



CENTRAL TABLELANDS
WEEDS
AUTHORITY

(Legal Entity Upper Macquarie County Council)

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

Financial Year

and

END OF TERM REPORT

2022-2024

Central Tablelands Weeds Authority

The local control authority for weed biosecurity in the local government areas of Bathurst Regional Council, Blayney Shire Council, Oberon Council and Lithgow City Council.

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ANNUAL REPORT

1. CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

The 2023-24 year was a year of challenges for the Upper Macquarie County Council trading as Central Tablelands Weeds Authority (CTWA). The climatic conditions over the last two years have seen a massive growth in weeds on our farmland, on the roads and on Crown land. This has seen significant issues for the organisation in funding roadside weed control and in pursuing landholders who are experiencing increased infestations of weeds and increased costs for weed control. An example is the cost of Fluprofonate during the 2023/24 financial year. Fluprofonate, the most used and effective herbicide for serrated tussock, is again being sold in Australia by one supplier but the price is approximately three times the price of that in 2020. The cost of control of serrated tussock for just the chemical is around \$150 per hectare.

The new Service Level Agreements with the four constituent Councils (Bathurst, Blayney, Lithgow and Oberon) for roadside weed control were implemented. Each Councils' roads are broken into three sectors, with a sector treated annually. All roads are treated in a three-year cycle. However, the costs for the first sector were significantly beyond budget for several Councils, due to the intensity and frequency of weed infestations on roads. Negotiations are continuing with the constituent Councils on funding the difference or changing to a four-sector four-year program.

The aerial program for blackberries and serrated tussock has continued to be supported by landholders. Rotor Solutions Helicopters provided a very professional service to landholders with significant logistic support. CTWA staff, in reviewing the program for 2023-24, will determine whether one or two programs will occur in 2024-25.

Some key performance metrics for the organisation are described below, demonstrating the inspectorial program and compliance and enforcement activities commencing in 2018 to date.

The total land area of the CTWA is 1,352,000 hectares, of which National Parks consist of 348,740 hectares. The CTWA rarely inspects National Parks. The performance indicators below exclude National Parks, leaving 1,003,260 hectares of land.

- a) From 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2024, 10,544 inspections were undertaken.
- b) 5,364 properties were inspected, equaling 435,484 ha which is 43.4% of the total land mass of CTWA, excluding national parks.
- c) Of the 5,364 first inspections, 3,576 or 66.66% were classified as low risk with 1,788 or 33.33% classified as high risk.
- d) Of the 1,788 properties first classified as high risk 1,147 or 64.14% have undertaken works and are now classified as low risk.
- e) As of 30 June 2024, 641 properties are active as high risk within the compliance system.

- f) 967.4km of roadsides were sprayed as part of the 2023–2024 roadside spraying program across the four Council areas.

This will be the final Annual Report for this term, with constituent Council elections to be held on 14 September 2024 and thereafter those Councils appointing new delegates to CTWA. I would like to thank my fellow Council delegates: Bruce Reynolds, Allan Ewin, Andrew Smith, Ben Fry, Bruce Watt, Col O'Connor and Stephen Lesslie for being a united team, totally committed to the task of reducing the biosecurity risk of weeds in the area covered by our four constituent Councils. It has been a pleasure serving as your Chairman with such a united Council. My considerable thanks to Bruce Reynolds, the Deputy Chairman, for his assistance with the finances and his assistance with the CTWA future revenue strategy scenarios. Bruce has been the CTWA representative on the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee and has worked with former Administration Manager Lisa Monardo in finessing the financial statements for the organisation.

The General Manager, Tim Johnston, has led the organisation effectively since 2022 and supported the Council, the Administration Manager and Chief Biosecurity Manager during this period of challenges. The CTWA is reliant on its staff, and I thank the General Manager, Administration Manager, Chief Biosecurity Manager, Biosecurity Officers and contractors for their dedication and passion.

As we are all aware, CTWA is dependent on the continuing support of our four constituent Councils and I thank them for their financial support, advice to staff and in-kind help. CTWA also works closely with and is supported by the Department of Primary Industries and Local Land Services and that support is greatly appreciated by the organisation.

The Central Tablelands is a food bowl for Australia and for agricultural exports. The agricultural sector is the major industry or a substantial contributor to the economy of the four constituent Councils within the Central Tablelands and the control of weeds is essential to our agricultural sector remaining productive and profitable. Effective weed control is also crucial for the conservation of our natural environment.

Please remain vigilant in controlling your weeds.

Andrew McKibbin
Chairman
Central Tablelands Weeds Authority

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Purpose of the Annual Report

The main aim of the Annual Report is to report on CTWA's progress in implementing its Delivery Program and Operational Plan as these documents are wholly within Council's responsibility. The Annual Report is a key point of accountability between the CTWA and its community.

