

UPPER MACQUARIE COUNTY COUNCIL

ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLAN
FINANCIAL YEAR 2021 / 2022

ADOPTED 18TH JUNE 2021



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Upper Macquarie County Council is the Local Control Authority for weed biosecurity throughout the areas of Bathurst Regional Council, Blayney Shire Council, Oberon Council and Lithgow City Council.

Contents

Title Page	Page 1
Contents	Page 2
Upper Macquarie County Council Contact Details	Page 3
Introduction	Page 4
Vision Statement and Mission Statement	Page 5
Statement of Principal Activities to be undertaken to achieve objectives	Page 6
Activity Details	Page 7 to 16
Revenue policy	Pages 17 to 18
Statement of Income & Expenditure Estimates for 2020/2021	Pages 19

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UPPER MACQUARIE COUNTY COUNCIL

Introduction

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

The Operational Plan is an annual sub-plan of the 4-year 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 invited, before a final plan can be adopted. 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 (as applicable) of: Estimated income and expenditure; Ordinary rates and special rates; proposed fees and charges; Council's proposed pricing methodology; and proposed borrowings.

This Operational Plan:

- Is prepared as a sub-plan of the Delivery Program.
- Directly addresses the actions outlined in the Delivery Program and is linked to the Business Activity Strategic Plan which identifies strategic projects, programs and activities that Council will undertake progressively within the subject financial year, and subsequently, towards achieving the County Council's principle activity of managing weed biosecurity.
- Allocates nominal responsibilities for each project, program or activity.
- Identifies suitable measures to determine the effectiveness of the projects, programs and activities undertaken.
- Includes a detailed budget for the activities to be undertaken in the subject year.

THE COUNCIL VISION for WEED BIOSECURITY

Upper Macquarie County Council will strive to ensure that Weed Biosecurity Risk is not a significant factor limiting:

- a) agricultural productivity;
- b) the quality of the rural environment and;
- c) the prosperity of rural communities in the NSW central tablelands.

THE COUNCIL MISSION for WEED BIOSECURITY

The mission for the Upper Macquarie County Council is to make sure all private and public landholders manage their properties (as far as is practical) to reach and maintain a sustainably low level of weed biosecurity risk.

This mission is shared with all those agencies striving to reduce biosecurity risks across the country, throughout the regions and locally with the constituent councils, landholders and the whole community living within the Upper Macquarie district

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY

Upper Macquarie County Council is a single purpose (weed biosecurity) council in terms of local government legislation, which dictates by default that its *principle activity* and core business functions are primarily driven by biosecurity legislation. In this context the council operates across multiple levels and within (sometimes) duplicative regulatory environments as follows:

- A.** Implementing a small part of a wider Australian Weed Strategy targeting weeds of national significance; and further targeting biosecurity matters of NSW State significance through the NSW Weed Action Program. These efforts are contributing sub-regionally to addressing the national weed biosecurity problem.
- B.** Participating at a NSW Central Tablelands regional level implementing a significant part of the Central Tablelands Regional Strategic Weeds Management Plan - covering about 1/3rd of the total land area - including the majority of the state forests and national parks in the region; and
- C.** Operating on a day-to-day basis across four 'general purpose' local council areas, that combined cover: some 1.35 million hectares of land, is intersected by nearly 4,000 kilometres of roadways, and supports a population of about 77,000 people. The County Council at this sub-regional / local level exercises its function to the exclusion of the constituent councils.

In the following tables the Column 2 provides the link back to the Strategic Objectives set out in the Business Activity Strategic Plan as they relate to the single principle activity of the County Council that is Weed Biosecurity.

ACTIVITY DETAILS

Provide information to Council to allow decisions at Council Meetings				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Ensure Business Papers are distributed to Members.	Governance 12	GM	At least 3 days, but preferably 5 working days, prior to the Council meeting.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Respond to Councillor inquiries related to the administration function				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Provide information to Councillors within Legislative, Code of Conduct and council's policy guidelines.	Governance 12	GM	On day requested, where possible, or within 5 working days (unless request requires detailed investigation or data is only available periodically).	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Update council policy register				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Update new or amended administration policies in Council's policy register.	Governance 12	GM	Within 14 days of adoption or amendment. Within 2 months of expiry of policy or every 2 years or longer period as specified in the policy.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Provide information to public in a timely and effective manner				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Ensure council business papers are made available to the public and constituent Councils.	Governance 12	BAM	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.		BAM	As soon as practicable after it becomes public information.	
Ensure minutes, Business Papers, and other public information is posted on the Council's website in a timely manner.		BAM	As soon as practicable.	

