

**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, 12 April 2018 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, **8 February 2018** 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 MONIES INVESTED

Reason for Report: Statutory

Cash and Investments

The below investment summary represents Council's total investments as at 4 April 2018 in accordance with Clause 212 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*.

Short-term Deposits	Value	Term (Days)	Rate	Maturity Date	% of Portfolio	S & P Credit Rating
Bank of Queensland	\$300,000	362	2.65%	24/07/2018	15%	A2
Bank of Queensland	\$250,000	273	2.60%	1/05/2018	13%	A2
AMP Bank Pty. Ltd.	\$200,000	363	2.60%	31/07/2018	10%	A1
AMP Bank Pty. Ltd.	\$200,000	181	2.60%	3/04/2018	10%	A1
Bank of Queensland	\$200,000	188	2.55%	8/05/2018	10%	A1
Bank of Queensland	\$250,000	179	2.55%	19/06/2018	13%	A1
AMP Bank Pty. Ltd.	\$250,000	273	2.65%	30/10/2018	13%	A1
AMP Bank Pty. Ltd.	\$200,000	272	2.65%	11/12/2018	10%	A1
Police Credit Union	\$150,000	181	2.81%	2/10/2018	8%	A1
TOTAL	\$2,000,000				100%	
At Call Deposits	Value	Term (Days)	Rate			S & P Credit Rating
NAB Business Chq A/c	4571.79	At Call	0.01-0.05%			A1
AMP Business Saver	164381.33	At Call	2.05%			A1
TOTAL	\$168,953.12					
Total Value of Investment Funds	\$2,168,953					
RBA Cash Rate			1.50%			

Legal

All investments are in accordance with section 625 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, clause 212 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* and Council's Investment Policy.

Recommendation:

1. That the report is received and information noted.

ITEM GM 2. HRCC VISION STATEMENT AND NAME REVIEW

Reason for Report: Decision Required

Background

At the Ordinary Meeting of 8 February 2018, the General Manager was asked to refresh the HRCC vision and allow opportunities for expansion of remit. The approach will also include a potential renaming of the organisation (trading or statutory) and a full rebranding and relaunch.

Existing Vision Statement:

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

Existing Mission Statement:

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

Proposed Vision Statements (options):

1. A networking hub to assist land management.
2. An improved environment by networking, to assist land managers and develop community capacity.
3. An improved environment by creating opportunities for better land management.

Rationale

The vision statement of HRCC has been broadened to accomplish the following goals. Firstly, to move from seeing ourselves as a narrow provider of weed control services, to functioning as local government networking hub and provider of services across the entire range of land management functions. The focus of any new services will be to respond directly to community requests and fill niches in which there are currently minimal other providers of those services within our jurisdiction. The statutory purpose of the organisation will remain unchanged, and this will be reflected by adhering to the existing mission statement: *To provide effective integrated weed management systems to all Constituent Councils fairly and equitably in accordance with the Biosecurity Act 2015 (NSW)*.

The change also reflects the broader change in the role of local government both internationally and nationally. That is a change from a "government" organisation to a "governance" organisation (McKinlay P. et al. 2011; Stoker 1998; Stoker 2004). In other words, from an organisation that acts like a historic department handing out rules and regulations, to one which is focussed on building partnerships with stakeholders and enabling them to achieve their own goals. This is sometimes referred to as "co-production":

The central ideas of co-production are that people using public services are not a drain on the system but an asset, and that no country is rich enough to ignore this source of wealth. The relationship between public servants and users shifts from one of subordination and dependency to one of parity, mutuality and reciprocity. (Bourgon 2011, p. 26)

This change has primarily been driven by the need for governments to do more with fewer resources, but also reflects a broader community attitude towards how they would like governments to behave in the modern era (Brown 2014).

How would it manifest at HRCC?

HRCC has already begun the path in moving naturally in this direction over the past three years. Evidence that we are suitably placed to provide such a role can be presented by the achievement of the following grants and contracts:

1. In 2015, the Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative (Local Land Services)
2. In 2016, the 20 Million Trees Revegetation (Commonwealth Dep. Of Environment)
3. In 2017, the Roadside Vegetation Mapping (NSW Environmental Trust)
4. In 2017, the NSW Weeds Action Program Lead Agency contract (Greater Sydney Local Land Services)

As such, a refresh of the vision to encompass these broadening roles would be timely. In the future, it would mean HRCC can further enhance itself as an educational networking hub that seeks to improve landowner and industry behaviour concerning weeds, pests, water quality, sustainability and conservation. It would allow us to enhance our existing relationships and develop new ones, no longer entirely encumbered by the: “they just spray weeds on the river” branding.

