

**Business Paper of a duly convened Ordinary Meeting of the
Hawkesbury River County Council to be held at 6 Walker St, South Windsor on
Thursday, 13 August 2015 commencing at 6.00pm**

1. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

2. APOLOGIES

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, **11 June 2015** to be confirmed or altered.

4. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

5. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL'S OFFICERS:

a) From the General Manager

To the Chairperson and Council Members

I submit these Reports for Council's consideration:

ITEM GM 1. REPORT ON MONEY'S INVESTED

Reason for Report: Statutory

The report presented to the last Ordinary Meeting, displayed the total amounts recorded on 28 May 2015 (EOD); investment accounts \$1,350,000, on-call account \$52,602.70 and transaction account \$21,350.24.

Since that report, the following investment decisions have been made:

On 10 June 2015 a term deposit of \$150,000 invested with Maitland Mutual Building Society was redeemed at maturity.

On 10 June 2015 a term deposit of \$250,000 invested with Bank of Sydney Ltd. was redeemed at maturity.

On 12 June 2015, a term deposit of **\$250,000** was invested with Bank of Queensland for a period of 227 days at 2.95%, maturing on 25 January 2016.

On 17 June 2015, a term deposit of **\$150,000** was invested with ME Bank for a period of 90 days at 2.95%, maturing on 15 September 2016.

On 24 June 2015, a term deposit of \$600,000 invested with AMP Bank was redeemed at maturity.

On 24 June 2015, a term deposit of **\$500,000** was invested with People's Choice Credit Union for a period of 364 days at 2.93%, maturing on 23 June 2016.

On 29 July 2015, a term deposit of **\$200,000** was invested with AMP Bank for a period of 182 days at 2.90%, maturing on 27 January 2016.

A term deposit of **\$250,000** remains invested with Bank of Queensland for a period of 180 days at 2.95%, maturing on 7 October 2015.

A term deposit of **\$100,000** remains invested with Macquarie Bank Ltd. for a period of 270 days at 3.0%, maturing on 16 February 2016.

On **5 August 2015 (EOD)**;

The total amount invested is **\$1,450,000***.

The total amount invested in the on-call account (at 2.55%) is **\$41,325.95**.

The total amount in our transaction account (at 0%) is **\$8,528.15**

The RBA Cash Rate was 2.00%.

**This includes Sydney NSW Weeds Action Program funding (-\$4,500 at 30/6/2015) as per our role as "Lead Agency" for the Sydney Application to Department of Primary Industries. This funding is quarantined against any HRCC operational or capital expenditure, and is specifically for the purposes of the NSW Weeds Action Program as per guidelines established by agreement with the Department of Primary Industries.*

Recommendation:

1. *That the report is received and information noted.*

ITEM GM 2. HRCC 3RD AND 4TH QUARTER FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reason for Report: Statutory

The 3rd and 4th Quarter Financial Review has been completed and is enclosed with this report. HRCC continues to track sustainably according to strategy and budget. Income lines such as "Private Property Works" continued to improve for the quarter as the result of some significant new contracts being completed. Expenditure lines were pushed, in particular staffing, to ensure adequate labour was available to meet the expanded operational requirements.

The overall budget position is healthy as we arrive at the conclusion of the financial year.

ENCLOSURES_GM3	HRCC 3 rd Quarter Financial Report 2014-15 HRCC 4 th Quarter Financial Report 2014-15
----------------	--

Recommendation:

- 1. That the report is received and noted.*

ITEM GM 4. HRCC DRAFT ANNUAL FINANCIAL REVIEW 2014-15

Reason for Report: Statutory

A Draft HRCC Annual Financial Review 2014/15 has been completed by compiling our quarterly reports. This is done in advance of the full external audit process to provide a timely indicator of financial performance. The audit will no doubt alter individual lines and summary tallies.

This draft review still gives a strong idea as to the financial status of Council prior to the formal Financial Statements, which will not be finalised until October 2015. The overall picture is positive with HRCC returning a small surplus of \$97,059 (7%).

