

ANNUAL REPORT

2016/2017

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HAWKESBURY RIVER COUNTY COUNCIL AT A GLANCE

Origin

Hawkesbury River County Council is a single-purpose authority for the control of declared priority weeds and came into existence in 1948 (Government Gazette of 24/9/1948)

Our Team

We are governed by a Board of 8 Council Members representing our 4 Member Councils. Our General Manager oversees a team of 17 staff in the areas of Operation, Project Management and Administration.

Our Area of Operations

We are the Local Weed Control Authority for the Councils of Blacktown City Council, Hawkesbury City Council, Penrith City Council and The Hills Shire Council Which constitutes a combined County area of 3,823 square kilometres

Funding & Revenue

Funds are provided by equal levies upon the four constituent councils. The State Government provides additional grants in which Council must achieve specific outcomes. Charges are made for services and work performed for private land holders.

Location

Council's Office and Works Depot is located at 6 Walker Street (Corner Dowling Place), South Windsor, NSW, 2756.

Postal Address: P.O Box 6021, South Windsor Delivery Centre, NSW 2756

Phone: (02) 4587 0230

Facsimile: (02) 4587 7354

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Website: www.hrcc.nsw.gov.au



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It has been a privilege to lead the County Council for the past 12 months, and play a role in its continued growth and vitality.

Over the last year, under the operational leadership of the General Manager, Mr. Chris Dewhurst, and Operations Manager Mr. Chris Stanfield, all of our organisation's vision has been met. With the support of the Board, we have remained focussed on providing tangible outcomes in relation to weed control and coordination throughout the local government areas of Blacktown, Hawkesbury, Penrith and The Hills Shire.

In summary, the County Council has controlled 535HA of weeds across our four local government areas. This alleviates a huge operational burden from our member Councils. By utilising economies of scale and specialisation of human resources, HRCC can provide this single service much more efficiently than four Councils could do individually.

Additional to the direct control results, HRCC undertook 3,370 private property inspections. The County staff have developed a unique approach to their inspection process, which is defined more by education and extension than regulation. All residents are offered the chance to meet personally with an inspector and have any issues explained to them in plain terms, prior to any regulatory processes coming into effect. This has led us to achieve a voluntary compliance rate of 98.7% with our initial inspections. This is a tremendous result for our organisation's ability to develop effective relationships with our community whilst imparting the "weed aware" message.

Council also continued to consolidate its financial sustainability by finding new revenue opportunities and delivering efficient results. Operating expenditure increased this year to keep pace with a number of new projects, such as the Shaw's Island planting program. Our staff employment numbers increased accordingly to 19. We are still on a trend of financial sustainability which will allow the organisation to continue to deliver effective value for money service to the community.

The County Council continued its regional role as the Sydney Lead Agency for the NSW Weeds Action Program. We performed this role under contract from the NSW Department of Primary Industries. This year we completed the second year of the new five program, the Sydney region came in within 0.01% of budget targets and having completed all on-ground targets and reporting requirements over the five-year period.

In conclusion, this reporting period marks the last in which HRCC will be governed by the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993*. From 1 July 2017, the new *Biosecurity Act 2015* will be enacted. This will create many new challenges for the county council but also new opportunities. However, the core mission of HRCC to deliver valuable, on-ground and tangible results in weed management will continue as strong as ever. We are committed to ensuring that our services meet the modern needs of the community and the environment, and I am pleased to lead a team that is so wholeheartedly committed to this goal.



Clr. Alan Haselden
Chair, HRCC

REASON FOR THE ANNUAL REPORT

The annual report is one of the key points of accountability between a council and our community. It is not a report to the Division of Local Government or the NSW Government; it is a report to our community.

The report focuses on the council's implementation of the HRCC Delivery Program 2012-2016 and HRCC Operational Plan 2016-17. A separate HRCC Financial Statement 2016/17 is also included as an appendix to the Annual Report.

The report also includes some information that is prescribed by the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005. This information has been included in the Regulation because we believe that it is important for community members to know about it – to help their understanding of how the council has been performing both as a business entity and a community leader.

Below is the additional legislative basis for the development of our annual report.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1993

Following is a summary of the requirements of Section 404 of the Act:

- The council must prepare an annual report within five months of the end of the financial year.
- The report will outline the council's achievements in implementing its Delivery Program.
- The annual report in the year of the ordinary election will also include an outline of achievements in implementing the Community Strategic Plan.
- The annual report in the year of the ordinary election must include a report (State of the Environment Report) as to the state of the environment in the local government area in relation to the objectives for the environment established by the Community Strategic Plan.
- The report must contain the council's audited financial statements and notes and any information required by the Regulation or the Guidelines.
- A copy of the report must be posted on the council's website (www.hrcc.nsw.gov.au) and provided to the Minister.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (GENERAL) REGULATION 2005

Clause 217 of the Regulation requires the following information to be included in the annual report:

- Details of overseas visits by councilors and council staff
- Details of mayoral and councilor fees, expenses and facilities
- Contracts awarded by the council
- Amounts incurred in relation to legal proceedings
- Private works and financial assistance
- Details of external bodies, companies, and partnerships
- Details of the General Manager's total remuneration
- Details of the total expenditure on Senior Staff remuneration
- Information on stormwater levies and charges
- Information on companion animals management
- A statement of the activities undertaken by the council to implement its equal employment opportunity management plan.



VISION



MISSION



VALUES

VISION STATEMENT

An improved environment through an integrated approach to weed management and building community capacity.

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide effective integrated weed management systems to all Constituent Councils fairly and equitably in accordance with the *Biosecurity Act 2015 (NSW)*.

VALUES “OUR COMPASS”

Staff will act with honesty and integrity, and not tolerate a lack of it in others.

Management will communicate with staff with openness and respect.

Staff will communicate with openness and respect with each other, and with management.

We will deliver measurable results for our community and the environment.

We will build meaningful relationships within the community.

We will maintain relationships with our member councils that are effective and productive.

We will treat the safety of ourselves, others and the environment as the highest priority at all times.

BENEFITS OF A COUNTY COUNCIL FOR THE CONTROL OF WEEDS



Formed over a larger area boundary problems are avoided. This is critical to effective weeds management.

Concentration on a few rather than many functions leads to specialisation, more efficient and effective outcomes due to increasing focus.

Resource sharing is achieved as resources are used over a larger area of operations. The “critical mass” needed to properly do the job is more easily achieved.

An outbreak of new invasive weeds anywhere within the County Council’s area means that ALL the resources are brought to bear on the problem. This is exemplified by periodic outbreaks of Water Hyacinth on the Hawkesbury/Nepean River and in 2004, a major outbreak of Salvinia in the same area.

Management and operational plans are prepared for the County area. As such, the revenue is used to focus attention on required strategic outcomes.

THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S ACTIVITIES

As an organisation the County Council is constituted under the Local Government Act and is specified as a Local Control Authority under the Biosecurity Act. It is a special (single) purpose authority formed to administer, control and eradicate declared priority weeds. The County Council's role is summarised below:

Responsible for administering the *Biosecurity Act 2015 (NSW)*.

Control of priority weeds on land occupied by Constituent Councils.

To ensure, as far as practicable, occupiers of land carry out obligations to control priority weeds imposed under the Act.

To develop, implement, co-ordinate and review priority weed control policies and priority weed control programs.