Most importantly, our existing roles in relation to the *Biosecurity Act (2015)* as a Local Control Authority would not be affected. Around 50% of our funding is tied directly to these functions with clear objectives and reporting requirements. This would not be altered by an update of the vision and is maintained by an unchanged mission statement.

Future roles reflecting the new “networked hub” vision would include utilising new Community-Based Social Marketing Strategies as is proposed in the Draft HRCC Operational Plan 2018-19. This is a new approach to weed management that focussed on the measurable behavioural change in relation to landowners undertaking weed control. It is being driven by the most recent NSW Department of Primary Industries policy and is reflected in the new Weeds Action Program guidelines (DPI 2017). Our organisation would be the first to incorporate such policy into an operational plan, and this would allow us further opportunities in this area, especially regarding supporting specific industries such as turf growing and earth moving. Additionally, this approach would allow us to address the weeds which our community dictate as “high priority” such as Fireweed, Green Cestrum and Apple of Sodom.

- Other potential services that HRCC may be able to incorporate into its remit include the following:

1. Pest animal control – assisting landowners with the control of feral animals such as foxes, rabbits, pigs and wild dogs.
2. Biosecurity certification and auditing – certify businesses to be compliant with a standard of biosecurity management.
3. Dam water quality – water testing, advice and control of algae.
4. Waterway clean-ups – removal of shopping trolleys, bikes etc.

New Name

The name: “Hawkesbury River County Council” has been with us since our inception in 1948. It was a time when Hawkesbury City Council did not exist; it was instead the Shires of Windsor, Richmond and Colo. Since their amalgamation into firstly the Hawkesbury Shire (1981), then the larger Hawkesbury City (1995), our name has caused considerable confusion within the community. Additionally, while the Hawkesbury River is undoubtedly an icon of the region, it does not run through one of our member councils, Blacktown City Council, and only barely touches The Hills Shire. Most importantly, HRCC has always worked across the entire landscape, and never just on the river.

If the proposed name change was to occur, there are two options. A formal statutory change would require Ministerial support, as our organisation was proclaimed as Hawkesbury River County Council and can only be changed by parliament and must contain the words “County Council” (*S389 Local Government Act, 1993*). The second option is to maintain the name for all formal reporting purposes but develop an additional ‘trading’ name. This would not compel us to use the term “County Council”.

A new name would also allow the opportunity for a rebranding, which would indeed enhance the broadening role our organisation would take.

Some New Name Options

1. Western Sydney Biosecurity (WSB)
2. Western Sydney County Council (WSCC)
3. Biosecurity Council of Western Sydney (BCWS)
4. Western Sydney Biosecurity County Council (WSBCC)
5. The Biosecurity Alliance (TBA)
6. Biosecurity Alliance (BA)
7. Western Sydney Biosecurity Alliance (WSBA)

Potential Taglines

1. Vigilance, Education and Growth.
2. Connecting Western Sydney for better land management.
3. Delivering the Biosecurity Act for a better Western Sydney.

Financial Impacts

The organisation will have to make some initial investment into the rebranding, however, this could be likely achieved for under \$20K and is non-recurrent. There will also be the costs associated with training and capacity building of existing staff. However, this could be staged and budgeted over some years (\$15K per annum). In the long term, as the services are likely to be on a "fee for service" basis, they would be cost recoverable via either grants or private contracts. This will mean the additional services will not incur additional rates drain.

Conclusion

With the recent change in legislation from the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993*, to the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, HRCC finds itself in a unique position to rebrand itself to the community. The opportunity should also be taken to place ourselves in a position in which we develop increasing amounts of public value by adapting to become a modern County Council that best reflects the needs of our local community and responds to the broader political spheres with agility.

