says that one of our key roles is emergency management.

But hang on. Don't the police, fire brigades and the State Emergency Service deal with emergencies? What role would a relatively small government agency, employing vets, biosecurity officers, agronomists and scientists, play?

There are actually two distinct roles in emergency management for Local Land Services, depending on whether it is a natural disaster or an animal disease.

For natural disasters: Murray Local Land Services, together with NSW Department of Primary Industries, acts as the Agriculture and Animal Services Functional Area for all natural disaster emergencies (e.g. plague locust outbreaks, floods and bushfires).

For example, if a large bushfire affected landholders in our region, we would do the following:

- Set up a control centre and incident management team in proportion to the size of the bushfire.
- Undertake operations such as:
 - obtaining mapping of the fire to identify impacted landholders
 - assessing and reporting agricultural damage, with this information to be used in developing recovery plans and to inform consideration of a natural disaster declaration
 - deploying field teams to properties to help landholders assess stock for possible destruction and disposal on welfare grounds



A revegetation site connecting landscapes at Gerogery.

Next Bushlinks round open

Bushlinks is now open for the final round of funding before the project finishes in June 2017. For the funding levels and more detailed project guidelines, go to www.holbrooklandcare.org.au/revegetation.

If you have a potential project, contact Holbrook Landcare Network on 02 6036 3181. The Murray Local Land Services contact is Julia McCourt on 02 6051 2213.

Applications close Friday 18 March.

- contacting impacted landholders to ascertain urgent needs
- assisting in the coordination of fodder to impacted farmers
- supporting companion and large animal welfare at evacuation facilities
- assessing wildlife affected by fire.
- Develop a recovery plan in consultation with affected landholders, NSW DPI rural resilience officers and the local recovery committee. Activities for recovery will depend on the needs of landholders.

For emergency animal and plant disease outbreaks:

Murray Local Land Services provides support to NSW DPI as a combat agency to animal, plant and aquatic disease and pest emergencies.

Depending on the emergency's scale, our staff will participate on the frontline, from investigating information about a possible outbreak to establishing and staffing a control centre and forward command post close to the incident site. NSW DPI becomes the lead agency as the incident escalates, with Local Land Services providing on-ground support and recovery assistance as needed.

Stay up-to-date with all our news, notices and advice with our e-newsletters. Send us an email with the subject "Subscribe" and your name to admin.murray@lls.nsw.gov.au. We will also add your email to our primary contact database.

Small grants inspire big ideas

The Murray Community Small Grants program continues to inspire valuable projects across the Murray region.

Funded by the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme, the 2014-15 round of grants has just finished, with 17 groups delivering 30 natural resource management, sustainable agriculture and capacity-building projects throughout the area.

One highlight was the Greenseeker project, run by Riverine Plains Inc., which aims to support farmers to increase their long-term returns by improving the efficiency of nitrogen application in cropping systems.

The project saw the purchase of two Greenseeker units, which estimate the potential for nitrogen addition by measuring the 'greenness' of the crop canopy. The units were successfully demonstrated at a nitrogen field day in September 2015. Riverine Plains Inc. plans to use the units for assessing research trials and for lending out to its members.

Meanwhile, the recipients of the 2015-16 round of Murray Community Small Grants were announced recently by



The Greenseekers were demonstrated at a nitrogen field day.

Member for Farrer, Sussan Ley, on behalf of the Australian Government.

In all, 21 local groups share over \$300,000 in funding for 34 projects across the region, which need to be completed by 30 June 2016.

The projects will deliver benefits including re-vegetation, sustainable agriculture practices, community development, school education and Connecting to Country programs.

Biosecurity

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Some of our other roles include:

- National Livestock Identification System audits and disease and welfare surveillance at saleyards.
- Emergency management.
- Help with administration and auditing of the ovine Johne's disease biosecurity area and ovine brucellosis eradication groups.

- Certification of animal disease and residue status for properties prior to sale and animals consigned to export and interstate movements.

Because we are out checking livestock, certifying stock for export and acting on any signs of disease, it is easier to convince consumers that our livestock products are safe and won't make them sick. Our trading partners need confidence that our livestock is disease-

free and safe to eat and that our biosecurity protocols are stringent so they can be assured that if we say we don't have nasty diseases, we really don't have them.

If you notice unusual disease symptoms, abnormal behaviour or unexpected death in your stock, contact your local Murray Local Land Services vet or biosecurity officer immediately.