Inspection of land within the local area in connection with its priority weed control functions.

To report, at the request of the Minister, on the carrying out of the Local Control Authority's functions under the Act.

To co-operate with Local Control Authorities of adjoining areas to control priority weeds, where appropriate.

Such other functions as may be conferred or imposed on the Local Control Authority by or under the Acts.

Supply priority weed control services to occupiers of land including public authorities and other persons and charge for the service.

Private property occupiers are responsible for notifying Council of the presence of certain notifiable priority weeds. Council can inspect private properties for priority weed infestations and the giving of directions to landowners and occupiers.



GUIDING STRATEGIES

Weed control is dynamic.

It is closely linked to climate, land use and ecology and must, therefore, be managed in order to respond as these attributes change.

There are, however, a range of guiding strategies that have been shown to be most effective across a range of conditions.

The HRCC 10 Year Business Activity Statement is closely aligned with these strategies as they have been outlined in the NSW Invasive Species Plan 2017-2027.

They are broad enough to allow an organisation to respond to climate and land use but still, conform to a solid set of management principals.

These strategic objectives also follow the guidance provided by the development of our member Council "Community Strategic Plans."

1.

Prevent the establishment of new weed species within our County.

2.

Eliminate the spread of new and existing weed species within our County.

3.

Reduce the impact of widespread weeds on key assets.

4.

Support the community, industry and government stakeholders to have the ability and long-term commitment to manage weeds.

A total of 535.5 hectares of weed control has been conducted by council's weed control teams this year.

Operational efficiencies from developing trainee weed officers has again helped council cover large tracts of land, treating noxious weed species.

Terrestrial Weed Control

Terrestrial weed species figured prominently in weed control operations. Class one weeds such as Boneseed have been a priority. This weed species has been recorded in each LGA of the county and staff have used both bush regeneration techniques and conventional herbicide application to destroy all Boneseed plants found. Overall plant numbers are declining in known infestations however, staff are detecting new infestations of this weed species in rural and urban landscapes.

Other terrestrial weed species that have been heavily targeted by weed control teams are; Green cestrum and Mother of millions. Both of these weed species have a negative impact upon livestock, and infestations of these weeds occur in livestock grazing areas within the county. A combination of management techniques is having a positive effect on these plants, and as a result extremely low levels of these weeds are now found in target areas. Locations such as Mulgoa and Regentville in the Penrith LGA still have persistent populations of both species, and council will be working to bring these locations into management as well.



Boneseed



Mother of Millions



Green Cestrum

Aquatic Weed Management

Aquatic weed populations in the county have been quite static over the past year. Aside from occasional outbreaks of Salvinia (class 3) and Water hyacinth (class 3) – on river and on private dams, weed species such as Senegal tea plant (class 1) are gradually retracting due to regular treatment works by council. Eradication of this species is still a long-term goal; however, progress is being made with reduction in overall infestation size. Alligator weed is being controlled annually, at strategic points along the Hawkesbury/Nepean River to reduce the threat of this species being unwittingly taken off site and transported to new locations via plant fragments.

The river had been experiencing a build-up of floating aquatic weed species – Salvinia (class 3) and Water hyacinth (class 3) during summer of 2017. A timely rise in the river flushed these weeds out of the river system before they had become an issue.

Harvesting of Egeria (class 4) has been conducted in the Nepean River at Penrith. The purpose of this harvesting work was to create lanes for rowing practice, as well as to assist in the construction of the new bridge, crossing the Nepean River.

At the time of reporting, aquatic weed populations were well managed. Planned control works during 2017 – 2018 aim to keep this level of management.

Private Property Inspection Program

3,367 property inspections were conducted by council's inspection team this year. The primary focus of the inspection program this year was to cover high risk sites such as new sub divisions where the threat of new weed incursion is present from; earthworks, soil movement, landscape works and heavy vehicle movements. Whilst inspecting yards and gardens, inspectors educated the community about weed incursions, toxic weeds and the threat of weed species moving from suburban gardens into neighbouring bushland. Inspection of high-risk sites and high-risk corridors has also taken place, with council's inspectors detecting new incursions of Boneseed (class 1) and Coolatai grass (class 3). Re-inspection and mentoring of property owners with council issue weed management plans has continued to check for compliance to weed control orders.

Public Education and Awareness Campaign

The public education and awareness campaign changed focus during 2016 – 2017. A number of larger community events were cancelled this year, including the Castle Hill show, which is no longer running due to construction at the Castle Hill showground site. Special interest clubs such as the NSW Bromeliad society, Hills garden club as well as the McDonald Valley landholders group were visited by council in lieu of these lost events. These days were highly successful with interest amongst attendees high - plant identification, weed management and practical weed control displays were carried out.

CONTROL OF WEEDS

Objective	Actions	Annual Target 16/17	Annual Result 16/17
C 1.1 Remove and destroy all Class 1 & Class 2 Noxious Weeds.	Inspect and treat Class 1 & Class 2 Noxious Weeds. Aquatic and terrestrial on public and private lands.	341 HA	397.6 Ha
C1.2 Fully and continuously suppress and destroy all Class 3 Noxious Weeds.	Using the latest weed control techniques and practices, treat with herbicides and other suitable integrated weed management systems.	47 HA	54.6 Ha
C1.3 Prevent the spread and reduce the numbers and distribution of Class 4 noxious weeds.	Using the latest weed control techniques and practices treat weeds with herbicides and other suitable integrated weed management systems.	70 HA	76.8 Ha
C1.4 Reduce the risk from Noxious Weeds which are poisonous to humans and animals on public lands.	Prioritise treatment of poisonous Noxious Weeds on public land.	39 HA	46.2 Ha
C1.5 Maintain the health of staff and public who may come into contact with herbicides during the noxious weed spraying program.	Staff to use herbicides in accordance with guidelines of Council, industry standards and specific guidelines on the label of each herbicide being used.	Yes/No	Yes
	Spraying operations to cease when there is a danger of the public becoming contaminated with herbicides by spray or volatile drift onto neighboring properties or contamination of produce likely to be consumed by the public, such as blackberry fruit.	Spraying cessation instances	39

INSPECTION OF PROPERTIES

Objective	Actions	Annual Target 16/17	Annual Result 16/17
I2.1 Inspect properties which have the most influence on exclusion of new weed incursions and/or protection of key landscape assets.	Systematically inspect various new areas bounded by specific landmarks, such as creek or road systems, each year. Report Noxious Weeds found, degree of infestation, location and area infested and input all data to the database system. Report action being carried out by land occupier and further action required by land occupier to Council.	2,265	3,295
I2.2 Prevent the sale and transport of Class 5 Noxious Weeds.	Inspect all nurseries and other outlets involved in the sale of weeds quarterly.	268	288
I2.3 Re-inspect all properties systematically where owners are, or should be undertaking noxious plant control programs.	Systematically re-inspect identified properties. Report action being carried out by land manager and further action required by land manager to Council.	168	266
I2.4 Advise, co-ordinate and implement noxious weed control programs.	Provide advice to land managers on a one-to-one basis. This advice will be provided during inspections and field days, or over the phone, by letter or by fact sheets.	168	193
I2.5 Undertake landscape surveillance to understand extent of weed control priorities.	Utilise a GIS system to spatial record extent of weed infestations.	105 HA	15 Ha

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Objective	Actions	Annual Target 16/17	Annual Result 16/17
A3.1 Develop awareness of noxious and potentially damaging weeds and promote good weed management practices using integrated weed management strategies and develop Weed Management Plans for weeds of regional importance through a Regional Committee.	Conduct field days, seminars and weed walks, speak at various farmer or community group meetings.	15	19
	Use various media such as newsprint, radio, television (video) and fact sheets to distribute information on Noxious Weeds.	2	2
	Promote appropriate vegetation management using integrated weed control and management techniques.	21	26
A3.2. Participate in regional advisory groups, campaigns and surveys being conducted by stakeholders with weed control interests.	Consult neighboring Councils and their Senior Staff.	5	9
	Attend meetings which directly or indirectly affect Council's noxious plant control program.	5	6
	Complete surveys or reports which support the endeavors of other bodies interested in weed control.	4	3

2016-2017 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

The public education and awareness campaign continues to have positive results in our community, building weed awareness and capacity.