References

- Bourgon, J. 2011, *A New Synthesis of Public Administration: serving the 21st century*, McGill Queen University Press, Canada.
- Brown, A.J. 2014, *Australian Constitutional Values Survey 2014*, Centre for Governance & Public Policy, Griffith University, Nathan, Queensland, Australia.
- DPI, N. 2017, *NSW Weeds Action Program 2015-20: Guidelines - Year 2 Version 1.0*, NSW Department of Primary Orange, NSW.
- McKinlay P., Pillora, S., Tan, S.F. & Von Tunzelmann, A. 2011, *Evolution in Community Governance: Building on What Works.*, Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government, University of Technology Sydney.
- Stoker, G. 1998, 'Governance as theory: Five propositions.', *International Social Science Journal*, vol. 50, pp. 17-28.
- Stoker, G. 2004, *Transforming Local Governance: from Thatcherism to New Labor*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Recommendations:

1. That Hawkesbury River County Council plans to request its name is changed to "Western Sydney Biosecurity County Council" with a trading name of "Western Sydney Biosecurity".
2. That the General Manager reports back to council at the next Ordinary Meeting with a process for the name change.

ITEM GM 3. HRCC DRAFT OPERATIONAL PLAN 2018-19

Reason for Report: Statutory

The strategic direction for HRCC is provided through the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) framework. It is a requirement of a County Council to review their Business Activity Strategic Plan and Delivery Program following the *Local Government Regulations*, Division 8 guidelines.

On 8 June 2017, HRCC adopted the following documents:

- HRCC Business Activity Strategic Plan (BASP) 2017-2027
- HRCC Delivery Program 2017-2021
- HRCC Operational Plan 2017-2018

As the BASP and the Delivery Program are still current, and HRCC is still in the process of implementing its guidance, only the Operational Plan is required to be updated for this year.

The operational plan is the key “go to” document for Councillors. It reflects the broader strategic objectives but has enough detail to clearly define works to an individual Council scale.

Process

In accordance with Section 405, Local Government Act 1993, Council is required to develop an Operational Plan which:

- must be adopted before the beginning of each financial year and must outline the activities to be undertaken that year, as part of the Delivery Program.
- must include the Statement of Revenue Policy.
- must be publicly exhibited for at least 28 days, over which period public submissions can be made to Council.
- Must not be adopted before Council has accepted and considered any submissions made on the draft Operational Plan.
- must be posted on the council’s website within 28 days of the plan being adopted.

Therefore, this meeting requires that Council places the Draft HRCC Operating Plan 2018/19 on public exhibition for a period of 28 days.

Operational Budgeting

The Bottom Line

HRCC budget is set to aim for a deficit budget in 2018/19 (-\$17,055). This is a parity budget is designed to maintain HRCC in a healthy financially sustainable position.

Income

The income is budgeted to increase by \$60,549 (4%) in 2018/19 for HRCC is based on a combination of Council Contributions (47%) and operating grants from external authorities (34%). These grants have existing contract arrangements with the Department of Primary Industries. The remaining 19% is as a result of HRCC's own income generation for external services, this is as an increase of 4% on the previous year.

Expenditure

HRCC's biggest expenditure item is staff. The organisation will move into the new FY with 17 positions, the same as the previous year, representing 71% of our costs. The remaining 39%, in declining order is composed of; depreciation, plant running, administration, governance, depot and office maintenance.

Capital Budgeting

HRCC Capital disposal and purchases are made to directly assist with the delivery of operational result targets as they relate to our Delivery and Operational Plans. They have been made against the background of two continuing trends:

Climatic – Our region is experiencing a period of average rainfall and periodic flooding. This means we are doing less control of floating aquatic weeds, but more control of weeds on the river banks and broader landscape. This has the effect of reducing our capital requirements but increasing our labour requirements.

Policy Guidelines – NSW Government policy in relation to weed management increasingly focuses on weed detection, eradication and education.

Funding Sources – Because of policy trends funding priorities have been increasingly focused on surveillance, new weed incursions and upper catchment activities. Whilst this requires less use of heavy plant, it requires higher staff levels, GIS computer mapping capabilities, and mobility to move around the landscape.

In 2018/19 Council will purchase and dispose the following items:

Asset Purchases 2018-19

- Chainsaw \$1,200
- Spray Equipment \$10,000
- Weed Mapping Hardware \$5,000
- Computer and IT upgrades \$10,000
- Depot and Office Upgrades \$15,000
- Tipping Trailer \$7,000

Asset Disposals 2018-19

- Spray Equipment \$9,000
- Transport Barge \$10,000

Operational Delivery

The operations of HRCC are the activities of weed control, weed inspection and surveillance, capacity building and governance. The HRCC Business Activity Statement 2013-2023 sets the guiding strategic principles of the activities undertaken by our staff.