What rates and other funds provide

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

This includes:

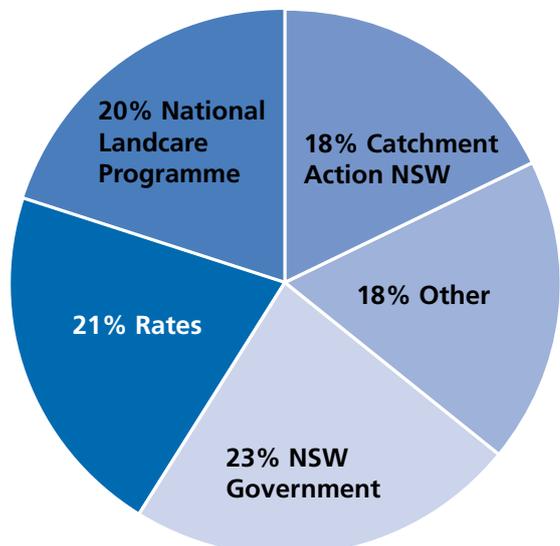
- activities relating to the **control of declared pest animals and insects**
- the provision of **animal health and welfare services**
- support for stock identification systems
- emergency management assistance for drought and other natural disaster relief such as bushfires and floods.

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 outbreaks of fire ants, supporting the recovery effort after the Hunter floods, as well as 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**, as well as supporting the protection, conservation and rehabilitation of Australia's **natural environment**.

Funding structure of Local Land Services 2015-16



Understanding your annual rates notice

General rate

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

Base charge

This charge is payable for each rate type levied on each property. It is similar to flag fall in a taxi.

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 2015 land and stock return by the due date.

Meat industry levy

This levy is collected on behalf of the NSW Food Authority 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.

*Notional carrying capacity

The notional carrying capacity of your property is calculated by Local Land Services in your local 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. This figure is based on stock units per hectare.

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

LOCAL LAND SERVICES ACT 2013 - Part 5

2016 RATE NOTICE TAX INVOICE



Local Land Services
ABN 57 876 455 969

J CITIZEN
PO BOX XXXX
RICHMOND NSW 2753

Occupier ID and Name: XXXXXX
Holding Name: J Citizen
Holding Address: Guns Gully

Region: Greater Sydney

Invoice No: XXXXXX
Customer Reference No: XXXXX
Date of Issue: XXXXX
Payment Due Date: 31/03/2016

SAMPLE ONLY

Area of Land (hectares): 13.1900

Stock Units/hectare: 5.0000

Item Description	Qty	Unit Price	GST	Amount (excl GST)
RATES-GENERAL (BASE CHARGE \$67.97 *) 65.95 Units 8.987800 Cents per Unit	1 EA	\$73.90	\$0.00	\$73.90
RATES-ANIMAL HEALTH (BASE CHARGE \$30.00 *) 65.95 Units 7.319400 Cents per Unit	1 EA	\$34.83	\$0.00	\$34.83
LEVY-MEAT INDUSTRY (BASE CHARGE \$5.00 *) 65.95 Units 0.600000 Cents per Unit	1 EA	\$5.40	\$0.00	\$5.40
SPECIAL PURPOSE RATE - PEST INSECT (BASE CHARGE \$16.70 *) 65.95 Units 1.912700 Cents per Unit	1 EA	\$17.96	\$0.00	\$17.96

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 11.46% will be charged on overdue rates

SUBTOTAL	\$132.09
GST TOTAL	\$0.00
CREDIT BALANCE	
ARREARS	\$0.00
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE	\$132.09

Preferred payment methods

1. online at www.lls.nsw.gov.au
 2. using BPay by phone or internet
 3. 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 rates as part of a move towards a more consistent and standardised rate base that treats all ratepayers equally.

The 2016 increases also ensure that Local Land Services can meet community expectations for managing pest animals and providing biosecurity, animal health and welfare and emergency management support.

General rate

Some regions had more than one base charge under the general rate. This has been standardised across NSW.

Animal health rate

The base component of the animal health rate has been standardised to \$30 across NSW.

General and animal health cents per unit

This charge increased by approximately three per cent to meet rising costs.

Stock ID fees

This fee supports stock identification systems. It is the same as the base charge of the general rate for each local region, with GST applied.

Murray Local Land Services
315 Victoria Rd, Deniliquin
394 Hay Rd, Deniliquin
931 Garland Ave, Albury
03 5880 1400 | 03 5881 1055 | 02 6051 2200
admin.murray@lls.nsw.gov.au
www.murray.lls.nsw.gov.au

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