Blacktown City Council		Penrith City Council	
28/1 Catch a Carp Day	♣ ♣ 32	23-24/7 Penrith Home Show	♣ ♣ 185
18-19/3 Blacktown Show	♣ ♣ 123	27-28/8 Penrith Show	♣ ♣ 151
22/4 Earth Day Nurragingy	♣ ♣ 54	18-19/2 Luddenham Show	♣ ♣ 164
Hawkesbury City Council		The Hills Shire Council	
30/7 Hawkesbury Nursery	♣ ♣ 126	30/7 Annangrove Enviro Centre	♣ ♣ 94
13/8 Ebenezer Arts & Crafts	♣ ♣ 81	17-18/9 Orange Blossom Festival	♣ ♣ 346
16/9 Wetlands Symposium	♣ ♣ 154	9/2 Bunnings Castle Hill	♣ ♣ 70
2/3 McLeod Park	♣ ♣ 143	8/4 Castle Hill Bromeliad Society	♣ ♣ 48
4/3 McDonald Valley Community Day	♣ ♣ 45		
6/4 Hawkesbury Garden Club	♣ ♣ 43		
29/4 Bowen Mountain Fair	♣ ♣ 32		
5-7/5 Hawkesbury Show	♣ ♣ 378		

HRCC engaged with 2269 people at the community events held during 2016/2017 in our four council areas.

OPERATIONAL TARGETS BY COUNCIL AREA

HRCC Operational Targets for 2016/17 by Council Area		
	Annual Target	Year to Date
Blacktown City Council		
Total Number of Properties Inspected:	730	658
Class 1 and 2 noxious weed control:	117 Ha	107 Ha
Total Weed Control:	39 Ha	56 Ha
Educational Events:	6	5
Hawkesbury City Council		
Total Number of Properties Inspected:	680	847
Class 1 and 2 noxious weed control:	117 Ha	118.4 Ha
Total Weed Control:	39 Ha	48.2 Ha
Educational Events:	5	6
Penrith City Council		
Total Number of Properties Inspected:	641	605
Class 1 and 2 noxious weed control:	117Ha	54.2 Ha
Total Weed Control:	39 Ha	43.1 Ha
Educational events:	5	5
The Hills Shire Council		
Total Number of Properties Inspected:	645	1,257
Class 1 and 2 noxious weed control:	117 Ha	118 Ha
Total Weed Control:	39 Ha	38.8 Ha
Educational Events:	6	4
Total Inspections	3,367	
Total Weed Control HA	535.5 Ha	
Total Education Events	18	

GOVERNANCE

Objective	Actions	Target 16/17	Annual Result 16/17
REPORTING			
G4.1 Provide ongoing information to Constituent Councils and the NSW Department of Primary Industries.	The General Manager or Operations Manager to provide feedback and reports on operations to each Constituent Council.	4	4
	Provide an annual Grant Return report to Council and in turn the Constituent Councils in summary form.	1	1
	The General Manager to provide regular updates on all major Council decisions and strategic planning processes.	6	6
STRATEGIC PLANNING			
G5.1 Achieve Management Planning Practices.	The General Manager and Operations Manager will review and monitor the Operational Plan and report to Council.	1	4
	The General Manager and Operations Manager prepare Annual Report in accordance with Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.	1	1
	The General Manager and Operations Manager will review Workforce Management Strategy and report to Council.	1	1
G5.2 Ensure level of Grant funding is maintained.	The General Manager and Operations Manager will complete applications and returns.	4	1
G5.3 Ensure Council Policies and Procedures are up to date and current.	The General Manager and Operations Manager to conduct annual policy and procedure reviews and submit to Council for adoption.	2	2
GOVERNANCE			
G6.1 Conduct Council Meetings.	Conduct 6 Council meetings per year in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993.	6	6

NSW WEEDS ACTION PROGRAM (WAP)

HRCC has been the Lead Organisation for the NSW Weeds Action Program 2015-2020 (WAP1520) - Greater Sydney regional sub-program since 2013. The WAP1520 is a NSW Government initiative to reduce the adverse impact of weeds on the environment, economy and community. It is an outcomes-based program where all funded activities contribute to the goals and objectives of the NSW Invasive Species Plan 2016-2023. Through the provision of an annual grant allocation to each region, the NSW Government supports agencies to collectively and strategically deliver activities to:

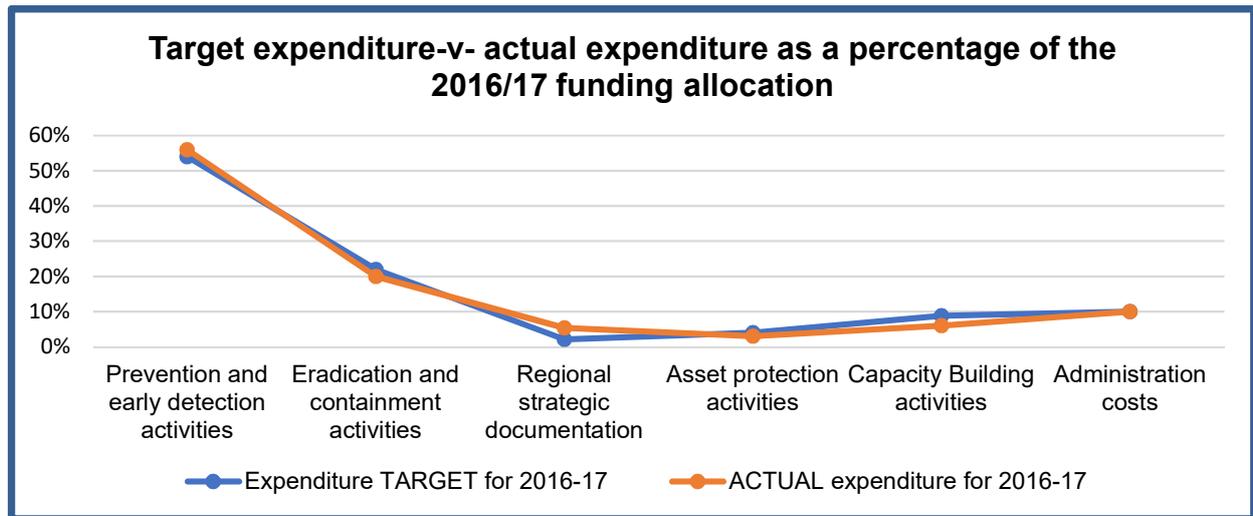
- prevent the establishment of new invasive weed species
- eliminate or contain the spread of new invasive weed species
- reduce the impact of widespread invasive weed species on valuable assets
- develop the ability of all stakeholders to manage invasive weed species effectively.