These are:

Strategic Objective 1

Prevent the establishment of new weed species within our County – Exclude

Strategic Objective 2

Eliminate the spread of new and existing weed species within our County – Eradicate or Contain

Strategic Objective 3

Reduce the impact of widespread weeds on key assets – Effectively Manage

Strategic Objective 4

Ensure the community, industry and government stakeholders have the ability and long-term commitment to manage weeds – Build Capacity

These strategies are then used to set measurable targets for each of our activities.

The introduction of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (NSW) from 1 July 2017 has meant many definitions and terminology have been updated to reflect the new Act. However, as the Biosecurity Act is strategically based on the principals of the NSW Invasive Species Plan, and HRCC objectives on that, they continue to remain relevant.

In summary, for works 2017/18, the following targets have been set:

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
Total Weed Control	544HA	521HA	459HA
Total Private Property Inspections	3,580	2,835	2696
Total Commercial Inspections	302	268	268
Weed Mapping	105 HA	105HA	0HA
Field Days	1	25	15
Property Weed Mgt. Plans	262	25	21
CBSM* Projects	3	0	0

*Community Based Social Marketing – Programs based specifically on behaviour change in relation to weeds.

ENCLOSURE_GM3: HRCC Draft Operational Plan 2017/2018

Recommendations:

1. *That the General Manager's report on HRCC DRAFT OPERATIONAL PLAN 2018-19 is received and noted.*
2. *That the General Manager communicates to each constituent Council manager the cost of HRCC Membership contribution is \$175,462 +GST for 2018/19.*
3. *That the General Manager consults directly with our member Councils via the HRCC Management Network.*
4. *That the Council places on public exhibition for a period of 28 days the Draft HRCC Operational Plan 2018-2019, and the General Manager reports back to the next ordinary meeting on any submissions received and changes made.*
5. *That the Council intends to adopt the plans, with any changes, at the next Ordinary Meeting on 14 June 2018.*

ITEM GM 4. HAWKESBURY LANDCARE UPDATE

Reason for Report: Informative



In the last 6 months, since updating the HRCC Board last, Hawkesbury Landcare Network (HLN) has continued to build land-caring capacity in the local community by engaging many people across the Hawkesbury area.



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. A 'Grazing Management' workshop has been organised in partnership with Greater Sydney Local Land Services, which is coming up on April 21.

A second stage of funding has been applied for, so that HLN can carry on providing valuable soil and water health related workshops to the Hawkesbury community until June 2019.

HLN, has also enabled many other pursuits of local landholders and community members, with:

Landcare Groups

Continuing development of local Landcare Groups, including three new Landcare Groups, namely Remony Farm Landcare, Cattai Landcare and Blue Gum Landcare (the latter two groups being partially and entirely in the Hills Shire).

The Cattai Landcare Group will have as its focus the Broadwater wetland, neighbours to Mitchell Park and, others interested in between.

Blue Gum Landcare Group is the result of the Cattai Hills Environment Network (CHEN), which is supported by Landcare.

Wet-Landcare and Streamwatch: Bushells Lagoon crisis



HLN has supported local landholders and community members, concerned about the drying out of Bushells Lagoon. It is evident that illegal water extraction was the cause of the complete emptying of the wetland, and a site of mass death, including fish (native and exotic), eels, turtles and birds.

Additional complications on the matter were an outburst of blue/ green alga and, Botulism found in a

dead bird. Most strikingly, is the fact that illegal trenching works on what is believed to be Council land has been allowed to continue.

Fortunately, a motion has now been passed by Hawkesbury City Council, and a 'wetlands workshop' will be pulled together with a number of stakeholders to determine a strategy forward in repairing Bushells, once a wonderland of life.

HLN is currently awaiting the news of a grant applied for in partnership with Conservation Volunteers Australia and the Hawkesbury Environment Network. This grant, totalling \$100,000 will be focussing on Bushells Lagoon, with an emphasis of better land management and reducing nutrient runoff by the surrounding properties.

StreamWatch

Streamwatch throughout summer was a hot and devastating activity. Following on from the update on Wet-Landcare, two Streamwatch Groups from Bushells Lagoon captured water quality of the Lagoon in its worst state on record, according to neighbours to the wetland.



Dead ducks were collected on the March Streamwatch day, and several were observed to be in very poor health, unable to fly.

Unusual water analysis results were confirmed by Western Sydney University and their turtle expert, Michelle Ryan, in February.

