

**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, 7 April 2016 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 February 2016** 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

The report presented to the last Ordinary Meeting, displayed the total amounts recorded on 4 February 2016 (EOD); investment accounts \$1,400,000; on-call account \$71,918.88; and transaction account \$55,349.06.

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

On 16 February 2016, a term deposit of \$100,000 invested with Macquarie Bank Ltd. for a period of 270 days at 3.0% was redeemed at maturity.

On 16 March 2016, a term deposit of \$200,000 invested with NAB for a period of 180 days at 2.88% was redeemed at maturity.

On 28 March 2016, a term deposit of \$100,000 invested with NAB for a period of 180 days at 2.93% was redeemed at maturity.

On 31 March, a term deposit of **\$100,000** was invested with Bank of Queensland, for a period of 210 days at 3.05%, maturing on 27 October 2016.

A term deposit of **\$100,000** remains invested with Bank of Queensland for a period of 181 days at 2.95%, maturing on 6 April 2016.

A term deposit of **\$500,000** remains invested with Bank of Queensland for a period of 182 days at 2.9%, maturing on 20 April 2016.

A term deposit of **\$200,000** remains invested with AMP Bank for a period of 270 days at 2.9%, maturing on 17 May 2016.

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

A term deposit of **\$200,000** remains invested with Bank of Queensland for a period of 182 days at 3.05%, maturing on 29 July 2016.

On 31 March 2016;

The total amount invested in Term Deposits is **\$1,600,000**.

The total amount invested in the AMP on-call account (at 2.55%) is **\$37,055.16**

The total amount in our transaction account (at 0%) is **\$38,617.52**

The RBA Cash Rate was 2.00%.

Total Liabilities at 29/2/2016 is \$1,158,643.57*

Net current assets is \$517,029.11.

This includes Sydney NSW Weeds Action Program funding (\$626,441.46** at 31/2/2016) 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 OPERATIONAL PLAN 2016-17

Reason for Report: Statutory

Background

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 13 June 2013, HRCC adopted the following documents:

- HRCC Business Activity Strategic Plan (BASP) 2013-2023
- HRCC Delivery Program 2013-2017

On 11 June 2015, HRCC adopted the following document:

- HRCC Operational Plan 2015-2016

As the BASP and 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.

Operational Budgeting

The Bottom Line

HRCC budget is set to aim for a deficit budget in 2016/17 (-\$156,275). This is a strategic decision to allow capacity to be developed in HRCC in related, but broader areas of operations. In particular, this will allow for increased staff involvement in Natural Resource Management projects such as tree planting, pest animal control, soil conservation and bush regeneration. Over time it is expected this will create new funding markets that allow HRCC to return to a neutral budget position. This approach will mean that there will be no reduction in HRCC core role as a Local Control Authority, with outputs in these areas continuing to increase at 5% per annum.

Income

Income is based on a combination of Council Contributions (47%) and operating grants from external authorities (37%). These grants have existing contract arrangements with the Department of Primary Industries. The remaining 16% is as a result of HRCC's own income generation for external services. The income is budgeted to increase by \$20,000 (1.5%) in 2016-17 for HRCC.

Expenditure

HRCC's biggest expenditure item is staff. The organisation will move into the new FY with 17 positions, three more than the previous year, representing 69% of our costs. The remaining 31%, in declining order is composed of; depreciation, plant running, administration, governance, depot and office maintenance.

The increase in expenditure of \$326,000 (18%) is based on servicing new highly labour intensive grant projects.

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 adequate rainfall and 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 – As a result 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 2016/17 Council will purchase and dispose of the following items:

Asset Purchases 2016-17

- Toyota Hilux dual cab 1 - \$47,000
- Weed Mapping Hardware - \$5000
- Computer and IT upgrades - \$10,000
- Depot and Office Upgrades - \$15,000
- Tradesman Trailer - \$12,000

Asset Disposals 2016-17

- Fuso Canter 3.0 Truck - \$28,000

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.