The Greater Sydney region received an allocation of \$955,182 in 2016-17. As Lead Organisation and signatory to the funding agreement with the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), HRCC was responsible for:

- receiving and distributing funding to 15 partnering local and state government agencies
- administering all budgets and processes including collation and submission of reports
- regular liaison with program partners and site monitoring to ensure program delivery
- ensuring all funds were used in accordance with the funding agreement with DPI.

Partners to the WAP1520 Greater Sydney sub-program spent more than \$2.7 million in 2016-17 identifying, minimising, responding to and managing weed risk across the region. This was comprised of \$925K in NSW Government grant funds and \$1.84m of in-kind contributions. The Greater Sydney subprogram met or exceeded most activity targets in 2016-17, with funds being spent as per the project plan that was submitted to DPI in 2015.

WAP TARGET VS ACTUAL EXPENDITURE



HRCC FACILITATED/COORDINATED WAP EVENTS



HRCC facilitated the delivery of the WAP1520-funded weed professional capacity building program, designed and tailored in direct response to needs identified by local council weed officers and inspectors. 59 staff representing 17 agencies participated in workshops that improved their skill in resolving conflicts, managing aggressive customers and facilitating community engagement in weed management.

HRCC COORDINATED WAP FUNDED REGIONAL EXTENSION EVENTS

Weed Management Demonstration Day

An event that showcased a variety of emerging and less often utilised tools and techniques used to detect, control and educate about weeds



A Valentine's Day week initiative

Where staff from ten agencies attended more than 100 florists across the region with the purpose of establishing and fostering professional and technical relationships with the industry.

A weed education initiative

Held at the Sydney Royal Easter Show comprised of floral competition entry inspections, an information stall, stage presentations and a Q&A session, resourced by representatives from eleven agencies.



NSW Weeds Action Program 2016-17

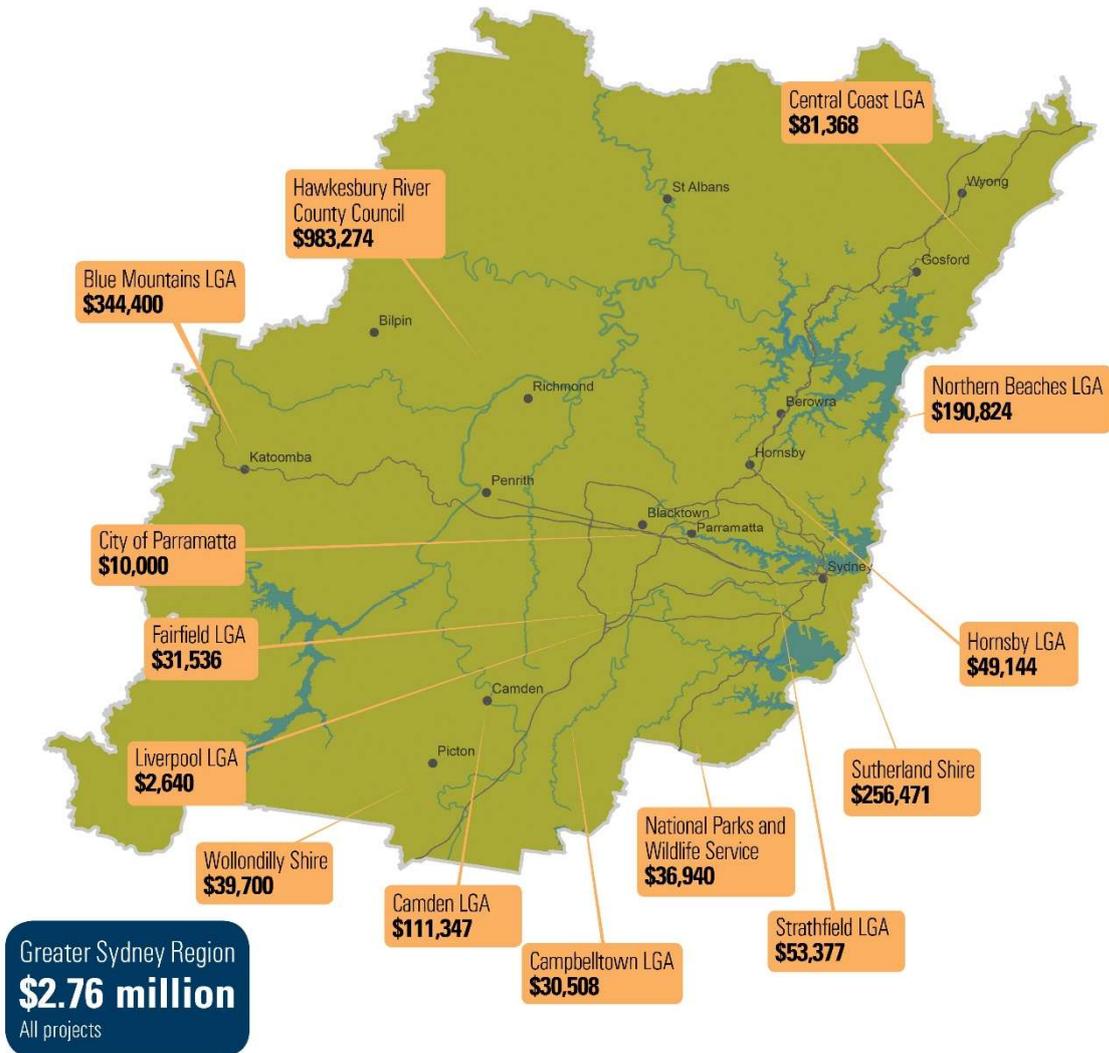
Greater Sydney sub-program activity and expenditure

NEW SOUTH WALES

WEEDS ACTION PROGRAM

ACROSS THE REGION

- Greater Sydney Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan developed
- 5 regional strategic documents reviewed and updated
- 237,442 educational brochures about weeds distributed
- 386 weed management staff and volunteers trained
- 14 new high risk weed incursions discovered and managed
- 372 private landholders mentored in weed management
- 13,827 private properties inspected
- 5,544 km of high risk pathways inspected
- 1,263 high risk sites such as nurseries and aquariums inspected
- 506.5 km and 82.5 ha of high risk aquatic weeds controlled along high risk pathways such as rivers and creeks
- 66 km and 2,737 ha of high risk terrestrial weeds controlled along high risk pathways such as major roads and railway lines
- 11,700 community members attended 67 educational displays that raised weed awareness
- \$1.84 m in-kind contribution made by project partners



HAWKESBURY LANDCARE NETWORK



Over the past 12 months Hawkesbury Landcare Network has continued to build land-caring capacity in the local community by engaging many people across the Hawkesbury area.

Soil Health Workshops



One priority, as highlighted by the Steering Committee was to target the agricultural audience of the area with the facilitation of a series of workshops on Soil Health (left). This was successfully completed, with the informal development of a Soils Network to be taken through 'Grazing Management' with Hawkesbury Landcare next.

Hawkesbury Landcare Network (HLN), via the Local Landcare Coordinator, has also enabled many other pursuits of local landholders and community members, with the following achievements in recent months:

Landcare Groups

Continued support of the formation of local Landcare Groups, including Cumberland Reach and Roberts Creek Landcare.