2.2 How to Read the Annual Report

This Annual Report is prepared to match the Activity Details and Performance measures in the Annual Operational Plan for Financial Year 2023/2024.

2.3 Highlights

Roadside Weed Control Services:

It was reported in last year's Annual Report that a new Roadside Weeds Control Services Agreement had been negotiated and commenced. It was a new strategic approach with a goal to treat all roads over a three or four year cycle. Each local government area is split into three sectors, with the objective being that a sector will be completed annually. This was achieved with Lithgow and Blayney Councils. Bathurst and Oberon Council did not complete sector one in the first year.

The first year of this new approach to roadside weeds included a steep rise in costs including labour, traffic control and herbicide. Combining this with a high density of weeds was the major factor in councils not completing sector one in the first year of the new agreement.

Councils negotiated amendments to the agreement including the introduction of GIS flow meters being attached to all spray units, providing mapping data of each occasion the spray gun is triggered, and plotting the location and quantity of spray. This technology will commence usage in November 2024, providing CTWA with immediate access to information that can address landholders questioning the annual road spraying program.

Property Inspections:

CTWA's property inspection program is undertaken in accordance with the *Biosecurity Act (2015)* and CTWA's Compliance & Enforcement Policy. That policy was adopted and commenced on 15 June 2018. The highlights are that Biosecurity Officers have surpassed 10,000 inspections, of which 5,364 properties or 435,484 hectares of land were inspected, that is 43.4% of the CTWA area. 66.66% of the inspections were identified as "low risk", demonstrating that those landholders were meeting their duty with weed management. In that period 1,788 properties were classified as high risk, on second inspection 64% had undertaken works reducing the weed risk to low.

The Biosecurity Officers work with landholders to reduce the risk of weeds. They assist by providing appropriate relevant timely information to aid landholder understanding of treatment methods. Landholders are encouraged to contact their local Biosecurity Officer and start a conversation about weeds.

2.4 Financial Summary

CTWA ended the 2023-2024 financial year with a net operating surplus result of \$82,000.

Revenue key factors:

- Chemical sales up \$15,000 from prior year.
- Private works down by \$142,000 from prior year (**Aerial Program**).

Expense key factors:

- Materials and services expense were increased significantly by \$156,000.

CTWA finished the 2023-2024 financial year with \$1,395,000 total equity compared to the previous financial year 2022-2023 of \$1,313,000.

In preparing the financial statements attached, management have assessed the ability of CTWA to continue as a going concern, which contemplates the continuity of business operations, realisation of assets and settlement of liabilities in the ordinary course of business. Management are of an opinion CTWA will continue as a going concern and that it is appropriate to adopt the going concern basis in the preparation of the financial statements after consideration of the factors documented in Note A1-1.

3. OVERVIEW

3.1 What the CTWA business is

The Central Tablelands Weeds Authority (CTWA) is a single purpose local government authority that is the 'local control authority' for weed biosecurity.

3.2 Constituent Councils

Two representatives from each of the four (4) constituent local government Councils come together to form the governing body of CTWA. The CTWA Council Members elect the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

3.3 Members of the Governing Body of CTWA

As of 30 June 2024, the CTWA Council was comprised of eight (8) Members as follows:

Cr Andrew McKibbin - Oberon Council [Chairman]
 Cr Bruce Reynolds - Blayney Shire Council [Deputy Chairman]
 Cr Ben Fry - Bathurst Regional Council [Member]
 Cr Andrew Smith - Bathurst Regional Council [Member]
 Cr Allan Ewin - Blayney Shire Council [Member]
 Cr Stephen Lesslie - Lithgow City Council [Member]
 Cr Col O'Connor - Lithgow City Council [Member]
 Cr Bruce Watt - Oberon Council [Member]

3.4 Council Meeting Attendance

Member attendance at CTWA Council Meetings for the twelve months to 30 June 2024 was as follows:

Cr Andrew McKibbin	Meetings attended out of 6 held.	6
Cr Bruce Reynolds	Meetings attended out of 6 held.	6
Cr Ben Fry	Meetings attended out of 6 held.	5
Cr Andrew Smith	Meetings attended out of 6 held.	4
Cr Allan Ewin	Meetings attended out of 6 held.	5
Cr Stephen Lesslie	Meetings attended out of 6 held.	6
Cr Col O'Connor	Meetings attended out of 6 held.	6
Cr Bruce Watt	Meetings attended out of 6 held.	6

3.5 Stakeholders and Staff

The CTWA has nine (9) permanent staff and is supported as required by various contractors that assist with bookkeeping services and the delivery of landholder support services. A part time General Manager manages governance and business strategy, while Biosecurity Administration Manager and the Biosecurity Operations Manager respectively manage the administration of both business and biosecurity systems and processes, the field-based biosecurity operations are provided by five (5) Weed Biosecurity Officers supported by a Program Assistant part-time.

