

**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, 14 August 2014 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, **29 May 2014** 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 amount invested on 20 May 2014, and was \$1,250,000. The total amount in the transaction account 20 May 2014 was \$145,939.80.

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

On 10 June 2014 a term deposit of \$500,000 invested with AMP for a period of 183 days at 3.9% was recalled at maturity.

On 12 June 2014 a term deposit of **\$500,000** was invested with ME Bank for a period of 271 days at 3.6%, maturing on 10 October 2014.

On 16 June 2014 a term deposit of \$200,000 invested with AMP for a period of 182 days at 3.9% was recalled at maturity.

On 17 June 2014 a term deposit of \$100,000 invested with AMP for a period of 180 days at 3.9% was recalled at maturity.

On 19 June 2014 a term deposit of **\$350,000** was invested with Bank of Queensland for a period of 90 days at 3.4%, maturing on 17 September 2014.

On 23 June 2014 a term deposit of \$150,000 invested with Bank of Sydney for a period of 97 days at 3.75% was recalled at maturity.

A term deposit of **\$300,000** remains invested with Bank of Sydney Ltd. for a period of 183 days at 3.85%, maturing on 14 October 2014.

The total amount invested 31 July 2014 is **\$1,150,000***.

The total amount in our transaction account on 31 July 2014 is **\$58,607.00**

The RBA Cash Rate on **31 July 2014** was **2.5%**.

**This includes Sydney NSW Weeds Action Program funding (\$86,135.77 at 30/6/2014) 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 DRAFT INVESTMENT POLICY

Reason for Report: Statutory

Background

It is a requirement under the *Local Government Act 1993* that Council has an investment policy.

Council holds cash reserves for a variety of reasons, most notable it is to cover unpaid liabilities such as staff entitlements and grant commitments. It also provides security and perpetuity for the organisation in times of unforeseen events. This would include major aquatic weed outbreaks or widespread flooding in the region.

Objective

The objective of the Draft HRCC Investment Policy is to provide a framework for the investing of Council's funds at the most favourable rate of interest available to it at the time, whilst having due consideration of risk and security for that investment type and ensuring that its liquidity requirements are being met.

Whilst exercising the power to invest, consideration is to be given to the preservation of capital, liquidity, and the return on investment.

Preservation of capital is the principal objective of the investment portfolio. Investments are to be placed in a manner that seeks to ensure security and safeguarding the investment portfolio. This includes managing credit and interest rate risk within identified thresholds and parameters.

Investments should be allocated to ensure there is sufficient liquidity to meet all reasonably anticipated cash flow requirements, as and when they fall due, without incurring the risk of significant costs due to the unanticipated sale of an investment. Investment decisions should be planned so as to also minimise the risk of having capital in a stagnant location that erodes its value.

The policy is designed to offer the flexibility to find the right balance between all the risks and ensure Council's funds are managed prudently.

ENCLOSURE_GM2	HRCC Draft Investment Policy Aug 2014
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Recommendations:

1. *That the report is received and noted.*
2. *That Council places the Draft HRCC Investment Policy on public exhibition for a period of 28 days.*

3. That the General Manager reports back to Council at the next Ordinary Meeting on any submissions received.
4. That Council plans to adopt the Draft HRCC Investment Policy at the next Ordinary Meeting.

ITEM GM 3. HRCC 4TH QUARTER FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reason for Report: Statutory

The 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.

ENCLOSURE_GM3	HRCC 4 th Quarter Financial Report 2013-14
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Recommendation:

1. That the report is received and noted.

ITEM GM 4. HRCC DRAFT ANNUAL FINANCIAL REVIEW 2013-14

Reason for Report: Informative

A Draft HRCC Annual Financial Review 2013/14 has been completed by compiling our quarterly reports. This is done in advance of the full external audit process to provide a timelier 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 2014. The overall picture is positive with HRCC returning a small surplus of \$93,307 (7%), and coming in \$68,276 ahead of 2013/14 budget predictions.

This means our Council has produced a small surplus for a second year in a row, which keeps us in a long term sustainable position (See **Figure 1**).