HLN is supporting these groups with stakeholder liaison, promotional resource development and general guidance of works suitability and prioritisation.

The DL brochure pictured here is being prepared by HLN for letterbox dropping across the Roberts Creek catchment.

Schools in the catchment are targeted as initial stakeholders for Roberts Creek Landcare Group.

Hawkesbury Schools Landcare Network

A Hawkesbury Schools Landcare support program has commenced with HLN coordinating workdays every school holidays at a significant site behind Hawkesbury High School, Freemans Reach. This is a partnership program with the High School, and to date Conservation Volunteers Australia.



Once known for its Goannas, the High School site (photo left) is significant with the Critically Endangered Ecological Community Cumberland Plain Woodland. The High School is also about to begin the development of a Habitat garden and is in the Kreative Koalas Program, dedicated to sustainability.

More schools will be approached throughout the Hawkesbury for HLN to support them in similar endeavours, particularly where school grounds are environmentally significant, or the school students are targeted for a take home message related to a nearby Landcare campaign. This broader schools program will be in partnership with Hawkesbury Environmental Educators Network (HEEN).

Wetlandcare (and StreamWatch)

HLN is developing Wetland-care, particularly at Bushells Lagoon, Wilberforce with the re-ignition of a StreamWatch Program (photo below). This is also being implemented with a monitoring program of the restoration works on the wetland.



Plans are underway for Artificial Habitat islands to be installed on Bushells Lagoon, in order to help wetland birds such as the Great Crested Grebe, being particularly vulnerable to fox predation when nesting. This is being carried out in partnership with the Greater Sydney Landcare Network

Fox control is also under discussion with Greater Sydney Local Land Services at Bushells Lagoon, potentially following the example of the Bilpin Fox Trapping Program.

Community Fox Trapping Program

A grant was successfully obtained from Greater Sydney Local Land Services to commence a Community Fox Control Program in Bilpin. Eight landholders are currently trapping for foxes as a result, aiming to increase their local small mammal numbers eg Bandicoots and to provide better security for their chickens, lambs and goats. This Program will be filmed as a 'How to', the film to be distributed across Greater Sydney, guiding others in carrying out similar trapping programs (where properties cannot legally bait if they are less than 15Ha in size).

Mitchell Park Volunteer Bushcare Program



Grant money was obtained through a Greater Sydney Local Land Services Community Landcare Grant, to support and enhance the NPWS Volunteer Bushcare Program at Mitchell Park, Cattai and Scheyville National Park, Scheyville. This will be achieved through four special Landcare led weekend events in early 2018.

The grant will also be used to target contract bush regeneration works on Cats Claw Creeper, a job that is somewhat overwhelming for the volunteers, but feasibly eradicated with the help of professionals.

Hawkesbury Rainforests

HLN is currently investigating the possibility of consolidating the old Hawkesbury Rainforest Network with the facilitation of a Rainforest Forum, to determine the status of local Rainforest sites and whether or not landholders and land managers are requiring support to better manage them. A Landcare Rainforest Network may well be the result of these discussions, with a focus on education and capacity building to better the Western Sydney Dry Rainforest, Moist Shale Woodlands and Blue Mountains Shale Cap Forest Endangered Ecological Communities. This will be done in partnership with Hawkesbury Environment Network (HEN).

Incorporation for Hawkesbury Landcare Network

Incorporating the Hawkesbury Landcare Network has been moved at a recent Steering Committee meeting, meaning that the process of Incorporation will soon be initiated for HLN. This is of great benefit with so many events and community gatherings, given HLN will be insured and adequately able to cover its subsidiaries. It is a move that will strengthen the growth and development of the current Landcare Program in the Hawkesbury and equip it for better things to come in the future.



WEEDS DECLARED UNDER THE NOXIOUS WEEDS ACT (1993)

The *Noxious Weeds Act 1993* was repealed on 1 July 2017, and replaced with the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. This is the final reporting period in which the provisions of the Noxious Weeds Act 1993 relate.

The Noxious Weeds Act (1993) provides for the Minister for Primary Industries to issue an Order declaring a plant noxious. This declaration may specify a plant to be noxious in a determined portion, or the whole of the State.

These noxious weeds have been listed into five (5) Classes as specified in the Act. In the Hawkesbury River County Council area, the action required for each control Class is:

Class 1 State Prohibited Weeds

Characteristics class 1 noxious weeds are plants that pose a potentially serious threat to primary production or the environment and are not present in the State or are present only to a limited extent.

Class 2 Regionally Prohibited Weeds

Characteristics class 2 noxious weeds are plants that pose a potentially serious threat to primary production or the environment of a region to which the order applies and are not present in the region or are present only to a limited extent.

Class 3 Regionally Controlled Weeds

Characteristics class 3 noxious weeds are plants that pose a serious threat to primary production or the environment of an area to which the order applies, are not widely distributed in the area and are likely to spread in the area or to another area.

Class 4 Locally Controlled Weeds

Characteristics class 4 noxious weeds are plants that pose a threat to primary production, the environment or human health, are widely distributed in an area to which the order applies and are likely to spread in the area or to another area.

Class 5 Restricted Plants

Characteristics class 5 noxious weeds are plants that are likely, by their sale or the sale of their seeds or movement within the State or an area of the State, to spread in the State or outside the State.



A noxious weed that is classified as a Class 1, 2 or 5 noxious weed is referred to in this Act as a **notifiable weed**, and its presence must be reported to the HRCC as the Local Control Authority within 24 hours of becoming known by a person in a professional capacity.