In summary, for works 2016/17, the following targets have been set:

	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Total Weed Control	459HA	164HA	105HA
Total Private Property Inspections	2696	2157	1300
Total Commercial Inspections	268	255	250
Weed Mapping	105HA	100HA	100HA
Field Days	15	14	12
Property Weed Mgt. Plans	21	15	15

ENCLOSURE	HRCC Draft Operational Plan 2016/2017
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Recommendations:

- 1. That the General Manager's report on HRCC DRAFT OPERATIONAL PLAN 2016-17 is received and noted.*
- 2. That the General Manager communicates to each constituent Council manager the cost of HRCC Membership contribution is \$169,000 +GST for 2016/17.*
- 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 2016-2017, 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 9 June 2016.*

ITEM GM 3. HRCC POLICY – CODE OF CONDUCT

Reason for Report: Statutory

Background

A revised Model Code of Conduct has been introduced by the Office of Local Government (OLG) and is supported by the *Local Government Act 1993*. It sets the standard in which a Council must adopt as minimum requirements for their own code of conduct.

The HRCC Code of Conduct was last revised in March 2013, so it is an appropriate time to conduct another review. The General Manager has used the model to prepare the Draft HRCC Code of Conduct, Feb 2016. It was resolved by Council at the meeting of 11 February 2016 to place this draft be placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days.

Additional to Councillors, every staff member will be provided a copy and supplied with training via regular “All Staff” meetings.

The General Manager has appointed staff member, Mrs Sue Holz as the “Complaints Coordinator” as per the Model Code of Conduct – OLG Procedures. Should the need to a conduct reviewer arise, the county council will seek support from one of its member councils.

Public Exhibition Process

The General Manager placed the Draft Code of Conduct on public exhibition from 16 Feb 2016 to 22 March 2016 (37 days). The document was displayed on Council’s website and in its public office. All HRCC staff were directly consulted by the General Manager at a meeting held on 30 March 2016. No public submissions were received.

Revised Model Code of Conduct and Procedures - Key Changes

- The new Model Code of Conduct has been developed following extensive consultation with councils and other key stakeholders.
- Based on feedback, the Division is giving councils greater flexibility to resolve less serious matters informally. It is also providing for stronger penalties to help deter ongoing disruptive behaviour and serious misconduct.
- The new code is designed to introduce greater fairness. The investigation of all complaints about councillors and general managers is now managed from start to finish by an independent conduct reviewer.
- New standards have been included to address misuse of the code. Minor changes have also been made to standards previously covered by the code.
- Clearer procedures have been introduced to help make the code easier to understand and use.
- The Division has more options to directly manage administration of the code and address its misuse. Both the Division and the Pecuniary Interest and

Disciplinary Tribunal will be able to impose stronger penalties for repeated misconduct.

- These changes will help councils get on with the core business of serving their communities.

ENCLOSURES:	HRCC Code of Conduct April 2016
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Recommendations:

- 1. That the report is received and noted*
- 2. That the Council adopts the HRCC Code of Conduct April 2016.*

ITEM GM 4. HRCC POLICY – INTERNAL REPORTING

Reason for Report: Statutory

Background

The NSW Ombudsman is responsible for promoting public awareness and understanding of the PID Act and monitoring its operation. The Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 (PID Act) sets up a system to encourage public officials to report serious wrong doing and to protect people who do so (whistleblowers). This includes:

- Corrupt conduct
- Serious maladministration
- Serious and substantial waste
- Failure to exercise functions properly in accordance with the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.
- Breach of obligation of Local Government Act 1993 in respect to pecuniary interest.

It is NOT covered by the PID Act if it:

- Is made to avoid discipline
- Contains intentionally false statements
- It questions merits of government policy
- Is a grievance

To receive the protections of the PID Act, concerns must be about wrongdoing serious enough that it is clearly in the interests of the citizens of NSW that you report it. Any concerns that relate to the way someone's behaviour is affecting you as an individual employee or general complaints of dissatisfaction should be made using a grievance or other staff complaint process. This includes, for example, actions or decisions by managers or others employees that you believe involve inequitable treatment in the workplace, harassment or bullying that affect you personally (other than where this is part of a course of conduct, particularly of a general practice affecting a number of staff).

HRCC Policy

It is a statutory requirement of the PID Act that HRCC adopts an internal reporting policy that guides a process of reporting serious wrong doing. A draft policy has been prepared and is enclosed with this report. This has been prepared using guidelines from the NSW Ombudsman Office. It is proposed that the policy is placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days to seek community comment.