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Ensure all statutory requirements are completed and financial returns and plans are completed and lodged by the due date				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Quarterly Budget Review Statements. Notice of meeting at which audited reports are to be presented. Audited financial reports presented to public. Audited Financial Statements to Department of Local Government.	Governance 6	GM BAM	Quarterly to next available Council Meeting Date specified by Office of Local Government.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Ensure all other statutory returns are completed and lodged by the due date				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Pecuniary Interest Returns. Council Annual Report prepared and forwarded to Minister. Other returns as required by Office of Local Government, Regular WAP Data reports to Department of Primary Industries.	Governance 12	GM GM BAM CWBO	30 th September 30 th November Not later than return date specified. Monthly through the year.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Continue current financial management direction and review Business Activity Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Update the 10-year Financial Plan.	Governance 12	GM	Annually as part of budget process.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Review Business Activity Strategic Plan.			As required or 4 yearly.	
Review Delivery Plan			As required or 4 yearly.	
Provide adequate funds for employee leave entitlements			Maintain cash reserves according to Financial Reserves Policy.	

Continue to ensure the provision of finance to the Council from available sources				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Liaise with Constituent Council regarding the level of Council contributions and services provided.	Governance 6	GM & BAM	Annually as part of budget process and other times as required.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Advise Constituent Councils of the County Council's estimates for the forthcoming financial year, and the contribution sought from them.			By August 31st	
Make application to Department of Primary Industries for grants under NSW Weeds Action Program as necessary.		GM & CWBO	Annually for agreement and 5-yearly for new program as required under Weeds Action Program.	
Pursue realistic opportunities for securing grant funds from other available sources.			Relevant and eligible grant opportunities as they arise.	

Implementation of council decisions				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Implement council decisions in a timely manner following council meeting	Governance 12	GM	Routine actions within 10 working days of council meeting. Strategic matters before next meeting or as applicable.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Provide financial information and advice to Council				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Provide regular investment reports.	Governance 6	GM	At each council meeting as applicable.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Provide Quarterly Budget Review Statements.			At a Council Meeting following the end of quarter.	

Ensure that Council's Operational Plan is considered in order to allow adoption by the due date				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Draft plan to be adopted to allow 28-day public exhibition.	Governance 12	GM & BAM	Before April 30 th	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Draft Plan to be adopted following consideration of any submissions received.			June meeting.	

Promote the county interests through participation in council bodies				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Participate in LLS Regional Weeds Committee through attendance at meetings, raising of issues and supply of information as required.	Governance 8	CWBO	Attend meetings and contribute as appropriate.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

UPPER MACQUARIE COUNTY COUNCIL

Provide active support to Local Government NSW				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Provide information where appropriate as requested by Local Government NSW. Utilise the services of the Local Government NSW to further Council's interests.	Governance 12	GM	Information to be provided by the date requested. As and when required by council.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Actively pursue politicians to further the council's interests				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Meet with State and Federal politicians to promote the interests of the council.	Governance 12	GM	As appropriate depending on issues.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Minimise the risks associated with all functions of Council				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Monitor risks associated with the functions of council. Analyse and prioritise all risks identified. Minimise exposure through rectification of risks. Reduce ICT risk	Governance 12 Biosecurity 2	GM CWBO & BAM	Ongoing as part of Strategic Risk Management functions. Annual Review of Enterprise Risk Register. According to Risk Management Policy. As possible within budget constraints. Ongoing.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Ensure Council staff are aware of their WHS duties and responsibilities and Risk Management				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Provide training to staff on relevant legislation.	Governance 12 Governance 10 Biosecurity 2	GM	Ongoing as identified.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Provide staff with training on risk management.		CWBO & BAM	Ongoing as required	
Update staff training program			Annually	

Implement system of information technology capable of providing information that is relevant and timely.				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Monitor technology improvements and assess future requirements.	Governance 7 Biosecurity 4 Biosecurity 5	GM	1. Ongoing	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Update Council's computer system, both hardware and software, to ensure that it enhances management and record keeping.		CWBO & BAM	2. Ongoing (In view of Government Cyber Standards)	
			3. As required.	