**NOXIOUS WEEDS DECLARED (WC030 Feb 2014) IN THE LOCAL CONTROL
AUTHORITY AREA OF HAWKESBURY RIVER COUNTY COUNCIL**

Common Name	Botanical Name	Class
African boxthorn	<i>Lycium ferocissimum</i>	4
African feather grass	<i>Cenchrus macrourus</i>	5
African olive	<i>Olea europaea</i> subspecies <i>cuspidata</i> (syn. <i>Olea europaea</i> subspecies <i>africana</i>)	4
African turnip weed	<i>Sisymbrium runcinatum</i> and <i>S. thellungii</i>	5
Alligator weed	<i>Alternanthera philoxeroides</i>	3
Anchored water hyacinth	<i>Eichhornia azurea</i>	1
Annual ragweed	<i>Ambrosia artemisiifolia</i>	5
Arrowhead	<i>Sagittaria calycina</i> variety <i>calycina</i> (syn. <i>Sagittaria montevidensis</i> subspecies <i>calycina</i>)	4
Artichoke thistle	<i>Cynara cardunculus</i>	5
Asparagus	<i>Asparagus</i> species except <i>A. aethiopicus</i> , <i>A. africanus</i> , <i>A. asparagoides</i> , <i>A. declinatus</i> , <i>A. falcatus</i> , <i>A. macowanii</i> var. <i>zuluensis</i> , <i>A. officinalis</i> , <i>A. plumosus</i> , <i>A. racemosus</i> and <i>A. virgatus</i>	4
Asparagus fern	<i>Asparagus virgatus</i> (syn. <i>Protasparagus virgatus</i>)	2
Athel tree / Athel pine	<i>Tamarix aphylla</i>	5
Bear-skin fescue	<i>Festuca gautieri</i>	5
Bitou bush	<i>Chrysanthemoides monilifera</i> subspecies <i>rotundata</i>	2
Black knapweed	<i>Centaurea xmoncktonii</i>	1
Black willow	<i>Salix nigra</i>	2
Blackberry	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> aggregate species except cultivars: <i>Black satin</i> ; <i>Chehalem</i> ; <i>Chester Thornless</i> ; <i>Dirksen Thornless</i> ; <i>Loch Ness</i> ; <i>Murrindindi</i> ; <i>Silvan</i> ; <i>Smoothstem</i> ; <i>Thornfree</i>	4
Boneseed	<i>Chrysanthemoides monilifera</i> subspecies <i>monilifera</i>	1
Bridal creeper	<i>Asparagus asparagoides</i> (syn. <i>Myrsiphyllum asparagoides</i> , <i>Asparagus medeoloides</i>)	4
Bridal veil creeper	<i>Asparagus declinatus</i> (syn. <i>Asparagus crispus</i> , <i>Myrsiphyllum declinatum</i>)	1
Broad-leaf pepper tree	<i>Schinus terebinthifolius</i>	2
Broomrapes	<i>Orobanche</i> species except the native <i>O. cernua</i> variety <i>australiana</i> and <i>O. minor</i>	1
Burr ragweed	<i>Ambrosia confertiflora</i>	5
Cabomba	All <i>Cabomba</i> species except <i>C. furcata</i>	5
Cat's claw creeper	<i>Dolichandra unguis-cati</i> (syn. <i>Macfadyena unguis-cati</i>)	4
Cayenne snakeweed	<i>Stachytarpheta cayennensis</i>	5
Chilean needle grass	<i>Nassella neesiana</i>	4
Chinese celtis	<i>Celtis sinensis</i>	4
Chinese violet	<i>Asystasia gangetica</i> subspecies <i>micrantha</i>	1
Climbing asparagus fern	<i>Asparagus africanus</i> (syn. <i>Protasparagus africanus</i>)	2



Mexican feather grass

Horsetail

Black knapweed

Common Name	Botanical Name	Class
Climbing asparagus fern	<i>Asparagus plumosus</i> (syn. <i>Protasparagus plumosus</i>)	4
Clockweed	<i>Oenothera curtiflora</i>	5
Coolatai grass	<i>Hyparrhenia hirta</i>	3
Corn sowthistle	<i>Sonchus arvensis</i>	5
Dodder	All <i>Cuscuta</i> species except the native species <i>C. australis</i> , <i>C. tasmanica</i> and <i>C. victoriana</i>	5
Espartillo	<i>Amelichloa brachychaeta</i> ; <i>A. caudata</i>	5
Eurasian water milfoil	<i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>	1
Fine-bristled burr grass	<i>Cenchrus brownii</i>	5
Fireweed	<i>Senecio madagascariensis</i>	4
Flax-leaf broom	<i>Genista linifolia</i>	4
Fountain grass	<i>Cenchrus setaceus</i>	5
Frogbit / Spongeplant	<i>Limnobium laevigatum</i> and <i>L. spongia</i>	1
Gallon's curse	<i>Cenchrus biflorus</i>	5
Gamba grass	<i>Andropogon gayanus</i>	5
Giant Parramatta grass	<i>Sporobolus fertilis</i> (syn. <i>Sporobolus indicus</i> variety <i>major</i>)	3
Giant reed / Elephant grass	<i>Arundo donax</i>	4
Glaucous star thistle	<i>Carthamus glaucus</i>	5
Golden dodder	<i>Cuscuta campestris</i>	4
Golden thistle	<i>Scolymus hispanicus</i>	5
Gorse	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	3
Green cestrum	<i>Cestrum parqui</i>	3
Grey sallow	<i>Salix cinerea</i>	2
Ground asparagus	<i>Asparagus aethiopicus</i> (syn. <i>Protasparagus aethiopicus</i>)	4



Hygrophila

Green Cestrum

Water Hyacinth

Common Name	Botanical Name	Class
Groundsel bush	<i>Baccharis halimifolia</i>	3
Harrisia cactus	<i>Harrisia</i> species	4
Hawkweed	<i>Hieracium</i> species	1
Heteranthera / Kidneyleaf mud plantain	<i>Heteranthera reniformis</i>	1
Honey locust	<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	4
Horsetail	<i>Equisetum</i> species	1
Hydrocotyl / Water pennywort	<i>Hydrocotyle ranunculoides</i>	1
Hygrophila	<i>Hygrophila costata</i>	2
Hymenachne	<i>Hymenachne amplexicaulis</i> and hybrids	1
Karoo thorn	<i>Vachellia karroo</i> (syn. <i>Acacia karroo</i>)	1
Kochia	<i>Bassia scoparia</i> (syn. <i>Kochia scoparia</i>) except <i>B. scoparia</i> subspecies <i>trichophylla</i>	1
Koster's curse / Clidemia	<i>Clidemia hirta</i>	1
Kudzu	<i>Pueraria lobata</i>	2
Lagarosiphon	<i>Lagarosiphon major</i>	1
Lantana	<i>Lantana</i> species	4
Leafy elodea / Dense waterweed / Egeria	<i>Egeria densa</i> (syn. <i>Elodea densa</i>)	4
Lippia	<i>Phyla canescens</i>	4
Long-leaf willow primrose	<i>Ludwigia longifolia</i>	3
Ludwigia	<i>Ludwigia peruviana</i>	3
Mexican feather grass	<i>Nassella tenuissima</i> (syn. <i>Stipa tenuissima</i>)	1
Mexican poppy	<i>Argemone mexicana</i>	5
Miconia	<i>Miconia</i> species	1
Mikania vine	<i>Mikania micrantha</i>	1
Mimosa	<i>Mimosa pigra</i>	1
Ming (Pom pom/Zig zag) asparagus fern	<i>Asparagus macowanii</i> var. <i>zuluensis</i> (syn. <i>A. retrofractus</i>)	2
Montpellier broom / Cape broom	<i>Genista monspessulana</i>	3
Mossman River grass	<i>Cenchrus echinatus</i>	5
Mother-of-millions	<i>Bryophyllum daigremontianum</i>	3
Pampas grass	<i>Cortaderia</i> species	3
Paper mulberry	<i>Broussonetia papyrifera</i>	2
Parthenium weed	<i>Parthenium hysterophorus</i>	1
Paterson's curse, Vipers bugloss, Italian bugloss	<i>Echium plantagineum</i> , <i>E. vulgare</i> and <i>E. italicum</i>	4
Pond apple	<i>Annona glabra</i>	1
Prickly acacia	<i>Vachellia nilotica</i> (syn. <i>Acacia nilotica</i>)	1
Prickly pear	<i>Cylindropuntia</i> species	4
Prickly pear	<i>Opuntia</i> species except <i>O. ficus-indica</i>	4
Privet (Broad-leaf)	<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	4
Privet (Narrow-leaf / Chinese)	<i>Ligustrum sinense</i>	4
Red rice	<i>Oryza rufipogon</i>	5
Rhizomatous bamboo	<i>Phyllostachys</i> species	4
Rhus tree	<i>Toxicodendron succedaneum</i> (syn. <i>Toxicodendron succedanea</i> , <i>Rhus succedanea</i>)	4