The positive surplus result can be related to expenditure reductions in plant running. Due to the strategic reduction in capital over the past three years depreciation costs dropped significantly in this FY (\$68,706/ 47%). This led to an overall reduction in expenditure even though staff costs increased slightly. Revenue continued to track upward mostly as an increase in private works, interest revenue and CPI.

This means our Council has produced a small surplus for a third year in a row, which places us in a strong financial position (See **Figure 1**).

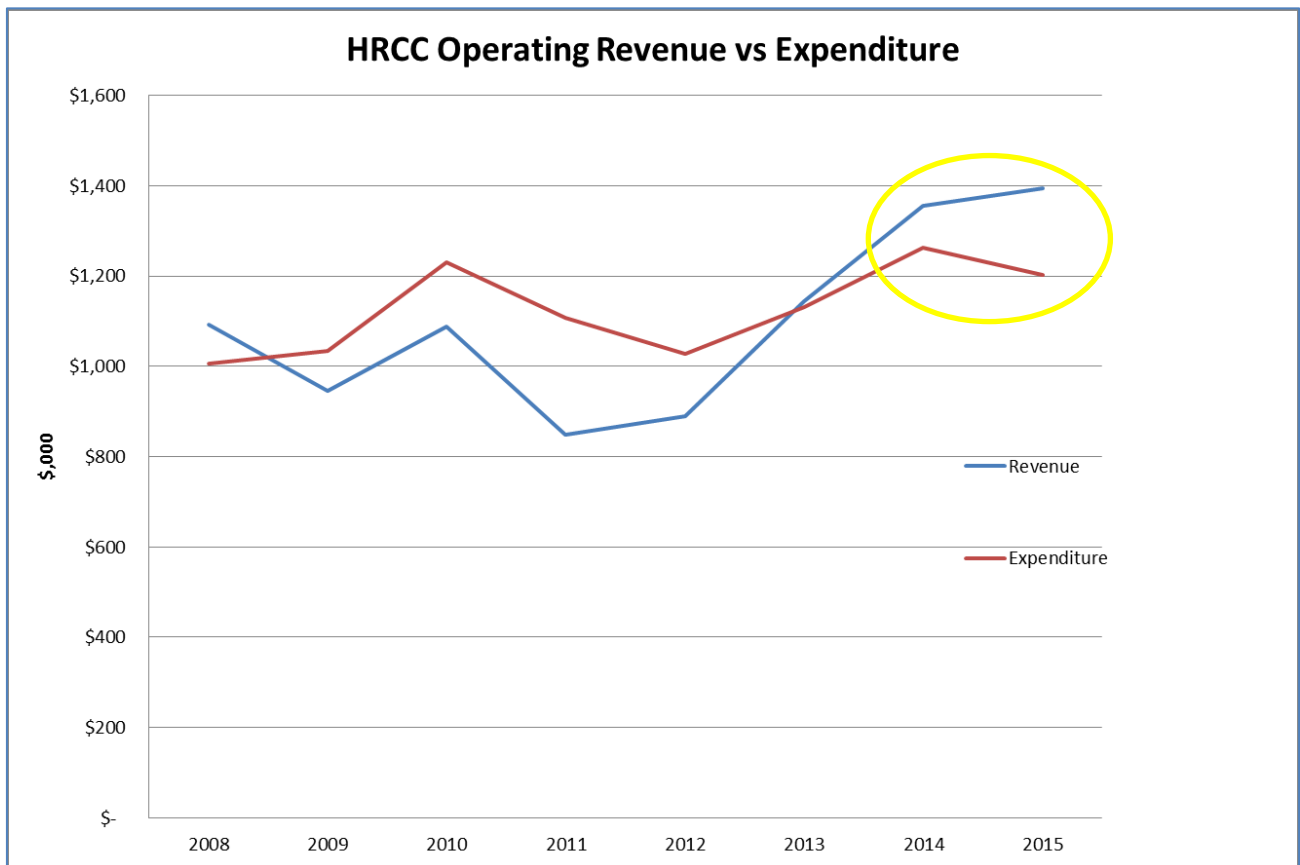


Figure 1: HRCC 7 Year Financial Operating Trend

Preparation of Financial Statements 2014/15

Pursuant to S413 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council must prepare financial reports for each year, and must refer them for audit as soon as practicable after the end of that year. A Council's financial report must include:

- a) A general purpose financial report
- b) Any other matters prescribed by the regulations, and
- c) A statement in the approved form by the Council as to its opinion on the general purpose report.