Maintain and update as required the council's records management system				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Monitor record keeping procedures to ensure that they provide the best method of maintaining an accurate record of council activities.	Governance 11 Biosecurity 4	GM CWBO & BAM	Ongoing. Linked to ICT program.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Introduce a system for electronic mapping of weed infestations.				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
<p>Expand the use of electronic mapping of priority weed infestations.</p> <p>Continue the training of staff in the use of the CREST and associated GIS system in order to ensure it's most effective and efficient use.</p>	Governance 7 Biosecurity 4	GM CWBO & BAM	<p>Ongoing. Capability implemented in 2019.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Compile accurate data on the condition of current council assets.				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
<p>Maintain assets register for all assets valued over \$5,000.</p> <p>Review maintenance requirements for key assets and incorporate costs in budget.</p> <p>Analyse council's current plant fleet and its activities and assess future plant needs.</p>	Governance 12	BOA GM&CWBO & BAM	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Provide access to competitively priced chemicals for participants in council weed control programs and purchasers of bulk supplies.				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Provide landholder access to chemicals at commercially competitive prices.	Governance 12 Biosecurity 3	GM	As required.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Actively pursue the control of weeds along the roadsides in the council area.				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
<p>Prepare and publish on-line the annual roadsides weed control program and herbicide use plans.</p> <p>Carry out necessary control works in line with Council's budget allocations.</p> <p>Respond strategically to reports of weeds on roadsides.</p>	Biosecurity 3	CWO	<p>Prepared by September 30th annually</p> <p>As seasonal conditions permit.</p> <p>As required.</p>	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Actively pursue the control of weeds on private lands.				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
<p>Inspect private lands to assess weed invasion risk and advise landowners to fulfil their legal responsibilities in relation to weeds.</p> <p>Provide information to landowners on priority weed control.</p> <p>Respond to priority weed complaints.</p> <p>Undertake enforcement action according to Council weed risk management system and policies.</p>	Governance 12 Biosecurity 1 Biosecurity 2	CWO	<p>Ongoing according to policy and available resources.</p> <p>If not done at time of inspection within 1 week.</p> <p>Initial inspection within 10 to 15 working days where possible.</p> <p>Ongoing according to policy and available resources.</p>	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.

Actively pursue the control of weeds on land of Forestry Corporation NSW.				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Inspect Forestry Corporation land areas and advise of weed control requirements.	Governance 12 Biosecurity 1 Biosecurity 2 Biosecurity 9	CWO	Ongoing	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Follow-up to ensure control work is carried out on priority weed risks.			Ongoing	
Inspect un-fenced road areas surrounding forest areas.			Ongoing	

Actively pursue the control of weeds on lands of other public land agencies				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Inspect lands of public land agencies and advise of weed control requirements.	Governance 12 Biosecurity 1 Biosecurity 2 Biosecurity 9	CWO	Ongoing (Priority for Raiilways, Crown Land and Stock Routes)	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Provide information to public land agencies on priority weed control requirements.			As required as resources are available.	
Respond to complaints regarding priority weeds on public land.			Initial inspection according to Weed Biosecurity Policy priorities.	

Actively pursue regional resource sharing with nearby agencies to provide cost benefits to council in provision of services.				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Pursue effective biosecurity coordination with nearby councils and other public authorities to achieve coordinated approaches to weed control.	Governance 6 Biosecurity 1 Biosecurity 2	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.

UPPER MACQUARIE COUNTY COUNCIL

Conduct aerial spraying programs for priority weeds				
Required Activity	Objective	Resp.	Target	Performance measure
Organise aerial spraying programs for priority weeds across the district	Governance 12 Biosecurity 3	GM CWO	As seasonal conditions permit and demand requires.	Satisfactory completion of task in accordance with target level.
Publicise aerial spraying programs as applicable to ensure optimum landholder participation.		GM CWO	As required.	
Organise aerial spraying (involving all inspectors) throughout the county area in accordance with programs.		CWO	In accordance with programs.	