A number of netting traps were also found at Bushells Lagoon, which had been left unchecked with 40 turtles in them. At least 20 of these animals had perished. These traps were found on the same property that illegally extracted the last remaining drop from the Lagoon. In recent days, the same offender has reworked its water supply trench (1km long) so that after the recent rain, its property was not flooded. All of this is occurring on Crown land, which is under the care and protection of Council.

On a positive note, two new Streamwatch Groups are starting up in Maraylya, with the help of CHEN.

Community Fox Trapping Program

Fox trapping has continued by a group of community members in Bilpin. Unfortunately, the use of small cage traps has not proved very successful. The group, known as the Bilpin Feral Animal Management Group are now using larger, purpose-built cage traps which are getting good catch results in southern Sydney. Next financial year, training will be provided on the use of Soft Jaw Traps, which are also hoped to bring in more fox numbers.

Additional funding has been applied for, to expand into Soft Jaw Traps throughout a larger area in Bilpin



Filming of the progress to date will be carried out in May. This will focus on the need to control foxes for agricultural and biodiversity reasons, given the project range includes the Threatened Ecological Community, Blue Mountains Shale Cap Forest.

Mitchell Park and Scheyville National Park Volunteer Bushcare Landcare Program

The first of four Wild Weeding Weekends was held in mid-March. This was a successful event, which brought 20 volunteers into the weed control programs of NPWS in Mitchell Park and Scheyville NP. This event, and the three future weekend events are a partnership between NPWS, Landcare and Conservation Volunteers Australia. They offer a fully catered weekend, with accommodation and all facilities. In addition to the bush regeneration the volunteers perform, special environmental activities are facilitated for the participants, including a spotlight for the Yellow-bellied Glider in Mitchell Park. This is the last known site for the threatened Glider in the Sydney basin.

Hawkesbury Rainforests

After a Landcare facilitated Hawkesbury Rainforest forum late last year, OEH carried out surveys on a number of private properties in the Kurrajong area, each containing the threatened Western Sydney Dry Rainforest. The report of this survey has now been made available to Landcare and shows that at least one private property in Kurrajong has pristine Rainforest.

Landcare is now investigating guided walks throughout a couple of rainforest sites, with the botanist used for the survey, as an educational and awareness raising event for local Rainforest enthusiasts.

Incorporation for Hawkesbury Landcare Network

HLN is now an Incorporated body. Members to the Network are growing steadily, as are the groups and networks it supports.

Recommendations:

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

ITEM GM 5. HRCC ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY

Reason for Report: Statutory

As per the Board resolution of 8 February 2018 (Minute #01992-2) the General Manager has placed the Draft HRCC Asset Management Policy on public exhibition.

The purpose of the policy is to provide a framework to guide the sustainable management of Council's asset portfolio and allow for appropriate expansion if required within the parameters of guiding legislation.

OBJECTIVES

To ensure effective asset management, Council will endeavour to:

- Utilise assets to their fullest potential to maximise usage and economic performance.
- Ensure that asset renewal, disposal, upgrade or new asset provision is carried out in accordance with the adopted resourcing strategy that includes demonstrated need, life cycle costing, alternative modes of delivery and sustainability.
- Ensure asset management practices conform to legislative requirements and reflect best practice in the industry.
- Ensure that all asset purchase, maintenance, rehabilitation and replacement shall be guided by Council's Asset Management Plans and annual budgetary process.
- Assets meet specifications and quality standards; and
- Assets meet requirements for public safety, OH&S and maintainability.

EXHIBITION PROCESS

The draft policy was placed on public exhibition on 12 February 2018 until 28 March 2018 (44 days). The document was made available on our website, and free hard copies provided through our office at 6 Walker St, South Windsor.

There were no public submissions received.

There have been no changes made to the draft document.

ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

A requirement of the Asset Management Policy is to produce an Asset Management Plan. This plan provides an internal valuation on all of HRCC assets and details their depreciation life cycle. It will be updated every two years.

ENCLOSURES_GM5:	HRCC Asset Management Policy 2018 HRCC Asset Management Plan 2018
-----------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------

Recommendations:

1. *That the report is received and noted.*
2. *That Council adopts the HRCC Asset Management Policy 2018.*

ITEM GM 6. STAFFING

Reason for Report: Informative

Since the last Council meeting held on 8 February 2018, there has been no staff changes.