Pursuant to S418 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council must give public presentation of the audited financial reports as soon as practicable after they have been received by Council.

A Draft Annual Budget Review for 2014/15 has been prepared for the information of Council, and work is currently underway to develop the reports in the prescribed standard required for audit.

ENCLOSURE_GM4:	HRCC Draft Annual Financial Review 2014/15
----------------	--

Recommendations:

1. *That the report is received and noted.*
2. *That Council prepares the Draft HRCC Financial Statements 2014/15 in accordance with the Australian Accounting and Standards Board and refers these for audit.*
3. *That the audited financial statements are publicly advertised once received by the General Manager.*
4. *That the Audited Financial Statements 2014/15 are presented to the Ordinary Meeting of 8 October 2015 and includes a report from the General Manager on any submissions made by the public.*

ITEM GM 5. STAFFING

Reason for Report: Informative

Since the last Council meeting held on 29 May 2014, Council has employed two staff members. They are:

- Ms Sue Holz – Administration Officer
- Ms Nicola Dixon – Sydney WAP Project Officer

HRCC currently employs a total of 14 people (at FTE of 13.3).

Recommendation:

1. *That the report is received and noted.*

ITEM GM 6. SUCCESSFUL CROWN LANDS FUNDING APPLICATION

Reason for Report: Informative

HRCC was successful in its grant application to the Crown Land Public Reserve Management Fund for \$23,638 in the 2014-15 year. This project will consist of HRCC staff working in 15 crown reserves across the county undertaking surveillance and control.

Recommendation:

1. *That the report is received and noted.*

ITEM GM 7. PROPOSED COMMONWEALTH 20 MILLION TREES APPLICATION

Reason for Report: Informative

HRCC intends to lodge grant applications with the Commonwealth Government under the 20 Million Trees Program. The applications are due in September 2015 and consist of three separate projects in the areas of North Richmond, Shaw's Island and Blacktown. If successful, the projects will install over 40,000 trees in the county in strategic areas that have experienced long term weed control. The project will seek to build collaborative partnerships with local schools, NPWS and the Green Army program.

Recommendation:

1. *That the report is received and noted.*

5. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL'S OFFICERS:

(b) Operations Manager

To the Chairperson and Council Members,

I submit the following for your consideration:

ITEM OM1. OPERATIONAL REPORT

Reason for Report: Statutory

Terrestrial Weed Control

Fine weather conditions over this reporting period have allowed weed control teams to target seasonally active weeds such as Mother of millions and African boxthorn. The Mother of millions is strikingly noticeable at present as it continues to flower prolifically along council roadsides and in reserves. Smaller weed control jobs have also been carried out by the team that have included council service requests, private works and isolated Green cestrum and African olive plants.

As predicted this season has seen massive growth and flowering from Mother of millions. Weed control teams continue to treat this year's crop, with appropriate herbicides. Power spray units, manual back packs and pump units have all been utilized to treat these infestations, at the time of reporting (late July) it has been forecast that the mother of millions spray program will continue until mid-September 2015, given the current progress of the team.

The team has travelled across the breadth of the county as this weed species is found in all LGA's. Treated weed infestations can be clearly seen due to the inclusion of marker dye in the herbicide spray mix; this inert additive allows applicators to track their progress whilst spraying large areas and is also a visible footprint of the progress of the control of this species throughout the county.