ENCLOSURE_GM4:	DRAFT HRCC Internal Reporting Policy
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Recommendations:

1. *That the General Manager's report on HRCC POLICY – INTERNAL REPORTING is received and noted.*
2. *That the Council places on public exhibition for a period of 28 days the DRAFT HRCC Internal Reporting Policy, and the General Manager reports back to the next ordinary meeting on any submissions received and changes made.*
3. *That the Council intends to adopt the plans, with any changes, at the next Ordinary Meeting on 9 June 2016.*

ITEM GM 5. HRCC POLICY – REVIEW OF THE PESTICIDE USE NOTIFICATION PLAN

Reason for Report: Statutory

Background

The NSW Pesticides Regulation 2009 requires public authorities, such as local councils and government agencies, to notify the community, in accordance with a notification plan, when they use or allow the use of pesticides in public places that are owned or controlled by the public authority.

These rules are based on the principle that people who live and work in an area have a basic right to know when public places in the area are treated with pesticides. Notifying people about pesticide applications means they can make informed decisions, for example, parents with young children may choose to delay a visit to the playground if they know pesticides have been applied that day.

Notifying members of the public about pesticide use before it happens does not mean that they can prevent the use of pesticides in the area. The aim of notification is to allow people to choose to reduce their exposure to pesticides if they wish. Notifying the community is now internationally recognised as best practice in pesticides management.

A pesticide use notification plan describes where a public authority uses pesticides and the steps it will take to notify people about its pesticide use in those places. It must be prepared by a public authority (including a local council) in consultation with the local community.

A notification plan must set out how and when the public authority will give public notice of the proposed use of pesticides in any prescribed public place it owns or controls. In particular, the notification plan must contain information about:

- where the plan will apply. The plan must identify the categories of public places where pesticides are to be used. For example, a notification plan might say that pesticides are used at 20 local parks and playgrounds and list their names and addresses. Where the notification plan refers to road verges, it may be sufficient for the plan to say that pesticides may be used on all council-managed roads within its area, and refer to a map showing the local government area boundaries. It may not be necessary to identify each public place.
- who regularly uses the public places. For example, a notification plan might say that the public places covered in the plan are used by local families, children, school groups and the general public. The notification plan must give a general estimate of the level of use. For example, the notification plan might say that these places are frequently used by local families.
- how and when the public authority will notify people about proposed pesticide use in public places. The notification plan needs to give details about the specific notification arrangements that will be used. For example, the local notification plan might say that the council will use newspaper advertisements, web-postings, information included with rates notices, mail-outs and/or signs to give notice of a pesticide application. The notification arrangements will vary

among public authorities, including councils, in accordance with the circumstances and needs of each local community. The notification plan must identify the categories of, or specify particular public places for which the public authority will provide notification of all or only some proposed uses of pesticides, and what those uses are. The notification plan must also specify the public places for which the public authority does not intend to provide notification.

- what information will be provided about a pesticide application. The notification plan needs to say what types of information will be given to the community when giving them notice of pesticide use. The Pesticides Regulation sets out minimum information requirements for when notice is given. The notice given to the community must include:
 - where the pesticide will be used
 - the full product name of the pesticide that will be used
 - the purpose of the use (for example, to kill noxious weeds)
 - the proposed date/s of use (where possible this should be specific, for example, weed spraying in specific streets in the week 1–7 August). Where it is not possible to provide a specific period, a range of dates of when an application will take place should be given
 - a phone number/email address for the officer who can be contacted about the notice
 - any warnings on the pesticide label or permit about how long the area must be avoided after a pesticide application.
- how the community will be informed about the notification plan. The plan must also provide the contact details of an officer the community can contact to discuss the notification plan. It must include their job title or description, and phone number or email address.
- how the plan will be reviewed in the future and how the community can be involved in future reviews. The specified review period varies across the state, but it is required that all plans will be updated on a regular cycle, consistent with community expectation.
- the notification plan must describe what special notification measures will be used if pesticides are used in a prescribed public place that is next to a sensitive place, such as a school or hospital. For example, special protection could include providing notification earlier, in greater detail and/or in a different form to ensure that the risk of people at sensitive sites coming into contact with the pesticide application is minimised.
- if a pesticide must be used to deal with an emergency near a sensitive place, extra steps should be specified to let people know about it. For example, some public authorities could make sure a door-knock takes place to inform people that a pesticide is about to be used to deal with a dangerous pest infestation.