HRCC currently employs a total of 17 people (at FTE of 16.6).

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

Hot weather conditions have continued through autumn over the county as well as a number of storms and rain events and approximately 80mm of rain has been recorded on the gauge in the depot, this combination of weather has seen weed populations take off, with a proliferation of growth and flowering activity.

Council staff have had their hands full tackling established plants as well as multitudes of fresh weed germination brought on by the weather conditions. Weeds that have been



of concern due to their rapid growth have been; Kidney leaf mud plantain in the Darling Mills Creek system in the Hills Shire, Boneseed in all LGA's, Senegal tea plant in the Hawkesbury River and its tributaries, Green cestrum has been an issue in a number of areas but particularly along creek lines around Kings Langley and Lalor Park. Boneseed in the Hills Shire has exploded from the seedbank with germination of seeds taking place at all known infestations.

Kidney leaf mud plantain, actively growing in Darling Mills Creek (Baulkham Hills)

Aquatic weed species have been flushed into popular swimming and fishing areas in the Hawkesbury/Nepean River by a recent river rise. Salvinia and Water hyacinth are visible in bays along the river at Castlereagh, Yarramundi and North Richmond.

Blacktown City Council

Terrestrial weed control in the Blacktown LGA has seen Green cestrum targeted in council reserves and along roadsides in the Doonside and Rooty Hill South areas. Minor road and reserves have been targeted by weed control teams, basal barking and cut stumping Green cestrum of varying ages.

Green cestrum has also been treated along the park and reserve network that runs along Blacktown creek from the Prospect highway at Seven Hills – north to Joseph Banks Drive in Kings Langley. Stem scrape and Basal bark control techniques were used in this treatment program as most of the cestrum plants were located amongst areas of revegetation.

Boneseed control has taken place in Glenwood. Boneseed seedlings were the principle target of these control works. Most of the known locations where Boneseed has been removed, had seedlings germinating from the onsite seedbank.

Aquatic weed control in the Blacktown LGA has focused on Ludwigia management via Truxor in Bungaribee Creek wetland. This emerging Ludwigia infestation has been treated via low pressure herbicide application.

Alligator weed in Plumpton wetlands is well under control, as inspection revealed in mid-March, terrestrial Alligator weed has re-established in the floodway of Bells Creek, downstream of Plumpton wetlands. This infestation of Alligator weed has been treated with selective herbicide.

Hawkesbury City Council

Hawkesbury LGA has been a hive of weed control activity from treating Green cestrum in grazing areas around St. Albans and Upper Macdonald through to roadside control of woody weed species and control of a number of aquatic weed species that have been respondent to favourable growing conditions.

St. Albans and Central Macdonald in the Hawkesbury's north east are rural areas where Green cestrum is impacting livestock from Green cestrum alkaloid poisoning. HRCC crews have been in attendance, treating roadside infestations of Green cestrum in an effort to reduce the number of seeding plants. This work will continue at regular intervals into winter 2018.

Green cestrum has again been targeted in riverfront reserves around Windsor and North Richmond, the reserves that have been treated are; Governor Philip Park, Macquarie Park, Little Manly (Freemans Reach), Hannah Park, Howe Park and Deerubbin Park.

Boneseed control works have been conducted in the following areas; South Windsor, Bilpin, Lower Portland, Sackville and Clarendon, in-line with other Boneseed sites, seed germination after the recent rain has occurred in number.



African Olive bearing fruit

Roadside woody weeds have been treated in the following locations; Pitt town, Cattai, Oakville, South Windsor, Cornwallis, Richmond lowlands, Freemans Reach, Wilberforce, East Kurrajong, Kurmond and North Richmond. The weeds that were targeted during these works were; African olive, Lantana, Blackberry, African boxthorn and Bitou bush. All these weed species were in low number but growing quickly.

Alligator weed has recovered from biological control attack and has required treatment in reserves that are popular with river users to reduce the threat of it being moved to new sites. HRCC teams have treated strategic areas of riverbank with herbicide from back packs to reduce off target damage to native vegetation.

Senegal tea plant has been thoroughly treated in Redbank creek, Cattai creek and the Hawkesbury river. The Truxor, boats and vehicle based quikspray units were used to spot spray this weed. The aquatic weed control program that has been active in the river is having a positive impact with Senegal tea plant numbers dropping by approximately 85% of their former size prior to treatment.