African boxthorn

Rhus tree

Johnson Grass

Common Name	Botanical Name	Class
Rubbervine	<i>Cryptostegia grandiflora</i>	1
Sagittaria	<i>Sagittaria platyphylla</i> (syn. <i>Sagittaria graminea</i> variety <i>platyphylla</i>)	4
Salvinia	<i>Salvinia molesta</i>	3
Scotch broom / English broom	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i> subspecies <i>scoparius</i>	4
Senegal tea plant	<i>Gymnocoronis spilanthoides</i>	1
Serrated tussock	<i>Nassella trichotoma</i>	3
Siam weed	<i>Chromolaena odorata</i>	1
Sicklethorn	<i>Asparagus falcatus</i>	2
Silver-leaf nightshade	<i>Solanum elaeagnifolium</i>	4
Smooth-stemmed turnip	<i>Brassica barrelieri</i> subspecies <i>oxyrrhina</i>	5
Soldier thistle	<i>Picnomon acarna</i>	5
Spotted knapweed	<i>Centaurea stoebe</i> subspecies <i>australis</i> (syn. <i>Centaurea maculosa</i>)	1
St. John's wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	4
Texas blueweed	<i>Helianthus ciliaris</i>	5
Tussock paspalum	<i>Paspalum quadrifarium</i>	4
Water caltrop	<i>Trapa</i> species	1
Water hyacinth	<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i>	3
Water lettuce	<i>Pistia stratiotes</i>	1
Water soldier	<i>Stratiotes aloides</i>	1
Willows	<i>Salix</i> species except <i>S. babylonica</i> , <i>S. xreichardtii</i> , <i>S. xcalodendron</i> , <i>S. cinerea</i> and <i>S. nigra</i>	4
Witchweed	<i>Striga</i> species except the native <i>Striga parviflora</i>	1
Yellow bells	<i>Tecoma stans</i>	3
Yellow burrhead	<i>Limnocharis flava</i>	1
Yellow nutgrass	<i>Cyperus esculentus</i>	5



Black willow

Sagittaria

Mexican poppy

ADMINISTRATION

Condition of Public Works

Council operates as a special (single) purpose authority which is to control declared noxious weeds on the four constituent Councils roads and reserves. Council does not own public facilities as referred to in Section 428(2)(d) of the Local Government Act, 1993.

The only non-current assets held by Council are listed below:

A. Freehold Land

Re-valued August, 2014.

B. Works Depot/Administration Office

Re-valued August, 2014.

Building in satisfactory condition.

C. Vehicles & Other Plant and Equipment

(i) Vehicles are only kept generally for 3 years or 60,000 km, whichever occurs first.

All vehicles are in first class condition.

(ii) Other plant and equipment are all in good condition.

D. Furniture and Fittings

Most is in a good condition.

Legal Proceedings

No legal proceedings were taken during the year for offences involving the failure to control declared noxious weeds.

There were no outstanding legal matters carried forward.

Elected Members

Council has adopted a policy, "Payment of Expenses and the Provision of Facilities to Members". The objective of this policy is to reimburse the chairperson and members for expenses reasonably incurred in performing their duties and to provide them with a standard and range of facilities in discharging the functions of civic office.

The following allowances, fees and expenses have been provided to Members or incurred as a result of their activities during 2016/2017:

Chairperson's Allowance	\$10,269
Members' Fees	\$44,771
Travelling Expenses	\$1,554
Conference & Delegates Expenses	\$1053
Local Government Association Subscriptions	\$1732
Insurance	\$6988
Miscellaneous Council Expenses	\$2,197

Limited use of facilities is available in accordance with Council's policy and no other expenses were incurred.

Attendance at Meetings by Board Members 2016/17 (Maximum 6)

Member	Meetings	Notes
Clr. Mark Taylor	4	Chair 8/16-3/17 (vacated 3/17)
Clr. Alan Haselden	5	Chair 4/17 – 6/17
Clr. Brad Bunting	4	Elected 11/16
Clr. Marcus Cornish	6	
Clr. Kevin Crameri OAM	1	Vacated 9/16
Clr. Jesse Diaz	1	Vacated 9/16
Clr. Julie Griffiths	2	Elected 4/17
Clr. Leo Kelly OAM	2	Vacated 1/17
Clr. Amanda Kotlash	4	
Clr. Warwick Mackay OAM	1	Vacated 9/16
Clr. Karen McKeown	4	
Clr. Warwick Porter	1	Vacated 9/16
Clr. Robyn Preston	2	Elected 4/17
Clr. Walter Smith	1	Vacated 9/16
Clr. Nathan Zamprogno	4	

Senior Staff Remuneration

The total remuneration provided during the year, comprising the salary and employer's contribution to superannuation, including payments of accumulated benefits was \$126K.

The General Manager is the only Senior Staff member. He commenced his duties on 1 November 2010.

Major Contracts Awarded

No major contracts were awarded during the year.

Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Program

Council is a special (single) purpose authority charged with responsibilities for Declared Noxious Weeds. Thus, bush fire activities are not within Council's functions.

Private Works

Council provided a contract spraying and aquatic weed harvesting services. Most of the work carried out during the year was undertaken on behalf of Constituent Councils, State Government Agencies or Departments, regular private property weed control activities is taking place, however these are generally of low economic value. Quite a proportion of these works arise from requests from landholders whom have been visited by council inspectors.

Contributions/Donations

There were no contributions or donations under Section 356 of the Local Government Act.

Human Resources Activities

Most staff undertook a number of training courses to assist them in their career development, and necessary, to meet appropriate certification and license requirements. Please also refer to Noxious Weeds Control Operations Report and Performance Management Report for further Human Resources Activities.

Activities to Implement EEO Management Plan

An Equal Opportunity Management Policy and strategies were adopted in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993. All Council articles and policies adhere to EEO policies. A harassment policy and anti-bullying policy has been adopted and a contact officer has been appointed as the first point of contact. EEO and anti-discrimination publications and articles concerning sexual harassment are all distributed to staff when received.



Number of Staff

Full-time	10
Trainee	6
Part Time	3
Casual	0
TOTAL EFT (Equivalent Full Time)	17.5

External Bodies Exercising Council Functions

There were no external bodies to which Council delegated any of its functions.

Controlling Interest in Companies

Council did not hold a controlling interest in any companies either singularly or jointly with other Councils.

Partnerships, Co-operatives and Joint Ventures

Council was not a party to any partnerships, co-operatives or joint ventures.

Rates and Charges Written Off

Council is not a rating authority and therefore rates and extra charges are not written off. No debts were written off.

Overseas Visits Funded by Council

There were no overseas visits undertaken during the year by Council Members or staff.

Activities for Children

Council is a single purpose authority charged with the administration of declared noxious weeds. Thus activities for children are not within Council's functions.

Access and Equity Service to All

Council advertised services and access to services, as required by the Local Government Act. However, for this "single purpose" County Council, only minimal advertising was necessary.

