

UPPER MACQUARIE COUNTY COUNCIL

OPERATIONAL PLAN 2015/16



The Noxious Weeds Control Authority for the areas of
Bathurst Regional Council, Blayney and Oberon Shire Councils and the Lithgow City Council

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What is an Operational Plan?

Section 1 in the County Council's Business Activity Strategic Plan explains the background and general structure of the **Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework** that was introduced for Local Government by the *Local Government Amendment (Planning and Reporting) Act 2009*.

Section 405 of the *Local Government Act 1993* requires that the County Council have an annual Operational Plan which is adopted before the beginning of each financial year and which outlines the activities to be undertaken that year as part of the Delivery Program.

The Operational Plan is a sub-plan of the Delivery Program and must include the Statement of Revenue Policy.

The draft Operational Plan must be publicly exhibited for at least 28 days and public submissions can be made to Council during the period.

The County Council must accept and consider any submissions made on the draft Operational Plan before adopting the Operational Plan.

Clause 201 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* includes provisions relating to the content of the County Council's annual statement of revenue policy.

This includes details of:

- Estimated income and expenditure
- Ordinary rates and special rates
- Proposed fees and charges
- Council's proposed pricing methodology
- Proposed borrowings.

Clause 203 of the Regulation requires that budget review statements and a revision of estimates must be reported to Council within two months after the end of each quarter (except the June quarter).

The Operational Plan must:

- Be prepared as a sub-plan of the Delivery Program.
- Directly address the actions outlined in the Delivery Program and identify projects, programs or activities that Council will undertake within the financial year towards addressing these actions.
- Allocate responsibilities for each project, program or activity.
- Identify suitable measures to determine the effectiveness of the projects, programs and activities undertaken.
- Include a detailed budget for the activities to be undertaken in that year.

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VISION STATEMENT

To protect the environment and agricultural pursuits through noxious weed control.

MISSION STATEMENT

Actively pursue the reduction of noxious weeds throughout the county area in a manner that is economically and environmentally sustainable and responsible.

Statement of Principal Activities to be undertaken to achieve objectives

In the following tables the column headed “BA & SO” provides, in order, a reference to the Main Business Activity Priorities number and the Strategic Objective number from the Business Activity Strategic Plan.

Provide information to Council to allow decisions at Council Meetings				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Ensure Business Paper is ready for distribution.	2.3	GM	At least 3 days, but preferably 5 working days, prior to the Council meeting.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Provide recommendations to council when possible.	2.3		In business paper to allow council to consider.	

Respond to Councillor inquiries related to the administration function				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Provide information to Councillors within council’s policy guidelines.	2.3	GM	On day requested, where possible, or within 5 working days (unless request requires detailed investigation).	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Provide written information as requested.	2.3		Within 5 working days (unless request requires detailed investigation).	

Update council policy register				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Update new or amended administration policies in Council’s policy register.	2.3	GM	Within 14 days of adoption or amendment.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Review Council administration policies.	2.3		Within 2 months of expiry of policy or every 2 years.	

Provide information to public in a timely and effective manner				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Ensure council business papers are made available in hard copy at council's office.	2.1	GM	At least 3 working days before the council meeting.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Ensure other public information is made available at council's office.	2.1		As soon as practicable after it becomes public information.	
Ensure business papers are provided to constituent Councils.	2.1		Post to General Managers at the same time as Councillors' business papers.	
Ensure minutes, Business Papers, and other information is posted on the Council's website.	2.1		As soon as practicable.	