African boxthorn is another weed species that is active over the cooler months; teams have been controlling this species along roadsides and in reserves where birds deposit seeds under fence lines and frequently under roosting trees. Areas with heavier clay soils tend to be favoured by this plant species. Areas that have been treated have been; Riverstone, Schofields, Mt Druitt, Mulgoa, Orchard Hills, Werrington, Werrington county, North Penrith, Mt. Pleasant, Londonderry, Annangrove and Rouse Hill.

A number of council and public weed control requests have been completed by the weed control teams. Isolated cases of bamboo, Privet, Boneseed, Green cestrum and Lantana that have been identified by council staff and members of the public and these weed issues have been treated by our staff.

Inspections have continued to take place across the county, private property inspections and high risk site inspections have been conducted this reporting period.

257 programmed private property inspections have been conducted in the following areas; North Rocks (HSC) targeting class 1 aquatic weeds, Oakville (HCC) targeting Mother of millions – in conjunction with HRCC spray program, and the Riverstone area which was targeted for Water hyacinth after consultation with Blacktown council staff in regards to this weed species.

Weed Surveillance and Inspection

High risk sites have been inspected by our staff. Nurseries, landscape yards and aquariums are currently compliant. Some low level weed growth was found on various council stockpile sites across the county, these weed infestations have since been treated.

New Weed Incursion

A discovery amongst the inspections was the finding of Coolatai Grass (Class 3) and Boneseed (Class 1) at the Percival street stockpile site at Clarendon (HCC). This is the first verified recording of Coolatai grass in our county. Every measure has been taken to eradicate this infestation of Coolatai grass. It is also a new infestation of Boneseed at this location, aside from the mature plants that were removed from the stockpile site, around 50 seedlings have been hand pulled (August 2015).

Operational Trends

HRCC has now been collecting standardised data on our key areas of operations since 2012. This allows us to now display trends in our operational output. **Figure 2** shows the number of official inspections completed under the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993* on an annual basis. There has been a 25% increase in resourcing to this area with a fourth inspector appointed in 2014, however the output trend is at a higher rate than this due to improvements in scheduling and process efficiencies. This excellent result is a credit to the HRCC Weed Inspection Staff.

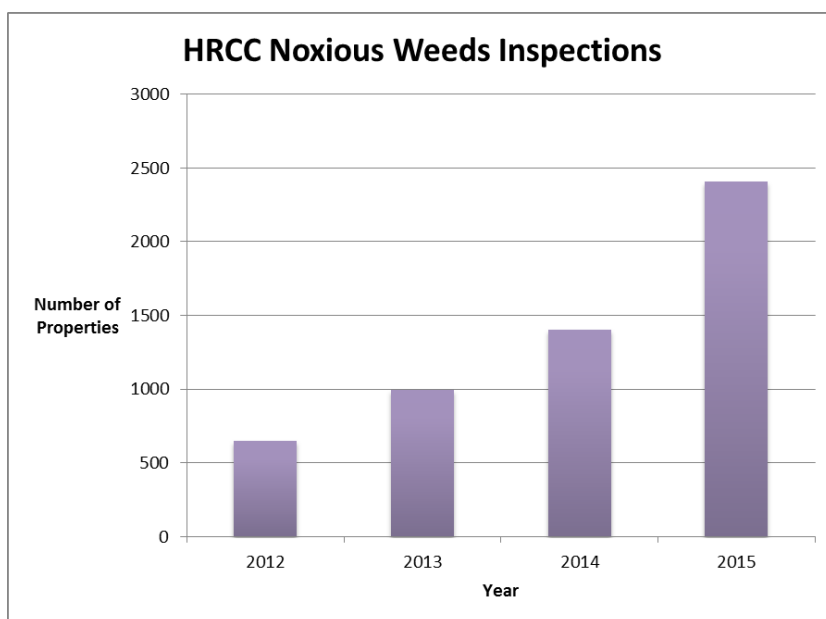


Figure 2: Operational Trend - Private Property Inspections

Figure 3 shows the trends relating to weed control output and reveal a similar positive story. The weed control operations was re-structured in 2013 from a number of two

person teams to a single five to six person team, with team leader. This allowed not only improved efficiencies but also greatly improved reporting (as evidenced in the significant jump in 2014 results). There have been little cost increases into this area of the time period due to the increasing use of traineeship labour. The good results are a credit to the HRC Weed Control team and their Team Leader, Mr Glenn Lavers.