HRCC Process

HRCC last reviewed and updated its plan significantly in February 2013. Since its adoption it has been placed permanently on our website at:

<http://hrcc.nsw.gov.au/pesticide-notifications/>

This page also includes regular updates of current notifications. The plan itself is required to be updated every two years, if changes are minor, it is not a requirement to place it on public exhibition. The General Manager has reviewed the plan and only

small updates were required. It is therefore being presented to this meeting for adoption.

ENCLOSURE_GM5:	HRCC Pesticide Use Notification Plan April 2016
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Recommendation:

- 1. That the report is received and noted.*
- 2. That Council adopts the HRCC Pesticide Use Notification Plan April 2016.*

ITEM GM 6. REVIEW OF COUNTY COUNCIL INVESTMENT OPTIONS

Reason for Report: Informative

At the Ordinary Meeting of 11 February 2016, a resolution was passed that:

1831 *RESOLVED on the MOTION of Councillor Bob Porter seconded by Councillor Marcus Cornish, that:*

- 1. The report be received and noted*
- 2. The General Manager reviews other Weed County Councils and reports back to Council at the next Ordinary Meeting.*
- 3. The General reviews the format of the Investment Report for the next Ordinary Meeting.*

The General Manager has commenced the process of the HRCC Investment Policy review and investigation into other County Councils. A report will be prepared for the next Ordinary Meeting.

The General Manager has included liabilities in our investment report, but a new format for the report are still being investigated.

Recommendation:

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

ITEM GM 7. LOCAL LANDCARE COORDINATOR INITIATIVE

Reason for Report: Informative

Background

Landcare is a community-based approach to managing and restoring Australia's natural environment, improving the sustainability of agricultural activities, and building the resilience of communities. Landcare refers to any community-based group operating in the sphere of sustainable agriculture and natural resource management in NSW and includes but is not limited to groups that describe themselves as Landcare, Bushcare, Coastcare, Dunecare, friends of groups, and producer groups.

The NSW Government has provided \$15 million over four years to renew the government-community relationship and unlock the full potential of the thousands of volunteers in the Landcare network. The program reflects the sentiment of the Memorandum of Understanding between Local Land Services and Landcare NSW. It has been designed to put Landcare on a more sustainable funding footing, with the majority of the funds going to community-based local coordinator positions, not on-ground works. The program is an election commitment of the Baird Government. While it falls within the programs managed by Local Land Services, it will be designed and delivered collaboratively by Landcare NSW and Local Land Services.

The Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative is a network of locally-based coordinators will work with local Landcare groups and networks to deliver strategically aligned programs, as well as providing support and guidance. Their goal will be to build capacity and connections within local communities to produce on-ground change.

Progress at HRCC

In December 2015, HRCC was notified that its partnership application with the Hawkesbury Landcare Network was successful. On 18 March 2016, HRCC employed a Local Landcare Coordinator on a two day a week basis. This position will be focussed on building community capacity to address land management issues in the Hawkesbury region. Developing structural processes for the Hawkesbury Landcare Network, and developing a steering committee will create strategic direction for the program. Additionally, workshops will be run that encourage landholders of the region to engage with the position in areas of equine, turf and food production. A communication system involving social media will be enhanced to keep the community informed of the program's progress.

Recommendation:

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

ITEM GM 8. GRANT PROJECT 20 MILLION TREES

Reason for Report: Informative

Background

This is a project of the Australian Government, who will work with the community to plant 20 million trees by 2020, to re-establish green corridors and urban forests. The 20 Million Trees Programme is part of the national stream of the National Landcare Programme, and has four strategic objectives:

1. 20 million trees – 20 million trees and associated understorey planted by 2020.
2. Environmental conservation – support local environmental outcomes by improving the extent, connectivity and condition of native vegetation that supports native species
3. Community engagement – work cooperatively with the community
4. Carbon reduction – contribute to Australia reducing its greenhouse gas emissions.

The 20 Million Trees Programme will complement and align with other Australian Government environmental initiatives, such as the Green Army and the work of the Threatened Species Commissioner.

The Australian Government has committed \$50 million over four years to the 20 Million Trees Programme.

Progress at HRCC

HRCC was notified that its application to the tree and understory planting program was successful in December 2015. Since then HRCC has commenced its project on Shaw's Island. It has developed a strategic site plan, undertaken quantity surveying and developed a reporting framework. A Green Army Team lead by Mr Eric Zarilla has been appointed by the Manpower service provider. The six participants have undertaken their induction training and are now carrying out works on the island. This includes weed control and preparations for planting.

Recommendation:

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

ITEM GM 9. STAFFING

Reason for Report: Informative

Since the last Council meeting held on 11 February 2016 Council has employed a Local Landcare Coordinator, Ms Sonia Lee.

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 has once again governed weed control activities over the county this reporting period. Oppressive humidity and consecutive days of heat above 30 degrees Celsius have been taxing on staff, however some excellent weed control results have been accomplished across the county.

Control activities across the county have been largely a continuation of previous works – retreating existing work sites and germinating weed seed. The teams have been treating terrestrial weed populations in council reserves and conducting aquatic weed control where possible. Green cestrum, African boxthorn, Boneseed, Blackberry, Honey locust and Bitou bush have all been targeted. Aquatic weed control has targeted Alligator weed and Ludwigia in Blacktown.

Blacktown

Terrestrial weed control in Blacktown has centred around locations such as Bungarribee reserve, Nurragingy reserve, Whalan reserve and RAAF reserve. Green cestrum, Lantana and African boxthorn were the most numerous weed species treated in these reserves.

Boneseed has been targeted in the north of the LGA. Many young Boneseed plants have been treated in Troubador park, Lady Penhryn park and Schaefer terrace in Glenwood.

Aquatic weed control has taken place in Bungarribee reserve, Nurragingy reserve and Plumpton park for Alligator weed, Bungarribee reserve for Ludwigia and Woodcroft lake for Salvinia.

Hawkesbury

Terrestrial weed control conducted within the Hawkesbury LGA has targeted weed species such as Boneseed, Green cestrum, African boxthorn, Privet and African olive have been treated in the following reserves; Macquarie park, Governor Philip Park, Chain of Ponds reserve, Swallow rock reserve, Deerubbin reserve and the breakaway.

Boneseed has been treated in Scheyville and Maraylya. Although numbers of this weed species continue to fall, council need to regularly treat known infestations due to the ever present threat of seed germination.

Aquatic weeds treated in the LGA have been Senegal tea plant, Salvinia, Alligator weed, Ludwigia and a small amount of Water hyacinth, trapped amongst other vegetation. The locations of these treatments were; Hannah park, Governor Philip park, Macquarie park, The breakaway, Gorricks lane and Swallow rock reserve.

The Hills Shire

The majority of weed control in the Hills Shire this reporting period has been targeting terrestrial weed species within council reserves. Priority weed targets have been Boneseed, Lantana and Green cestrum and these plants have been treated across the LGA.

Boneseed and Lantana has been treated in the following reserves; Newman road reserve, Sackville memorial park, Cattai creek conservation area, Francesco Ave. park and Bella Vista farm park. Bella Vista continues to be the centre of Boneseed activity.

Green cestrum is growing strongly across the LGA with the weather conditions being experienced at the moment. Weed control teams are battling burgeoning infestations in Glenhaven, Maraylya, Nelson and Annangrove.

Cattai creek has much of the reporting period recovering from high volumes of water from storms and heavy rain events, when water levels have dropped, council have been able to treat Senegal tea plant with herbicide.

Penrith LGA

Weed control in the Penrith area has seen the teams targeting woody weed species such as Blackberry, African olive, African boxthorn, Green cestrum, Ludwigia and St John's wort.

Treatment areas have been a mixture of parks, reserves and council roadsides and have included; Fowler reserve, Tench reserve, Regatta park, River road reserve, Boronia park and South creek park.

Roadside control Blackberry, Green cestrum, St John's wort and African olive has taken place along The Northern road, Luddenham road, fourth, fifth and sixth avenues. Foliar herbicide application and cut stump have been the predominant control techniques used.

Aquatic Weed Program

Conditions along the Hawkesbury Nepean river remain good. Aquatic weed species are visible along the water's edge at various locations upstream of Yarramundi, but these are not cause for panic. River levels are dropping as rains have tapered off over the last couple of months and nutrient loads are concentrating within the water. At the time of reporting, all river access points are open, and all usual activities are taking place.

Salvinia molesta has been noted by council's inspectors at a number of locations such as Devlin Road, Yarramundi reserve, Shaw's island and Cassola Place, North Penrith. These infestations are light and under regular inspection by our inspectors and will be managed as the need arises.

Water hyacinth has been located above Windsor at Freeman's reach. Approximately 30 bulbs of water hyacinth were recently seen in irrigation holes on a recent inspection of the river with staff from NSW DPI. These plants will be treated in upcoming spray treatment of the river.

The weed containment booms are currently open, the Windsor boom in particular has been kept open to allow natural movement of organic debris downstream, rather than being held against the boom to breakdown. The Warragamba boom is scheduled for replacement in late April 2016, and is currently open.

A close eye will be kept upon the river to ensure that weed populations are taken care of before any weed impacts river users. The river is open for business as usual, cooler weather over the county should ensure that conditions remain this way for some time to come.

Education and Extension Program

A wide variety of inspections have been carried out by council staff this reporting period. A lot of work has come into the office as a result of council attendance at a number of local agricultural shows and community events. Surveillance of online retailers has also seen further activity of illegal plant sale within our region, and adjoining LGA's. Programmed private property inspections are focused on the Dean park area in the Blacktown LGA, with just over 1,000 properties scheduled for a visit from council's inspectorial staff.

The Easter period is always a busy time for council inspectors and staff. The agricultural shows begin in late February and continue through to May. Council have stalls at all of the local shows and community events to promote weed management and educate the community in regards to noxious weed issues. Luddenham, Castle hill and Blacktown shows have all been a great success for council with great patronage of the stall, lots of savvy landholders testing our inspector's plant I.D. skills, large volumes of weed media sought by show goers, and most importantly over 100 follow up inspections, phone conversations and private weed control jobs resulting from the shows. This is a positive trend that is steadily climbing as the community realises the shows are an easy avenue to approach council and discuss issues in a non-threatening environment. The upcoming Hawkesbury show is our most popular show and if current trends are anything to go by, our staff will be in for a frantic time at the show.

A heavy focus has been placed on the online sale noxious weed material of late. Council, Wyong council and NSW DPI are leading the charge to provide oversight to this industry which has largely flown under the radar for many years. Most sellers of weed material are backyard traders whom have little knowledge of weed legislation, and have quite innocently offered pond plants for sale – these sellers quickly remove offending material once they have been approached by council, or one of the other bodies. A further 11 sellers have been approached in relation to trading noxious weed

material, all but one (a minor) have been compliant with council's requests to remove these plants from sale.

The minor in question presented himself to council at the Castle hill show and surrendered Water lettuce (a state-wide class1 noxious species) to our inspectors, he lives outside of our county, but still has noxious weed material for sale online. NSW DPI are conducting an ongoing investigation.

Dean Park is the focus of programmed private property inspections at present. Over 1,000 properties are scheduled for inspection during this campaign. Dean park has been selected due to the large amount of development and soil disturbance from nearby Colebee and Stone cutters ridge estates, and the associated proliferation of weed species such as Green cestrum and Boneseed that are known in this area. The inspections will serve as an educational tool for council's inspectors to provide residents with information on future weed threats in the area, as well as checking for compliance to the current noxious weeds legislation.

The workload for council's inspectors will remain at high levels for some time to come, given the amount of community engagement and property inspections that are planned for the near future.

ENCLOSURE_OM1:	HRCC Operational Maps Q3 Operational Results Q3 Aquatic Weed Program Results
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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. **RECEIVED – 17 December 2015** – Letter from The Hon. Greg Hunt MP, Minister for Environment. Re: Successful 20 Million Trees grant application, Shaw’s Island
2. **RECEIVED – 17 December 2015** – Letter from Louise Markus MP, Member for Macquarie. Re: Successful 20 Million Trees grant application, Shaw’s Island
3. **SENT – 28 January 2016** – Letter to the Hon. Niall Blair MP, Minister for Primary Industries. Re: Invitation to attend HRCC.
4. **RECEIVED** - 16 December 2015 – Letter from Scott Hansen, Director General, NSW Department of Primary Industries. Re: Biosecurity Act 2015, supporting legislation.
5. **RECEIVED** – 5 February 2016 – Letter from Chris Wheeler, Deputy Ombudsman, Ombudsman NSW. Re: Requirement for training in PID Act.

Recommendation:

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

7. GENERAL BUSINESS / QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

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