Ensure all statutory requirements are completed and financial returns and plans are completed and lodged by the due date				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
June Quarterly Financial and Delivery Program Reviews to Council.	2.2	GM	August Meeting	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Audited Financial Statements to Department of Local Government.	2.2		End November	
Financial Data collection return	2.2		Date specified by Division of Local Government.	
September Quarterly Financial and Delivery Program Reviews to council.	2.2		November Meeting	
Notice of meeting at which audited reports are to be presented.	2.2		Prior to November meeting	
Audited financial reports presented to	2.2		November meeting	

public.				
December Quarterly Financial and Delivery Program Reviews to council.	2.2		February Meeting	
Draft Operational Plan approved for public exhibition.			May meeting	
March Quarterly Financial and Delivery Program Reviews to council.	2.2		May meeting	
Operational Plan to be adopted (see financial actions).	2.2		June meeting	

Ensure all other statutory returns are completed and lodged by the due date				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Pecuniary Interest Returns.	2.2	GM	30/9/15.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Council Annual Report prepared and forwarded to Minister.	2.2		30/11/15.	
Other returns as required by Division of Local Government, Department of Primary Industries, or others.	2.2		Not later than return date specified.	

Implementation of council decisions				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Implement council decisions following council meeting	2.2	GM	Within 10 working days of council meeting. For prosecutions, within 2 months of council resolution.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Continue to ensure the provision of finance to the Council from available sources				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Liaise with Constituent Council regarding the level of Council contributions and the apportionment of contributions.	2.4	GM	Continuously.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Letter to Constituent Councils concerning the County Council's proposed Delivery Plan and Estimates for the forthcoming financial year, and the contribution sought from constituent councils.	2.4		30 November.	
Application to Department of Primary Industries for grants under NSW Weeds Action Program as necessary.	2.4		As required under Weeds Action Program.	
Provide grant returns to Department of Primary Industries.	2.4		As required under Weeds Action Program.	
Pursue opportunities for securing grant funds from other available sources.	2.4 & 1.4		As required.	

Finance

Continue current financial management direction and review Business Activity Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Review Business Activity Strategic Plan.	2.1 & 2.4	GM	Continuously.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Review Delivery Plan	2.1 & 2.4		Continuously.	
Provide adequate funds for employee leave entitlements	2.3		Maintain cash at not less than 50% of Long Service Leave liability.	

Provide financial information and advice to Council				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Provide financial information as required.	2.2 & 2.3	GM	At council meetings.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Provide quarterly update on financial trends relating to council's expenditure	2.2 & 2.3		At Council Meeting following end of quarter.	

Ensure that Council's Operational Plan is considered in order to allow adoption by the due date				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Draft Plan to be presented to council.	2.2	GM	May meeting.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Draft plan to be adopted to allow 28 day public exhibition.	2.2		May meeting.	
Draft Plan to be adopted following consideration of any submissions received.	2.2		June meeting.	

Promote the county interests through participation in council bodies				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Participate in Macquarie Valley Noxious Weeds Advisory Committee through attendance at meetings and supply of information as required to assist the lobbying of state and federal governments.	1.1	GM	Attend meetings and provide information as requested.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Provide active support to the Local Government NSW				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Provide information as requested by Local Government NSW to assist it to lobby governments.	3.1	GM	Information to be provided by the date requested.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Utilise the services of the Local Government NSW to further Council's interests.			As and when required by council.	

Actively pursue politicians to further the council's interests				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Invite politicians to attend Council meetings.	3.1	GM	At least 2 politicians to be invited to council annually.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Meet with State and Federal politicians to promote the interests of the council.	3.1		As required.	

Minimise the risks associated with all functions of Council				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Identify new risks associated with the functions of council.	2.3	GM	Ongoing.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Analyse and prioritise all risks identified.	2.3		Within 3 months after identification.	
Minimise exposure through rectification of risks.	2.3		As possible within budget constraints.	
Update policy on the use of contractors.	2.3		Ongoing.	
Review risk management policy.	2.3		Ongoing.	
Undertake a Risk Assessment of materials handling and weed spraying on roads.	2.3		When resources allow.	

