



**Local Land Services  
Update for Local Government  
21 January 2013**

**What are Local Land Services?**

Local Land Services (LLS) are the new regional service delivery organisations that will replace Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs), Livestock Health & Pest Authorities (LHPAs) and incorporate agricultural advisory services currently provided by Agriculture NSW (DPI).

LLS will be regionally-based, statutory organisations, governed by locally elected and skills-based boards, delivering services for landholders and local communities. They will begin operations in January 2014.

**Reference Panel**

To guide the development of the new organisations a Reference Panel of major stakeholders has been established. Local Government is represented by Cr Ray Donald, President of the Shires Association of NSW.

**Boundaries**

The Reference Panel has released a map of draft boundaries for the new LLS regions. The proposed regions are based on common landforms, land-uses, and communities of interest (social and economic interaction). The Associations have strongly advocated for the alignment of LLS boundaries with Local Government boundaries.

The Panel continues to seek feedback from stakeholders on the proposed boundaries. If councils are concerned with their proposed region, they should advise the LGSA. The final map will not be finalised until after the upcoming LLS consultation roadshows.

**Governance**

The governance framework for the new organisations has been the focus of significant debate within the Reference Panel. The Panel has just released a Discussion Paper on the proposed governance framework, and is seeking feedback from stakeholders. The major issues are:

- The primary roles of LLS Boards are to ensure good governance and strategic leadership; establish open and transparent decision making processes; develop regional strategic plans that reflect community needs; establish community consultation committees; and ensure General Managers meet performance expectations for the day-to-day operations.
- LLS Boards will consist of both elected and ministerially appointed members, however feedback on the exact make-up of Boards is still being sought. The current proposals include four appointed members and either three or four elected members. **LGSA SUPPORT A 4:4 SPLIT**
- All board members (both elected and appointed) to reflect a matrix of required skills and experience (similar to existing CMA and LHPA models). **ACCEPTABLE TO LGSA**
- LLS Boards will nominate / elect their own Chair (for ratification by the Minister). **SUPPORTED BY LGSA**
- At least one of the Ministerial appointees will have significant senior experience in local government (for example, Councillor or General Manager). **SUPPORTED BY LGSA**
- It is proposed that the LGSA assist in appointing this Local Government representative through the commonly used process of seeking nominations from each region, collating and screening nominees, and providing a short-list to the Minister for appointment.
- The Chair of each LLS Board will also sit on a Council of Chairs to co-ordinate policy, procedure and activities at a state level, and provide advice to the Minister. The Minister will appoint a Chair of Chairs.

## Function

The Associations believe that one of the highest priorities during this LLS development phase is to determine the functions of the new organisations. The roles, responsibilities, functions, operations and activities of the new organisations are the foundation elements in the whole establishment of the new framework. The government's original announcement stated that the new organisations would deliver the services and functions currently provided by CMAs, LHPAs and DPI extension. However, beyond that there has been very little detail.

The Associations have advocated that councils are not only concerned about the well-being of their local communities (ie what range of services they have access to), but they are also very interested in the potential interaction between the services proposed to be provided by LLS and the services already provided by councils.

In response to local community expectations, many councils across the state are moving beyond environmental management defined simply by regulatory necessity, and into more strategic and innovative activities in both planning and implementation. Councils are striving for (and delivering) best-practice action in areas as diverse as environmental assessment, strategic land use planning, coastal and estuary management, river restoration, water sensitive urban design, bushfire planning and land rehabilitation. Many of these activities have the potential to align or even overlap with functions or services proposed to be delivered by LLS. It is vital that consultation with Local Government regarding LLS must go beyond the easily identified issues of rates and weeds. This engagement must be undertaken so that a full understanding and appreciation of how Local Government can contribute to the new LLS model can be developed.

While the Associations support any moves to improve services to farmers and other agricultural landholders, it is also interested in what services will be provided to non-farming sections of the community. Urban and coastal communities (including bushcare and coastcare volunteers), schools and even industry, have all become active participants in the protection and conservation of our landscape across NSW. The new LLS framework must recognise these stakeholders and include provision to supply them with the services they require.

## Rating

The Associations have paid particular attention to all discussions relating to revenue generation, especially rating. The initial LLS announcement stated that *"Local Land Services will be funded via direct budget contributions from the NSW Government, ratepayer funds and a continuation of NRM grant funding via the State and Commonwealth Governments"*. However, so far there has been no official announcement by the NSW Government as to the level of direct budget funding allocated to LLS, and the rating framework is still uncertain.

The Associations have strongly advocated that any expansion of existing rating systems (LHPAs) must not impact on Local Government rates. We have also stated clearly that councils are not tax collectors for the state government and are not in a position to collect any rates on behalf of LLS.

The Associations have also raised the issue of Councils rates being subject to IPART determination. We have argued that many stakeholders (especially councils) would expect that LLS rates also be subject to IPART determination.

The Reference Panel recognises that some of the present arrangements for LHPA rates are inequitable and will be making preliminary recommendations to the Minister for a transitional rating framework for the first 2 years (2014 & 2015) based on small-scale changes to the current LHPA rating system. IPART will also be commissioned to do a broader review of rates in 2013 and will conduct independent consultation as a part of that review.

## Council Feedback

All Councils across the state are strongly encouraged to engage in this process, especially by attending the upcoming consultation workshops. The Associations are actively seeking the views of member councils on the issues. We have received feedback from a broad range of councils across the state and this greatly assisting our work with the Reference Panel. Councils can send their feedback to the to LGSA (send to [geoff.hudson@lgsa.org.au](mailto:geoff.hudson@lgsa.org.au)) or provide feedback to the Reference Panel via the [Have Your Say website](#)

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## Stakeholder Reference Panel

Local Land Services Reference Panel's proposed Local Land Services' boundaries

Local government area



### Map of proposed Local Land Services regional boundaries

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Stakeholder Reference Panel Chairman John Keniry



Mick Keogh, Australian Farm Institute



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Fiona Simson, NSW Farmers



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Richard Sheldrake, DG Department of Primary Industries



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Ian Donges, Livestock Health and Pest Authority



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Chris Andrew, Greening Australia



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Rob Dulhunty, Landcare NSW



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Tom Gavel, CMA Chairs Council



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Ray Donald, NSW Shires Association



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Map of proposed Local Land Services regional boundaries

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