Revenue Policy

What Revenue will be raised and how

Council's revenue is expected to be derived from the following main sources in 2021/2022: Certain Amounts will come from *voluntary contributions* from Constituent Councils, and Weed Action Program *operational grants* from the NSW Government through the Department of Primary Industries and Local Land Services. Uncertain Amounts: may be derived from the sale of herbicides; provision of specialised weed control treatment services to landholders; and service or enforcement fees and charges. The uncertain amounts are subject to adverse weather and economic conditions during the period.

In setting its financial objectives Council takes into account that there are significant financial constraints that are imposed by legislation and the capacity to raise revenue from incidental fees and charges is limited by economic factors including the imperative to achieve full cost recovery for discretionary services while endeavoring to also provide price competitive landholder support services. The Council has no legal ability to raise any 'rates' or 'charges' within the meaning of the LGA. Notwithstanding these limitations, the Council is continuously striving to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its discretionary services, which it offers, without taking from its core functions as a biosecurity inspection and enforcement agency. The Council will investigate and pursue alternative appropriate income producing opportunities, consistent with its principle business activity, as and when they might become available.

Grants from Government Departments and other Authorities

The main grants that the Council receives are 'tied' and 'term' recurrent provided through the NSW Department of Primary Industries under the *NSW Weeds Action Program*. The Council is funded as a participant in the Department of Primary Industries – Local Land Services *central tablelands* regional control program consisting of all local control authorities in the area of Central Tablelands Local Land Services.

The Council may actively pursue the availability of project grants from other sources, however the opportunities for relevant types of grants are few and far between, and often (absurdly) the County Council is not eligible to apply for grants related to its core function. Accordingly grant applications will normally only be undertaken in partnership with other agencies.

Landholder Fee for Service Charges

The Council generally makes herbicides available for sale to local landholders and provides other weed control services directly or through agents on a full-cost recovery basis or quotation basis. The landholder services charges typically relate to aerial and ground based weed control activities. The methodology for establishing such fees for service charges is based on recovering the full amount of direct costs for materials and labour and contractor support, and in addition a margin of between 5% (some public agencies) and 15% (most private entities) to cover organisational on-costs. The margin also depends on the risk, scale and complexity of the work.

Landholder Enforcement Charges

The Council may impose, or have a court impose, penalties where landholders fail to meet their weed biosecurity duties despite being encouraged and warned of the requirements. Such landholder enforcement charges typically relate to infringement notices, court orders, and cost recovery enforcement works – all of which are directly or indirectly set by regulation.

Fees and Charges Schedule:

Regulatory Items (INCOME)	Fee / Charge
Certificates under Section 28 (2) of Schedule 7 of the Biosecurity Act (2015)	\$200 <i>(As per Schedule 5 of the Biosecurity Regulation 2017)</i>
Subdivision Certificate relating to Weed Biosecurity matters relating to Environmental Planning & Assessment Act consent requirements.	\$200
Certificates as to adverse affectation relating to the Conveyancing (Sale of Land) Regulation (2017)	\$200
Any other Certificate / Inspection Report as to the current status of priority weeds and weeds of community concern on a property.	\$200
Cooperative Weed Control OR Inspection Work (INCOME)	
Work on private land by Council by arrangement with the landholder	Cost inc GST plus margin (labour, contractors, materials and travel) between 5% (public agency) and 15% (private persons) OR Quote Basis.
Enforcement - Entry and Control Work (INCOME)	
Enforcement Action (Work) on private land by Council under Section 133 of the Biosecurity Act (2015)	Full recovery of all operational costs and administration expenses incurred in connection with the action. [As per Biosecurity Act 2015]
Enforcement Action (Work) on private land by Council under Section 147 of the Biosecurity Act (2015)	Full recovery of all operational costs and administration expenses incurred in connection with the action. [As per Biosecurity Act 2015]
Prosecution Fees (INCOME)	
Fee for (agreement to) withdrawal of prosecution for failing to control priority weeds or to comply with a weed control notice	On withdrawal of a prosecution, once commenced, \$300 + court costs + legal costs + reinspection cost.
Fee for Court Attendance by General Manager or Council Inspector to pursue prosecutions	\$130 per hour (including travelling time) + GST + incidental expenses such as accommodation and travel.
Penalty Infringement Notices (INCOME)	
	Penalties as per Schedule 6 of the Biosecurity Regulations (2017) (Minimum \$1,000 per infringement)
Chairman & Councillor Fees (EXPENSE)	
	Sitting Fees and Travel Allowances as prescribed under the Local Government Act (1993) and according to UMCC Policy 2018/07.