Ensure Council staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to WP H&S and Risk Management				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Provide training to staff on relevant legislation.	2.3	GM	Ongoing as identified.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Provide training on Equal Employment Opportunity to staff.	2.3		Ongoing as required	
Provide staff with training on risk management.	2.3		Ongoing as required	
Review and update staff training program.	2.3		Annually	
Review EEO Management Plan.	2.3		As required	

Implement system of information technology capable of providing information that is relevant and timely.				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Monitor reporting system ability to provide information requirements.	2.3	GM	1. Ongoing	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Monitor technology improvements and assess future requirements.	2.3		2. Ongoing.	
Update Council's computer system, both hardware and software, to ensure that it enhances management and record keeping (as resources allow).	2.3		3. As required.	
Review Council's website and implement systems for expanding content and keeping content up to date (as resources allow).	2.1 & 3.2		4. As required.	

Maintain and update as required the council's records management system				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Monitor record keeping procedures to ensure that they provide the best method of maintaining an accurate record of council activities.	2.3	GM	Ongoing.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Review record keeping procedures with a view to updating and computerising.	2.3		Ongoing.	

Introduce a system for electronic mapping of noxious weed infestations and the automation of Weeds Officers' reporting procedures.				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Monitor the introduction of electronic mapping of noxious weed infestations and the automation of Weeds Officers'	1.3 & 2.3	GM	Ongoing.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

reporting procedures.				
Expand the introduction of electronic mapping of noxious weed infestations and the automation of Weeds Officers' reporting procedures to the whole of Council's Area of Operations.	1.3 & 2.3		Ongoing.	
Continue the training of staff in the use of the system in order to ensure its most effective and efficient use.	1.3 & 2.3		Ongoing.	

Compile accurate data on the condition of current council assets.				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Maintain assets register for all assets valued over \$5,000.	2.3	GM	Ongoing.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Monitor the condition of those assets.	2.3		Ongoing.	
Identify maintenance requirements for those assets.	2.3		Ongoing.	
Cost maintenance requirements and incorporate in budget.	2.3		As identified.	

Compile data on current plant and vehicle fleet condition and usage.				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Analyse council's current plant fleet and its activities and assess future plant needs.	2.3	GM	Ongoing	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Provide access to competitively priced chemicals for participants in council noxious weed control programs and purchasers of bulk supplies.				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Provide access to chemicals at commercially competitive prices.	1.2	GM	As required.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Actively pursue the control of noxious weeds along the roadsides in the council area.				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Inspect roadsides prior to control works to ensure that control programs are efficient.	1.3	CWO	At least one week prior to spraying.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Carry out necessary control works in line with Council's budget allocations.	1.3		As seasonal conditions permit.	
Respond to reports of noxious weeds on roadsides.	1.3		Carry out inspection within 7 days of notification.	
Carry out control works in accordance with Council's policy and budget allocations.	1.3		As required.	

Health

Actively pursue the control of noxious weeds on private lands.				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Inspection of private lands to assist landowners to fulfil their legal responsibilities in relation to noxious weeds.	1.2 & 3.2	CWO		Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Land classifications Rural/farmland Rural residential Urban Special (aquaria, pet shops, other)			(Annual) 15% (668) 15% (949) 1% (237) 100% (60, estimate only)	

Provide information to landowners on noxious weed control.	1.2 & 3.2		If not done at time of inspection within 1 week.	
Respond to noxious weed complaints.	1.2 & 3.2		Initial inspection within 10 working days.	

Actively pursue the control of noxious weeds on vacant Crown lands.

Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Inspect vacant Crown land parcels to facilitate application to Department for funds for necessary control works.	1.2	CWO	Prior to submission of application.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Inspect vacant Crown lands to ensure obligations for noxious weed control are being met.	1.2		As required as resources are available.	
Provide information to Department of Lands on noxious weed control requirements.	1.2		Within 10 working days of inspection.	
Respond to complaints regarding noxious weeds on vacant Crown land.	1.2		Initial inspection within 10 working days.	

Actively pursue the control of noxious weeds on land of Forests NSW.

Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Inspect areas proposed to be clear felled in coming financial year.	1.2	CWO	Within 28 days of receipt of <i>Harvesting Plan of Operations</i> .	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Advise Forests NSW of proposed clear fell areas that are potential weeds risks.	1.2		Within 14 days of inspection.	