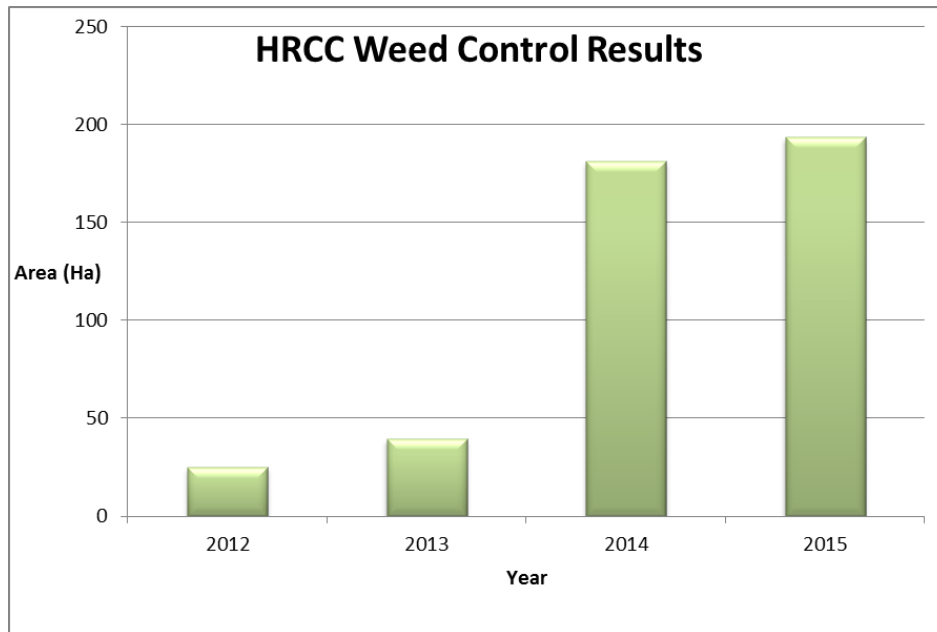


Figure 3: Operational Trends – Terrestrial Weed Control

ENCLOSURES_OM1:	HRCC LGA Operational Maps June/July 2015
	HRCC 4 th Quarter Operational Report 2014/15

Recommendation:

1. That the report is received and noted.
2. Council acknowledges the efforts of HRCC Operational Staff in continually improving their efficiency and capacity to deliver results.

ITEM OM2. AQUATIC WEED OPERATIONAL REPORT

Reason for Report: Informative

The river system is experiencing the depths of winter at the time of this report. Short day lengths and frigid water temperatures ensure that the bulk of aquatic weed species are kept dormant for another six to eight weeks. As a result of these conditions, the river is looking clear and free of weeds.

The weed containment booms have been left open as the risk of weed movement is not an issue at this time of year, and allows the tidal movement of wood debris to naturally move and settle within the river, this is important as native fish species live and breed amongst these snags. The containment booms will be closed for the spring, summer and autumn seasons when aquatic weed growth resumes and needs to be contained for monitoring and control.

River access for recreational use is at its best at this time of year with less submerged weed growth to interfere with paddlers, swimmers and boaters. There is also a dedicated band of water skiers who can be seen on the river, the water is crowd free and often in glassed off condition – perfect for water skiing.

Upstream in the Nepean River, the only weed growth that can be found is from native ribbon weed and curly pond weed. These species are generally regarded as non-invasive plants and cause little trouble for river users.

Further south, in the middle reaches of the Nepean River, no visible signs of aquatic weed can be found. The boom at the Warragamba River confluence is open with no evidence of *Salvinia* build up.