Budget Estimates for Income & Expenditure 2021/2022

The following **Table 1** is the statement containing the detailed estimate of the council's **expenditure** and **income** for 2021/2022 required by Clause 201 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*.

The final Budget was adopted by the Upper Macquarie County Council at the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 18th June 2021.

Budget Statement - Sub-Program Detail		Annual Budget 2020/2021	Annual Budget 2021/2022	Budget Change
Income from continuing operations		<i>Original</i>	<i>Draft Proposal</i>	<i>Year on Year</i>
1r. Landholder Support Program				
<i>1r1</i>	Aerial Weed Treatment	-	440,000	440,000
<i>1r2</i>	Ground Weed Treatment	-	-	0
<i>1r3</i>	Herbicide Sales	13,200	13,200	0
Total 4a Program Revenue		-	440,000	440,000
2r. Roadsides Weed Control Program				
<i>2r1</i>	Constituent Council Contribution (Roads)	101,300	152,940	51,640
<i>2r2</i>	State Government Agencies	-	5,000	5,000
Total 4b Program Revenue		101,300	157,940	56,640
3r. Weed Biosecurity Compliance Program				
<i>3r1</i>	NSW Weed Action Operating Grants (All)	342,574	348,691	6,117
<i>3r2</i>	Constituent Council Contributions (General)	611,874	624,497	12,623
Total 4c Program Revenue		954,448	973,188	18,740
4r. Business Management Program				
<i>4r1</i>	Interest - Cash & Investments	2,075	5,000	2,925
<i>4r2</i>	Infringement Penalties	6,000	7,000	1,000
<i>4r3</i>	Miscellaneous Revenue	7,500	14,000	6,500
Total 4d Program Revenue		15,575	26,000	10,425
Total Income from continuing operations		1,084,523	1,610,328	525,805

Expenses from continuing operations		Original	Draft Proposal	Year on Year
1x. Landholder Support Program				
1x1	Aerial Weed Treatment	-	400,000	400,000
1x2	Ground Weed Treatment	-	-	0
1x3	Herbicide Materials	12,000	12,000	0
Total 4a Program Expenditure		12,000	412,000	400,000
2x. Roadsides Weed Control Program				
2x1	Bathurst Council	58,566	58,969	403
2x2	Blayney Council	19,184	18,890	(294)
2x3	Lithgow Council	48,416	47,912	(504)
2x4	Oberon Council	27,202	27,169	(33)
2x5	State Government Agencies	-	5,000	5,000
Total 4b Program Expenditure		153,368	157,940	4,572
3x. Weed Biosecurity Compliance Program				
3x1	Biosecurity Administration	106,309	134,973	28,664
3x2	Biosecurity Compliance	412,360	444,459	32,099
3x3	Plant Operating (Inc Dep)	104,000	93,941	(10,059)
3x4	Office Materials & Technology	66,705	85,831	19,126
Total 4c Program Expenditure		689,374	759,204	69,830
4x. Business Management Program				
4x1	Member Costs & Allowances	31,466	47,859	16,393
4x2	General Management	109,500	111,690	2,190
4x3	General Insurances	51,952	57,147	5,195
4x4	Professional Services	36,156	38,897	2,741
Total 4d Program Expenditure		229,074	255,593	26,519
Total Expenses from continuing operations		1,083,816	1,584,738	500,922
Operating Result from continuing operations		\$ 707	\$ 25,590	\$ 24,883
		Surplus	Surplus	Surplus

UPPER MACQUARIE COUNTY COUNCIL

END