Follow up to ensure control work is carried out on potential weed risks.	1.2		Prior to Spring each year.	
Inspect areas surrounding standing forests and “land bank” areas.	1.2		Ongoing as resources permit, or in response to complaints within 10 working days.	
Advise Forests NSW of areas that pose a risk of weeds spreading to adjoining land.	1.2		14 days after inspection.	

Actively pursue the control of noxious weeds on lands of other public authorities				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Inspect lands of public authorities to ensure obligations for noxious weed control are being met.	1.2 & 1.3	CWO	Ongoing.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Provide information to public authority on noxious weed control requirements.	1.2 & 1.3		Within 10 working days of inspection.	
Respond to complaints regarding noxious weeds on land of public authorities.	1.2 & 1.3		Initial inspection within 10 working days.	

Conduct aerial spraying programs for noxious weeds				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Organize programs for the aerial spraying of noxious weeds throughout the year as seasonal conditions permit and demand requires.	1.2	GM CWO	As required.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Publicise aerial spraying programs in local media, and as occasion permits, to ensure maximum landholder participation.	1.2	GM CWO	As required.	
Organize aerial spraying (involving all	1.2	CWO	In accordance with programs.	

inspectors) throughout the county area in accordance with programs.				
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Actively pursue regional resource sharing with neighbouring councils and other public authorities to provide cost benefits to council in provision of services.				
Required Activity	BA & SO	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Pursue resource sharing through regular interaction with nearby councils and other public authorities to discuss regional weed plans and coordinated approaches to weed control.	1.1	GM	Liaise with appropriate members and officers of surrounding councils and other public authorities as required.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Revenue policy

(Attention is also invited to the information provided in the **Resourcing Strategy** contained in the Council's **Business Activity Strategic Plan**.)

What Revenue will be raised and how

Council's revenue is derived from the following main sources:

- Contributions from Constituent Councils
- Grants from Government Departments and other authorities
- Sale of Herbicides
- Other income producing activities.
- Fees and Charges

In setting its financial objectives Council is aware of the financial constraints that the current economic environment imposes. The Council is continuously striving to improve the services which it offers and to do so as economically as possible.

Rating policy

Council does not levy any rates but relies on voluntary contributions from its Constituent Councils.

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Grants from Government Departments and other authorities

The main grants that the Council receives are provided by the Minister pursuant to Section 33 of the *Noxious Weed Act 1993*. As from 1 July 2010 these grants have been made available under the *NSW Weeds Action Program* which is complex and administratively expensive. The Council has in 2015/16 been forced by the rules imposed by the Department of Primary Industries into a regional control program joining all local control authorities in the area of Central Tablelands Local Land Services. It is not known what amount the Council will receive from this Program in 2015/16 but it is anticipated that the grant will be the same as 2014/15 increased in line with inflation at 2.5% less approximately 9.5% increased administrative costs.

The Council intends to actively pursue the availability of grants from other sources, and to attract more grant funds to the Council area. This strategy has previously resulted in the Council obtaining special purpose grants from Central West Catchment Management Authority and Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority. The opportunities for these types of grants in future will be impacted by the change to Local Land Services and these opportunities will be continuously monitored.

Herbicide sales

In order to encourage the control of Noxious Weeds the Council supplies herbicide at competitive prices to landholders within its areas. This is a low key activity which the Council undertakes as a service to its landholder constituents.

Other income producing activities

The Council will investigate and facilitate income producing opportunities as they become available.

Notice pursuant to Section 356, *Local Government Act 1993*

Section 356 of the *Local Government Act 1993* provides that a council may, in accordance with a resolution of the council, contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons for the purpose of exercising its functions. It further provides that a proposed recipient who acts for private gain is not ineligible to be granted financial assistance but must not receive any benefit under the section until at least 28 days public notice of the council's proposal to pass the necessary resolution has been given.