Upstream of Wallacia, at the county boundary the river is in good condition. Lots of new snags and woody debris courtesy of the river flushes earlier this year are present, these pose little threat to boater safety as this part of the river is primarily utilised by paddlers.

Excellent conditions for river users are expected to remain until late September when weed activity will build with the warmer water and long day lengths. There are no imminent threats to be seen from aquatic weed species

ENCLOSURES_OM1:	HRCC LGA Operational Maps June/July 2015
	HRCC 4 th Quarter Operational Report 2014/15

Recommendation:

1. *That the report is received and noted.*

ITEM OM3. WEED CONTROL IN SYDNEY RAIL CORRIDOR

Reason for Report: Council Resolution

At the June 2015 HRCC council meeting it was requested to examine the feasibility of targeting contracts for weed control within the rail corridor (#1792).

The western rail corridor holds substantial infestations of environmental and noxious weeds. Initial research into this venture revealed that Sydney trains demand contractors meet stringent training and medical criteria before entering any rail corridor, and that any major works that are to take place can only happen when the corridor is closed to train operation. This only happens on weekends and after thorough investigation of the proposed works by rail management.

At all times that staff are inside the rail corridor they must be accompanied by a worksite protection officer, this is an additional cost of approximately \$110 per hour. The worksite protection officer service is provided by Sydney trains authorised service providers.

Even when permission is granted to carry out weed control works, there are parts of the rail corridor that are permanent exclusion zones for non-essential works, so weed control would not take place in these zones, preventing complete treatment of weed species within sections of the rail corridor.

An introduction course for contract staff looking to conduct work for Sydney trains is available, the Rail Industry Safety Induction or RISI for short. This is a base induction and describes generic hazards associated with rail work. A medical is also required to be passed at this stage. The class 3 health assessment evaluates, vision, hearing and mobility. Drug and alcohol screening will also be conducted during this process. Sydney trains require a zero blood alcohol reading, and a drug reading below that of Australian standard 4308 for tolerance of drugs. The cost of the induction and medical is \$545.00 per person and is held at the Sydney trains Chullora training venue.

Once staff has completed the induction, technically they can enter the rail corridor to carry out weed control. They need to be accompanied by the worksite protection officer at all times. The primary form of weed control will need to be performed by backpack and hand spraying equipment as there is limited vehicle movement on track. Major weed control work can only take place when there is a "track possession", this is a maintenance shut down period when many types of work are carried out on the train line in a limited timeframe – where weed control fits amongst Sydney trains works priorities is not clear, access to particular stretches of track to perform weed control may be very limited.

From a purely weed management perspective, entering contracts to perform weed control within the rail corridor presents a substantive investment in training, cost and resources that will not provide complete treatment of weed infestations within the rail corridor.

Recommendation:

1. *That the report is received and noted*
2. *That Council does not pursue weed management within the rail corridor at this time.*

6. COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

From the Office of the General Manager, to the Chairperson and Members, I submit the following report on, correspondence of note, which has been received and sent by Council since the last Ordinary meeting:

1. **DATED – 16 June 2015** – Letter from Stephen Britton, PCC re: Regional Strategic Alliance.
2. **SENT – 13 July 2015** – Email to Minister for Local Government, all member council GM's and, HRCC Network Delegates re: HRCC Operational Plan 2015/16. Actioning 11/6/2015 #1783.
3. **SENT – 21 July 2015** – Letter to Mr Graeme Kelly, General Secretary, United Service Union re: industrial dispute process.
4. **SENT – 22 July 2015** – Letter to Willoughby City Council. Re: support reference for weed ID app development.
5. **DATED – 22 July 2015** – Letter from Mr Paul Grimson, City Planning Manager, PCC. Re: Deferred matters from Penrith LEP (Amendment 4).
6. **DATED – 3 Aug 2015** – Letter from Hon. Niall Blair MLC, Minister for Primary Industries. Re: Public Reserves Management Fund 2015/16, successful grant application.

Recommendation:

1. *That the report on Correspondences is received and information noted.*

7. GENERAL BUSINESS / QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE