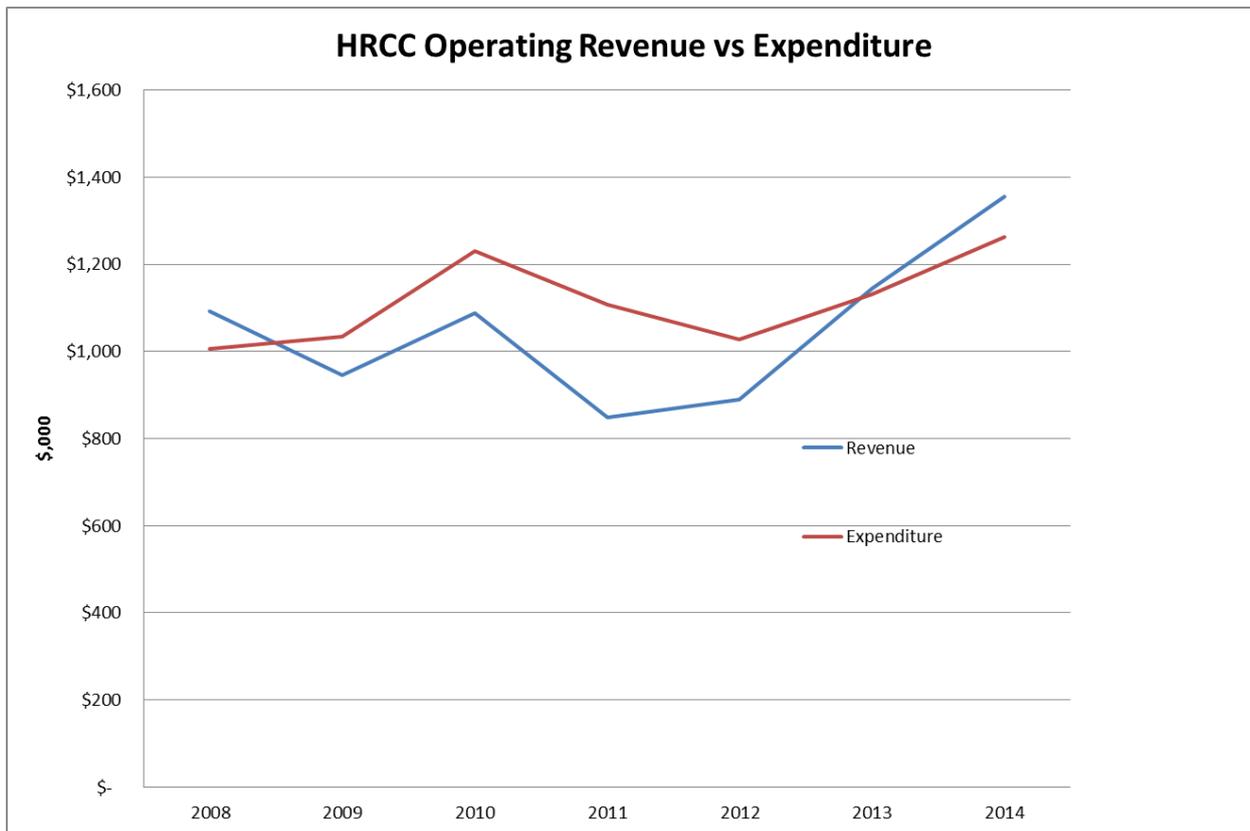


Figure 1: HRCC 6 Year Financial Operating Trend

Preparation of Financial Statements 2013/14

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 2013/14 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 2013/14
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Recommendations:

1. That the report is received and noted.
2. That Council prepares the Draft HRCC Financial Statements 2013/14 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 Council.
4. That the Audited Financial Statements 2013/14 are presented to the Ordinary Meeting of 9 October 2014 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 Trainee Weed Officers. They are:

- Ms Sophie Mills
- Ms Brianna Davies

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. HRCC GREEN ARMY TENDER

Reason for Report: Informative

On 4 August 2014 the General Manager was advised by the Commonwealth Department of Environment that HRCC was not successful in its tender application to be a service provider for the Green Army Western Sydney region. The successful tenderers for Western Sydney were Manpower and Campbell Page.

HRCC will continue to look for opportunities to work with the Green Army program.

Recommendation:

1. That the report is received and noted.

ITEM GM 7. HRCC MEETING WITH LOCAL LAND SERVICES

Reason for Report: Informative

On 31 July 2014, the Chairman, Clr. Bob Porter and the General Manager, Mr Chris Dewhurst met the NSW Local Land Services Chair of Chairs, Mr John Maccurthur-Stanham at Penrith LLS offices.

The meeting was aimed at opening the relationship between HRCC and LLS. A positive conversation ensued, which covered topics such as aligning HRCC's operational role with the LLS "enabling role" and regional strategy. Some aspects of the NSW Weeds Review were touched upon, however it was agreed that detailed discussions would not be required until the final determination of the NRC recommendation are made by the Minister for Primary Industries.

Recommendation:

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

ITEM GM 8. HRCC MEETING WITH MEMBER FOR MACQUARIE, LOUISE MARKUS, MP

Reason for Report: Informative

On 4 August 2014 the Chairman, Clr. Bob Porter and the General Manager, Mr Chris Dewhurst met the Member for Macquarie, Louise Markus MP. The meeting took place on-site at Kurrajong, in an area recently worked by HRCC staff. Also present were members of the Hawkesbury Environment Network Landcare group.

The meeting discussed the success of the ongoing "Cats claw Creeper" project and the partnership arrangements currently in place with HRCC.

Recommendation:

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

ITEM GM 9. 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 \$35,026 in the 2014-15 year. This project will consist of HRCC staff working in nine crown reserves across the county, and undertaking over 1000 hours of weed control.

A media release was published on 6 August 2014 and is enclosed with this report.

ENCLOSURE_GM9:	HRCC Media Release – Public Reserve Funding
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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

Summary

Weeds across the county have taken full advantage of the late season warm spell and weed control teams have dealt with some unusual plant activity as a result of the warm weather.

Intermittent cool spells have fooled many plants into thinking that winter had come and gone, resulting in unseasonal activity amongst our target weed species. Mother of Millions is a prime example of this activity. Flowering time for this species is late winter and spring, this year infestations were flowering by early June. The optimal treatment time for this species is when it is flowering so work teams have scrambled to treat infestations of this plant while it is flowering.

Penrith LGA

Blackberry infestations stayed active much longer this year which allowed teams to treat roadside infestations and regrowth in the south and south west of the LGA. Due to the longer growing season a number of previously treated infestations required additional herbicide application to address regrowth. Areas treated were: Mulgoa, South Penrith, Orchard Hills, Regentville and Wallacia.

Green cestrum plants were still in condition to treat up until July which allowed works to continue targeting cestrum along the banks of South creek from St. Marys through to Llandilo.

Mother of Millions control works have been expansive due to the unusual warm spell. Work teams have covered much of the LGA targeting this pest with low pressure herbicide application of Affray 300 which is a target specific spray and safe to use amongst other desirable vegetation.

Blacktown LGA

Terrestrial weed control has been the focus of activity within the Blacktown LGA over the past two months. Green cestrum has again been targeted along roadsides and in council reserves. Areas targeted included Schofields, Riverstone, Quakers Hill and Marayong.

Mother of Millions is prevalent in a number of locations across the council area and work teams have concentrated efforts in areas where the infestations are heaviest, these predominantly roadside infestations have been treated in Blacktown, Prospect, Rooty Hill, Glendenning and Plumpton.

At the request of the BCC General Manager, council has commenced weed control works along the road reserve in the vicinity of the animal holding facility at Prospect. These activities have targeted Lantana and African Olive growth. Work teams have treated Lantana with high volume herbicide application, whilst African olive has been injected and smaller specimens have been cut and painted with glyphosate. Works have been planned to continue at this site until October 2014.

The Hills Shire LGA

Mother of Millions, Green cestrum and Blackberry have been the most active target species treated within the Hills Shire this reporting period.

Mother of Millions is a particularly common roadside pest in the north and north/west of the shire. Work teams have been treating roadside infestations in areas such as Sackville north, Maroota, South Maroota, Wiseman's ferry, Glenorie and Kenthurst. Control works upon Mother of Millions will continue throughout the winter months until plants stop flowering and herbicide application is not effective.

Green cestrum has continued to be active well into winter when it usually loses its leaf and shuts down for the winter period. This has allowed staff to carry on with control works within council reserves along creek lines where cestrum is commonly seen. Reserves treated include, Small's creek – Withers Rd, Cattai creek – Newman Rd, Cattai creek – Annangrove Rd, Cattai creek – Pitt town/Dural Rd and Cattai creek at Showground Rd.

Hawkesbury LGA

With many kilometres of prime roadside growing sites, the Hawkesbury LGA has the largest infestations of Mother of Millions of our four council areas. From the shale soils around Pitt town and Scheyville through to the sandstone soils in Sackville and Lower Portland, Mother of Millions are present and particularly noticeable when flowering brightly. This weed species is toxic to livestock when consumed and has a massive propagule load, meaning that if left untreated large infestations can form quickly.

Work teams have covered large areas of the Hawkesbury treating this weed species with herbicide from the spray trucks. Areas treated include: Grose vale, Kurrajong, Kurrajong heights, North Richmond, Freemans reach, Wilberforce, Sackville, Lower Portland, Leetsvale, Scheyville and Pitt town.

African olive control continues in the north of the LGA with work sites and inspection zones in North Richmond, Freemans Reach and Upper Colo. The works in particular at Upper Colo are of strategic importance due to the fact that the proposed African olive containment line for Sydney is south of this infestation, and it is relatively small in size making the infestation an eradication target.

Green cestrum has been carried out along roadsides bordering the Hawkesbury River, roads that were treated include: Settlers Rd, Greens Rd, River Rd, Webb’s creek Rd and Tizzana Rd.

Inspection and Weed Surveillance Program

Inspectors have targeted a variety of aquatic and terrestrial weed species this reporting period. Kidney leaf mud plantain inspections in the Hills shire has targeted residences backing onto Darling Mills creek and its tributaries. These inspections were conducted to assess the distribution of this Class 1 weed species. Inspectors did not find extensive infestations of the target species, however they did locate Class 3 weeds – Willow leaf primrose and Peruvian primrose. These locations have been noted for future treatment.

Inspectors have embarked on a large inspection and awareness campaign, targeting stock feed suppliers across the county. They visited stock feed retailers, growers and distributors as well as related retail stores to inspect for weed growth and propagules as well as providing topical information on the subject of weed contamination and its relation to primary producers and the equine industry.

High risk sites throughout the county have also been visited by HRCC inspectors, sites such as: council stockpile sites, aquariums, nurseries, urban waterways and truck stops. The stockpile sites and truck stops have most weed growth, mostly nuisance weeds with minor infestations of class 4 weeds.

ENCLOSURES_OM1:	HRCC LGA Operational Maps July/Aug 2014
	HRCC 4 th Quarter Operational Report 2013/14

Recommendation:

1. That the report is received and noted.

ITEM OM2. GRANT REPORT – LOCAL LAND SERVICES BONESEED AND AFRICAN OLIVE

Reason for Report: Informative

Greater Sydney LLS funded this innovative project that’s targeted two high risk weed species utilising HRCC’s traineeship program. The direction of the Boneseed component of the project has been adjusted to deal with the on-ground weed situation, whilst the olive control steadily claws through control targets and clearly defines a containment line throughout the north and north/west of the county for African olive. Both of these weed species are now listed as noxious plants within our county, Boneseed (class 1), African olive (class 4).

Boneseed

At the commencement of this project Boneseed was declared an eradication target with the current knowledge of the weed at that time proposing that infestations were small and capable of being eradicated locally. 18 months into the project a much

clearer picture of Boneseed spread and density across the landscape has been created and Boneseed populations are widespread and growing.



Hand removal of Boneseed seedlings at Bella Vista

Despite the negative outlook that has been depicted, controlling the spread of this species is an achievable target, this revised “control” target has been discussed with LLS who have agreed that containment rather than eradication has a higher chance of success.

Weed control teams have defined the core of the Boneseed infestation to a number of locations within the county including: Bella Vista, Norwest, Glenwood and Lalor Park. These core infestations are treated on a six week rotation to address new germination from the seed bank in the soil. Boneseed propagules stay active in the soil for up to ten years. Mature plants are quite easily killed - it is the masses of seed present in the soil that sustains the infestations.

Teams have also detected outlying infestations numbering ten or less plants per infestation in isolated areas such as Cattai, Glenorie, Erskine Park, Bilpin, Maraylya. These infestations have been treated and viewed as realistic eradication targets.

Council’s inspectorial staff has put a huge effort into building awareness of Boneseed within the community, this has taken place via: 411 property inspections, educational events and landholder mentorship programs. The message is steadily getting out into the community about the Boneseed menace. Members of the public contact the office regularly to make enquiries regarding controlling this species in their gardens.

At the completion of this grant funded work, council will endeavour to protect this investment by conducting control works upon Boneseed found on public land, and by conducting private property inspections in targeted suburbs.

African Olive

The formation of the African olive containment line which is a major component of this project is advancing at a steady rate. The containment line encompasses the suburbs of Grose Vale, Kurrajong, North Richmond, Pitt town, Annangrove, and Rouse Hill, in an effort to contain the spread of this species within the Sydney basin. A small number of African olive infestations occur outside the containment line and these infestations are being controlled with the view of eradication being facilitated in the near future.



Treatment of African Olive along South Creek at Orchard Hills

The majority of the African olive infestations are held on public land such as council road reserve, parks, reserves as well as some scattered infestations occurring on NPWS estate. Control of this species has been developed by staff as initial treatments were not completely successful. Large olive trees that were treated during the colder months required follow up injection to kill them.

To accompany the control works, council inspectors carried out property inspections and an awareness campaign to enlighten landholders to the threat this weed species poses. 239 properties were visited during the campaign and 12 landholders are being mentored in control of this species upon their properties.

Over 120 hectares of land has been treated for this species by council staff throughout the county. Over 60% of this work has been carried upon public land. At the time of reporting, four landholders outside the containment line were yet to commit to the mentoring program or have control works carried out by council weed control teams. Efforts will continue to encourage these landholders to join the control program for the benefit of our environment at large.



Assessing control at Grose Vale

Recommendation:

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

**ITEM OM3. GRANT REPORT – DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES –
AQUATIC WEED MANAGEMENT**

Reason for Report: Informative

The condition of the Hawkesbury/Nepean River has been excellent over the last 12 months. Aquatic weed levels are very low throughout the system, populations of native submerged aquatic plants are stable – without causing trouble in the stretches of river that are used for swimming and paddling.

The projects main target, Senegal tea plant (Class 1) has been restricted to physical removal and spot spraying due to general dormancy across the county. Good results were achieved during spray operations in late summer and autumn 2014 with no new infestations of Senegal tea plant detected below freeman’s Reach. Control works this coming year are planned for the summer period between North Richmond and Sackville, inspecting and treating Senegal tea plant with herbicide application.

Kidney leaf mud plantain (class 1) is another high priority aquatic weed that council is endeavouring to eradicate from the waterways of the county. Thankfully this species is restricted to the Darling Mills creek system that flows into the Parramatta river system which is much smaller compared to the Hawkesbury/Nepean River system. Control works by our teams are keeping this weed species under tight control through hand removal and bagging collected plants.



Distributing *Salvinia* weevils at Shaw's Island

Inspection of the river is conducted each month via boat and inspection on foot. Recent inspection of Yarramundi reserve detected small *Salvinia* plants that had been blown via southerly winds around the lake shoreline, this infestation will be assessed during spring 2014 for weevil introduction. Upstream at Devlin road a similar story has taken place – further investigation revealed a bay on Shaw's island containing a mixed infestation of *Salvinia* and Water hyacinth. The *Salvinia* has been treated with weevils. The water hyacinth will need to be treated in spring 2014 with herbicide.

The weed containment booms have been inspected on a regular basis and are collecting fragments of *Salvinia* and singular Water hyacinth plants, in the middle reaches of the river such as Yarramundi and Cordner's corner. These species are present in the river system hidden by bankside foliage and debris, which in itself is not a problem – the river has historically held small populations of these aquatic weed species.

This coming year however, is shaping up to be interesting though. Long periods of warm weather well into winter helped sustain aquatic plants where normally they would be destroyed by the cold. A general lack of rain is reducing water flow and this concentrates the nutrient load within the river, add to this warm water temperatures from spring and summer, and the increased day length as the seasons warm – we have all the ingredients needed for weed blooms to occur.

Strong aquatic weed growth is forecast for the coming spring and summer, which will require council to implement a number of control measures to keep the condition of the river at its current level. Trapping aquatic weed with booms for harvesting,

herbicide application and the use of biological control agents will all play their part in maintaining river health.

Recommendation:

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

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. **SENT – 13 May 2014** – Letter to all member council General Managers. Re: Member contributions 2014-15.
2. **DATED – 29 May 2014** – Letter from Clr. Keith Rhodes, LGNSW. Re: NSW Local Government annual conference 2014.
3. **SENT – 3 June 2014** – Letter to all member council General Managers. Re: Member contributions 2014-15.
4. **DATED – 20 June 2014** – Letter from Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP to Chairman, Clr. Bob Porter. Re: Local land services election
5. **DATED – 25 June 2014** – Permit (#OUT14/17223) from Department of Primary Industries for HRCC to grow and transport noxious weeds.
6. **SENT – 26 June 2014** – Email to NSW Division of Local Government (dlg@dlg.nsw.gov.au) providing a link to our adopted HRCC Operational Plan 2014-15.
7. **DATED – 15 July 2014** – Letter from Clr. Keith Rhodes, LGNSW. Re: NSW Local Government conference 2014.
8. **DATED – 1 August 2014** – Letter from Peta Lane, Department of Environment. Re: HRCC Green Army tender.

Recommendation:

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

7. GENERAL BUSINESS / QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

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