The section further provides that public notice is not required if –

- (a) the financial assistance is part of a specific program, and
- (b) the program's details have been included in the council's draft Business Activity Strategic Plan for the year in which the financial assistance is proposed to be given, and
- (c) the program's proposed budget for that year does not exceed 5 per cent of the council's proposed income from the ordinary rates levied for that year, and
- (d) the program applies uniformly to all persons within the council's area or to a significant group of persons within the area.

The Council's *Detailed Estimates of Income & Expenditure 2015/2016*

, which comprise the Schedule to this Operational Plan, contains details of programs to subsidise noxious weeds control work by landholders. This may occur in either of two circumstances –

- where the landholder is in impecunious circumstances such as preclude the landholder complying with their obligations under the Act, or
- where the County Council considers that the provision of incentives to landholders will serve to encourage landholders to more effectively control noxious weeds on their land or will have more widespread benefits.

Fees and charges

Where fees are not set under legislation the Council will recover the full cost of providing the service to the customer.

Council's fees and charges are listed below and have not been increased above existing (2014/15) levels.

Service	Charge
Certificates under Section 64 of the Noxious Weeds Act 1993	
As to outstanding notices, expenses and charges	\$70.00
Urgency Fee	Additional \$70.00 + GST
Control Work on Noxious Weeds	
Treatment work on private land by Council by arrangement with the landholder	\$90.00 per hour per inspector engaged on work (including travelling time) + GST + cost of chemical
Supervision of treatment work on private land, by arrangement with the landholder, by contractor (landholder directly responsible for contractor's charge)	15% of contractor's charge (or \$100, whichever is the higher) for administration and supervision.
Section 20 Noxious Weeds Act 1993 – Entry and Control Work	
Entry onto private land to carry out treatment work under section 20 of the <i>Noxious Weeds Act 1993</i> , if undertaken by Council	\$90.00 per hour per inspector engaged on work (including travelling time) + GST + cost of chemical
Entry onto private land to carry out treatment work under section 20 of the <i>Noxious Weeds Act 1993</i> , if undertaken by Contractor	Contractor's charge + GST + cost of chemical (if not included in contractor's charge) + 15% of contractor's charge (or \$100, whichever is the higher) for administration and supervision.
Prosecution Fees	
Fee for withdrawal of prosecution for failing to control noxious weeds or to comply with a weed control notice	On withdrawal of a prosecution, once commenced, \$200 + court costs + legal costs + reinspection cost.

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Court Attendance by General Manager or Council Inspector to pursue prosecutions	\$100.00 per hour (including travelling time) + GST + incidental expenses such as accommodation and travel
Inspection of Private Property	
Special inspection of private property at the request of the landholder, other than in connection with provision of a certificate as to the noxious weed status of a property (the General Manager to have authority to waive in special circumstances)	\$75.00 per hour (including travelling time) + GST plus \$0.60 per km + GST
Inspection of private property as part of the Council's regulatory function after the service of a notice under Section 18 of the <i>Noxious Weeds Act 1993</i> (the General Manager to have authority to waive in special circumstances)	\$90.00 per hour (including travelling time) + GST plus \$0.60 per km + GST
Certificate as to noxious weed status	
Provision of certificate advising subdivider/owner/purchaser of the noxious weeds status of a property	\$90.00 + GST +, where inspection is necessary, \$65.00 per hour (including travelling time) + GST plus \$0.60 per km + GST

Detailed Estimates of Income & Expenditure 2015/2016

This is the statement containing the detailed estimate of the council's income and expenditure for 2015/2016 required by Clause 201 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*.

The statement shows total income of \$1,542,907 and total expenditure of \$1,560,272 giving a loss for the year of \$17,365.

This result is largely attributable to the new and unnecessary payment of \$22,495 which the Council is being forced to make because of the Department of Primary Industries' requirement that the Council join in a joint application through Macquarie Valley Weeds Advisory Committee Incorporated and a "lead agency" in order to receive a grant for the coming year through the Weeds Action Program which is being used by the Department to distribute grants made by the Minister under Section 33 of the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993*.