Water hyacinth and Salvinia have been visible in the Hawkesbury River, around North Richmond and Freemans Reach. These weeds were flushed out of upstream channels near Clarkes island (North Richmond) during a recent river rise and have been working their way through the river between North Richmond and Windsor.

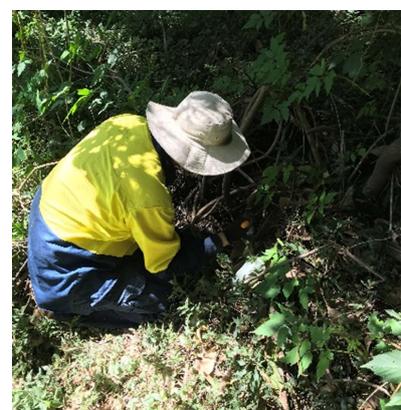
Typical Salvinia molesta aggregation in the Hawkesbury River at Freemans Reach

The Hills Shire Council

Roadside woody weed control has focused on the following target species in the Hills shire this month; Boneseed, Green cestrum, Lantana, African olive, Mother of millions, Apple of Sodom and Blackberry.

Increased rainfall this reporting period has spurred on weed growth, and this was particularly visible in the rural areas of the Hills Shire. The locations that have been treated lately have been; Annangrove, Glenorie, Glenhaven, Maroota, South Maroota and Wisemans ferry.

Weed control in reserves around the Hills has seen weed control teams visit Fred Caterson reserve at Castle Hill, Connie Lowe Reserve at Rouse Hill, Smalls Creek at Kellyville and Newman Road at Glenorie.



Weed control teams treating weedy vines, woody weeds and Senegal tea plant at Newman Rd. Glenorie.

Weed control in these reserves targeted many weed types and these were treated via low impact techniques given the sensitive nature of the reserves and the high quality of the surrounding native vegetation.

Aquatic weed treatment in the Hills Shire has seen Senegal tea plant and Alligator weed treated in the Hawkesbury River and Cattai Creek, Kidney leaf mud plantain in Darling Mills Creek and Christmas Bush Creek.

The aquatic weed control program has completed its second treatment of the lower Hawkesbury and Cattai Creek, spot spraying Senegal tea plant and Alligator weed. Only minor regrowth was treated by crews using boats to access these waterways.

Kidney leaf mud plantain has been strongly resurgent over the summer period in Darling Mills Creek and Christmas Bush Creek. Previously, control works conducted upon this species in early summer had treated small infestations of this weed species. Weed control, teams were shocked at the level of infestation when they returned in late February. Recent control works have brought the infestation density down to around 5% of unmanaged levels. Hand removal and spot treatment with Glyphosate were the applicable control techniques.

Penrith City Council

Weed control in the Penrith LGA this month has seen a mix of woody weeds and aquatics treated in Parks, reserves and along waterways. HRCC staff have conducted a number of weed sweeps through popular reserves such as Tench Reserve, Weir reserve and River Road reserve in Penrith. Woody weed species have been the primary focus. A number of weedy vine species are starting to emerge in Penrith's reserves. HRCC has been working with Penrith council staff to identify, map and treat vines such as Moonflower before they can establish significant populations. Other woody weed species treated during these operations are; Lantana, Green cestrum, African olive and African boxthorn.



Roadside weed control has been conducted due to the rampant growth of widespread weed species such as Blackberry, Green cestrum and Lantana. Areas that have been treated were; Oxley Park, Dunheved, North St. Marys, Tregear, Orchard Hills and Mulgoa.

Moonflower (*Ipomoea alba*) has recently been found along the Nepean River, Penrith



Some opuntia cactus species have been treated as part of this program although generally the Cactoblastis biological control has been active across the LGA and is chewing its way through Common pear, Smooth tree pear and cultivated Indian fig plants.

Common pear (*Opuntia stricta*) suffering damage from Cactoblastis moth at Wallacia

Aquatic weed treatment has been conducted on the Nepean River at Castlereagh, Penrith and Emu Plains targeting; Alligator weed, Salvinia and Water hyacinth. Spot spraying has been used to treat isolated outbreaks of these weeds.

Alligator weed is starting to recover from biological control attack over the summer months. Infestations close to boat ramps, picnic spots and kayak launching sites will be treated to prevent this pest moving offsite.

Biosecurity Weed Inspections

Broad leaf pepper - Blacktown, Penrith



Broad leaf pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*)

Private Property inspections to assess the extent of Priority Weed-Broad Leaf Pepper have been conducted across the areas of Oakhurst and Wallacia to meet the Local Objective of Eradication.