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act) – Statistical Report

The statistics for requests for information via GIPA Act were as follows

2016/2017

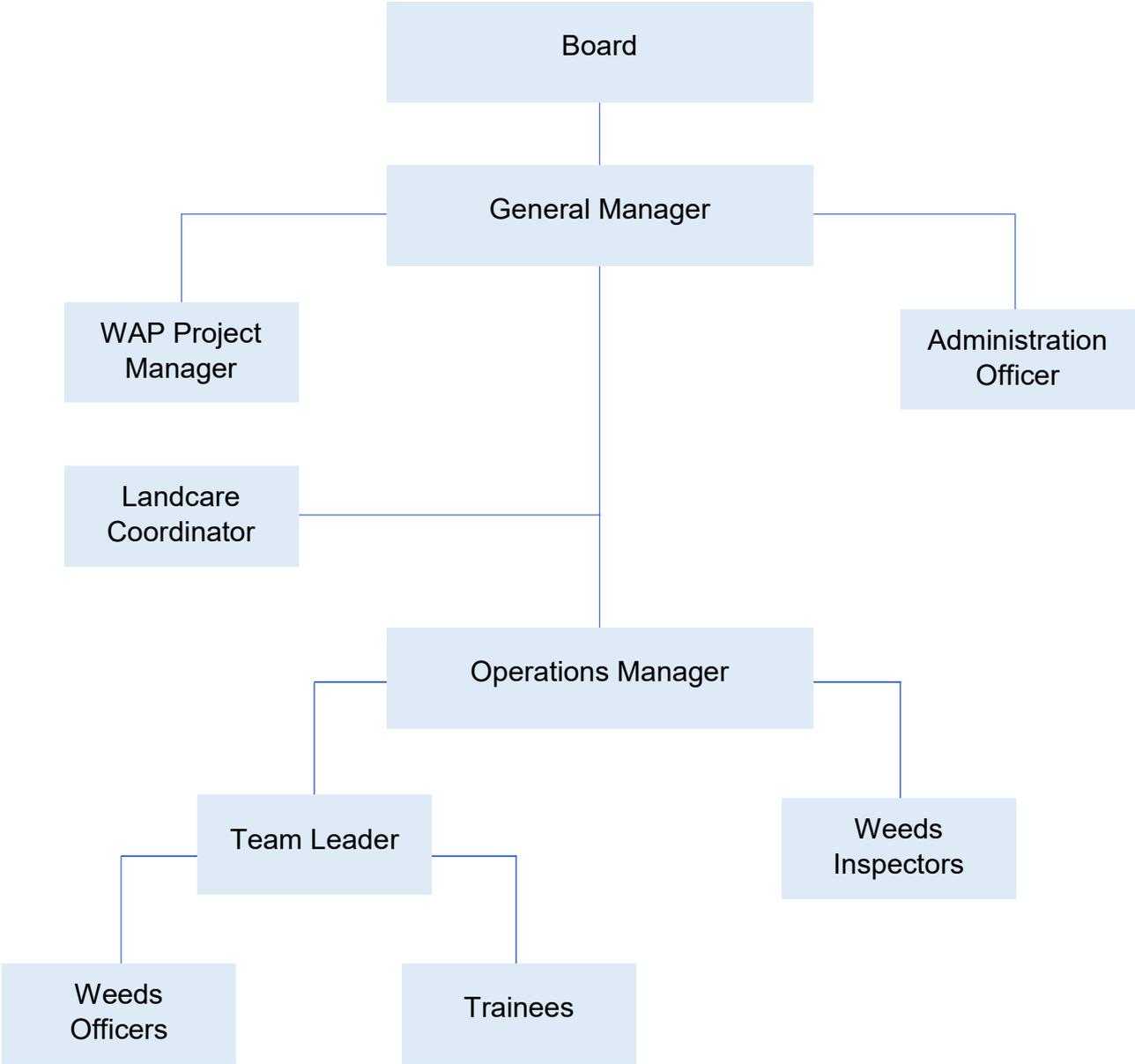
Public Info Requests	Nil
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Public Info Results	Nil
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There are no circumstances in which the Ombudsman has made enquiries of Council.

Council has published its "Publication Guide" on the website under the guidelines of the Act. This guide navigates public access to Council information.

HRCC ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



PLANNING AND POLICY DOCUMENTS

Council participates in the discharge of the following legislation, policy and plans:

State Legislation

Local Government Act 1993 (and Regulations) (NSW)

Noxious Weeds Act 1993 (NSW)

Workplace Health and Safety Act 2012 (NSW)

Pesticides Act 1999 (NSW)

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)

State Weeds Strategies

NSW Invasive Species Plan 2008-2015

Council Policies

Code of Conduct

Code of Meeting Practice (OLG)

Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities to Council Members

Procurement Policy

Protected Disclosures Act 1994 – Internal Reporting

Staff Records Management

Anti-Bullying Policy

Vehicle Leaseback Management Policy

Investment Policy

Pesticide Use Notification Policy

High Risk Weeds Policy

Employee Assistance Program

Local Procedures and Plans

Financial Reports; Auditor's Reports and Annual Reports to the Community

Delegation of Authority – via Council Minutes.

10 Year Business Activity Statement 2012-2022 (includes Resourcing Strategy)

4 Year Delivery Plan 2012-2016

Operational Plan 2014/15

Minutes of Council and Committee Meetings

Noxious Weeds Inspectors – Authority and Powers of Entry

Pecuniary Interest Disclosures – Members, General Manager, Operations Manager, Weeds Inspectors

Register of Investments

Register of Meetings Closed to the Public

Summary and Statement of Affairs

Process for Inspection of Private Properties

MOU – Sydney Regional Weeds Committee x 4

MOU – Weeds Action Program Project Partners x 19

Administration Procedures for WAP Lead Agency Role

Employee Management

Personal Files

Values Statement

E. E. O

WHS System

Special Leave for Emergencies and Fire Fighting

Staff Recruitment & Procedures

MEMBER COUNCIL INFORMATION

Role of Council Members

Members' duties include attending Council and Committee meetings, and organised site inspections as required. They are responsible for making major decisions and deciding on policies which set the direction Council will take in its operations, services and activities. They are not paid a salary but receive a fee. Most Councillors have other full or part-time jobs.

Your Representatives

The Hills Shire Council



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Mobile: 0401 995 945

MEMBER COUNCIL PROCESS



Each of the four constituent Councils elect two delegates from amongst their Councillors to comprise the governing body of the Hawkesbury River County Council.

If the number of Councillors seeking election is no more than the required two delegates, then membership of the County Council is by appointment of the constituent Council.

These elections or appointments take place after the constituent Councils quadrennial (four yearly) elections are finalised or to fill a casual vacancy.

The resultant eight, in the case of this County Council, comprise the governing body. For County Councils these delegates are referred to as "Members".

The Chairperson is elected or, if unopposed appointed, in October each year.

The County Council meets regularly on a two monthly basis and at other times when required.



FINANCE, ACCOUNTING & ADMINISTRATION

Functions/Activity – Cost Report

Council's audited financial results are presented in the form of General Purpose Financial Statements. This same financial information is used in compiling this report which is based on the following functions/activities:

(i) Health – Noxious Weeds

Administration, inspections and weed control activities associated with noxious weeds.

(ii) Economic Affairs

Private Works (Category 2 Business Activity) related to weed control on private lands and training services for O.H & S.

(iii) Governance

Costs relating to the Council's role as a component of democratic government, including members' fees and expenses, subscriptions to local authority associations, meetings of council and policymaking committees, reporting, area representation and public disclosure and compliance, together with related administration costs.

(iv) Administration

Costs not otherwise attributed to other functions.



A copy of Council's Audited HRCC Financial Statement 2016/17 is contained as a separate Appendix to this Report.

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