Wallacia - Control works have been conducted on the incursion located in Crossman Reserve. A specimen has been identified in private property by authorised weeds inspectors as the parent plant and has been controlled. Follow up control works will be carried out to ensure no reshooting occurs in Crossman's Reserve. Residents that were spoken to during the inspections were given handouts with HRCC details and photos of the Broad Leaf Pepper Tree and those residents that were not present were left the information in their letterbox. Residents were extremely positive towards inspectors and happy to engage inspectors with weed identification questions, historical information of Wallacia vegetation and stories of engagement with the reserve. The Wallacia Golf course was also inspected with no pepper noted.

Oakhurst- Inspections have occurred across the immediate urban neighbourhood of the plant located in the Mittaggar reserve. No further incursions of the plant were noted. Residents that were spoken to during the inspections were given handouts with HRCC details and photos of the Broad Leaf Pepper Tree and those residents that were not present were left the information in their letterbox. Residents have been very positive in their engagement with officers and Mittaggar reserve is seen as a key asset by all residents spoken with. The plant in the reserve will be controlled in Autumn.

Penrith- HRCC has identified a new incursion located on a Penrith road verge. This identifies the worth of HRCC's focus on internal education for identification skill sharing and field based high risk pathway surveillance. Preliminary Inspections in the immediate area have commenced and follow up inspections and surveying will occur. The plant will be controlled in Autumn.

Senegal Tea - Hawkesbury

Inspections and control are currently being conducted across the Redbank creek catchment to meet the Regional Priority Weed Objective of Containment of Priority weed-Senegal Tea Plant. An integration of private property inspections, weed spraying on council managed lands and vegetation mapping is being utilised in this catchment to strategically eradicate the Senegal from the catchment which flows directly to the Hawkesbury River at North Richmond.



Senegal Tea Plant, Redbank Creek, Hawkesbury



Mapping has occurred across the catchment with a core infestation zone being identified and the weed been traced further down the drainage line. One new incursion was noted in a neighbouring creek line and will be controlled by the resident. Senegal

has been flowering so it has been convenient to show land managers the plant and locating it has been straightforward for field staff.

Hay inspection

In March HRCC was contacted by a Hawkesbury resident who had found a seed in her horse's hay delivery that she was unable to identify. HRCC obtained a sample of the seed and spoke with the supplier of the hay



After investigation the seed was identified as a *Solanum* species (Ground Apple) and although not identified as a listed weed species it was unknown to weed officers as occurring in this area.

HRCC have utilised this experience to improve internal processes, educate staff and external stakeholders in the importance of plant and weed identification and engagement of

external stakeholders in HRCC's high risk pathways processes.

Hawkesbury Nepean Aquatic Weed Management Program

Weed levels in the Hawkesbury Nepean River currently sit at an acceptable level. There are low numbers of floating aquatic weed species – Water hyacinth and Salvinia that have been flushed out into high public use areas. *Egaria densa* is present in scattered locations throughout the river and is being managed through harvesting. Senegal tea plant and Alligator weed are currently being managed through the annual aquatic weed control program.

The recent increase in river levels has flushed low numbers of floating aquatic weeds (Salvinia and Water hyacinth) into high use areas of the river around Castlereagh and North Richmond. These weed infestations have been treated by staff with low pressure, targeted herbicide application. The Salvinia also had biological control agents amongst the floating aggregations, so the risk of spread by these species was limited.

Egaria densa has taken advantage of good growing conditions over summer and has established scattered beds at locations throughout the river system. Council's harvester has been deployed to conduct spot harvesting to control the growth of this weed species and allow activities such as rowing, kayaking and fishing to be carried out unimpeded.

The annual aquatic weed control program continues throughout the Hawkesbury/Nepean. The program is drawing to a close as the cooler autumn weather becomes consistent, and aquatic plant activity slows down. This program has successfully controlled aquatic weeds along approximately 64km of river riverbank, and reduced Senegal tea plant densities in the river by over 70%.

The current condition of the river is good, weed populations, although present are well managed and pose no threat to activity on the water.

ENCLOSURES_OM1:	HRCC Operational Maps
	HRCC Operational Report 2017/2018 Q3

Recommendation:

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

6. COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

Nil to report

7. GENERAL BUSINESS / QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE