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), in conjunction with the Central Tablelands Local Land Services (LLS), are key stakeholders providing State and regional strategy and planning. DPI through LLS provides funding support involving an annual operating grant from the NSW Weed Action Program. These agencies also provide invaluable in-kind support with research results, weed identification, weed species risk assessment, and weed information and extension materials.

The constituent councils, being the councils from the local government areas of Bathurst, Blayney, Lithgow, and Oberon, are the primary funding agencies through annual operating contributions provided in proportion to the relative strategic weed risk associated with each council area. The constituent Council communities are

the direct beneficiaries of the CTWA's work and accordingly have a keen interest in the CTWA's activities, and particularly the impacts of weed biosecurity in relation to farmland productivity, local economic impacts and more generally the quality of life in rural communities.

Beyond landholders and residents in the CTWA area, the effectiveness of local weed biosecurity impacts on all Australians in different ways, as efforts to control weeds in our district is part of a national effort to control serious invasive pest plants that, unchecked, will cause insurmountable damage to the productivity of agricultural land, country landscapes, and waterway environments.

3.6 CTWA's Source of Authority

The CTWA was first constituted by proclamation of the Governor of NSW in February 1949, pursuant to the provisions of the *Local Government Act (1919)*. The initial charter was for the *eradication of noxious plants – particularly serrated tussock*. More recently that charter was clarified to pursue control of various *priority weeds* (still commonly referred to as noxious weeds).

Today the CTWA derives its power and authority from two primary sources:

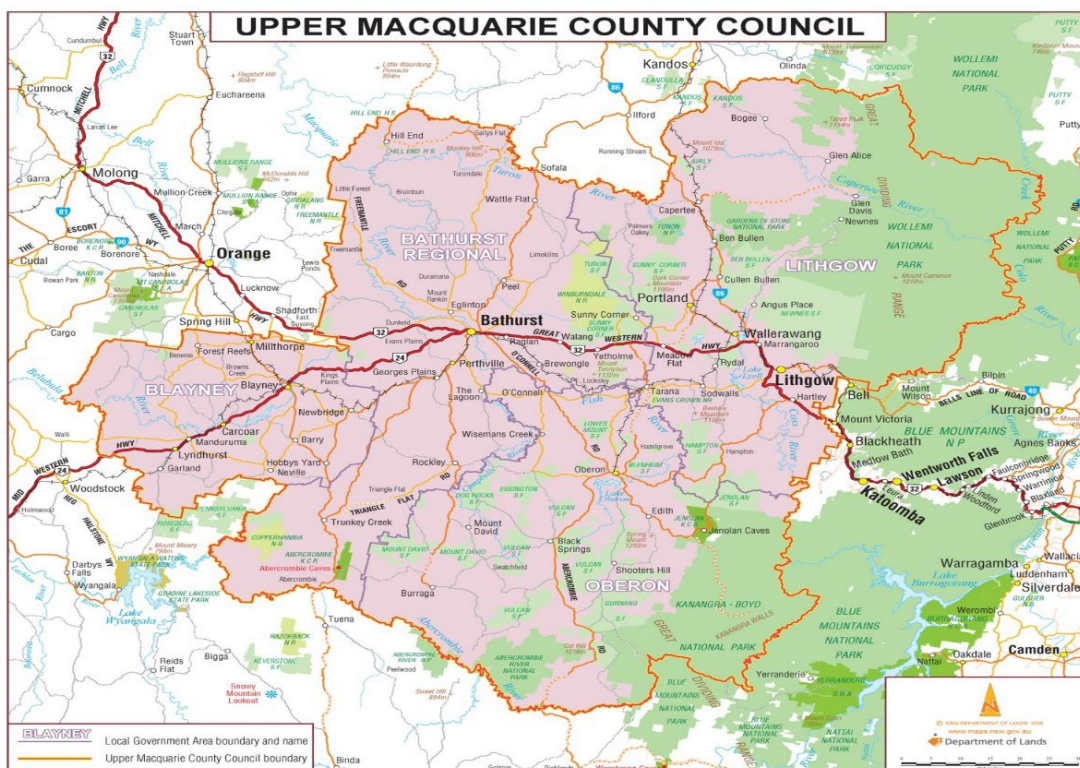
- The *local weed control authority* roles and responsibilities come from the provisions of the *Biosecurity Act (2015)*.
- The *local government authority* duties and obligations come from the provisions of the *Local Government Act (1993)*.

The area of operations of the Central Tablelands Weeds Authority comprises the whole of its constituent Council local government areas of Bathurst, Blayney, Lithgow, and Oberon and has the local weed control authority function to the absolute exclusion of those local Councils.

The CTWA has the following key operational functions in relation to the land for which it is the local control authority:

- a) The prevention, elimination, minimisation, and management of the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by weeds,
- b) To develop, implement, co-ordinate and review weed control programs,
- c) To inspect land in connection with its weed control functions,
- d) To keep records about the exercise of the local control authority's functions, and
- e) To report to the NSW Government about the exercise of the local control authority's functions.

3.7 Central Tablelands Weeds Authority Operating Profile.



The CTWA has an 'area of operation' that covers the whole of the local government areas of Bathurst, Blayney, Lithgow, and Oberon.

The CTWA has responsibilities covering an area of 1.35 million hectares. The area extends from high in the Blue Mountains in the east, from the Abercrombie National Park south to Kanangra Walls in the south-east, as far west as Limestone Creek and beyond Forest Reefs, and to the north-west reaching Hill End and Wattle Flat, then to the north-east beyond Capertee and Glen Davis, across into Wollemi National Park.

The area of operations has a population of 78,113 residents and 41,000 landholdings made up of 842,000 hectares of private land, 122,000 hectares of forest plantations, 377,000 hectares of National Parks and 11,000 hectares of other public land.

The CTWA area of operations includes highly productive agricultural land, high ecological value national parks, and vast areas of forest operations. Climatically the area is susceptible to rapid weed invasion from roads, rivers, and properties where landholders do not properly control weeds. The Central Tablelands' undulating country is also prone to weed invasion with seed being blown by prevailing winds.

There are 34 priority weeds in the Central Tablelands region. The Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans details these weeds – please refer to the link below.

[CTLLS Strategic Weed Management Plan](#)

4. STATUTORY REPORTING

The NSW *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* (LG (G) Reg.) in Clause 217 requires the following specified information to be included in the Annual Report:

This information has been included in the Regulation because the Government believes that it is important for community members to know about it – to help their understanding of how the CTWA has been performing both as a business entity and a community leader.

A. Details of overseas visits by members and council staff [LG (G) Reg. c.217 (1)(a)]

Central Tablelands Weeds Authority had no Council Member, nor staff member make any overseas visits on its behalf or at its expense during the reporting period.

B. Details of the Chairman and Members fees, expenses and facilities [LG (G) Reg.c.217 (1)(a1)]

Chairman's Allowance (S249 LGA).....	\$9,000
Members Fees (S248 LGA)	\$40,000
Members Travelling & Subsistence (CTWA Policy)	\$9,000
ANNUAL TOTAL	\$58,000

C. Induction of Members

Members of the Central Tablelands Weeds Authority Council are inducted primarily with their constituent Council. Due to this, the CTWA Members' induction is focused on the local control authority function under the *Local Government Act* and as the authoriser and employer of authorised officers under the *Biosecurity Act* as the regulator of the risks that weeds (National, State and Regional) impact on the community and particularly the agricultural sector of those communities.

The induction focuses on CTWA's four year Delivery Program, the Operational Plan and budget, and the Compliance and Enforcement Policy.

D. Contracts awarded by Central Tablelands Weeds Authority [LG (G) Reg. c.217(1)(a2)]

Central Tablelands Weeds Authority Contracts 2023 - 2024						
Contractor	Contract Details	Contract Purpose	Contract Value	Contract Commenced	Contract Duration	Budget Variance
Rotor Solutions	Aerial weed	Aerial spraying	Less than \$150,000	1/7/2023	4 years	NIL

	spraying contractor					
Gregaldon Pastoral	Weed spraying contractor	Roadside spraying panel	Less than \$150,000	15/11/2020	4 years	NIL
Dean Grabham	Weed spraying contractor	Roadside spraying panel	\$186,198	15/11/2020	4 years	NIL
Brett Howarth	Weed spraying contractor	Roadside spraying panel	Less than \$150,000	15/11/2020	4 years	NIL

E. Amounts incurred in relation to legal proceedings [LG (G) Reg. c.217 (1)(a3)]

- Legal proceedings \$5,181
- General legal matters and advice \$3,109

F. Private works and financial assistance [LG (G) Reg. c.217 (1)(a4, a5)]

CTWA undertook private works including:

- Aerial Spraying Program..... \$219,119
- Forestry Weed control spraying \$18,251
- Private lands ground spraying \$2,680
- NSW Priority Weed eradication \$3,205 (Mexican feather grass)

For the purposes of Section 428(4)(b) of the *Local Government Act (1993)*, and Clause 217(1)(a4) of the *Local Government Regulations (2021)* Central Tablelands Weeds Authority's position in relation to undertaking private works for the 2022/23 reporting period is as follows: CTWA undertook various private works in relation to weed control on both public and private land during the year, on a cost-plus basis paid by the relevant agency/property owner.

CTWA sets out the applicable rates and charges for private works in its fees and charges schedules. These rates are generally similar to the rates of contractors, as CTWA does not wish to unfairly compete with private enterprise. CTWA has not made any resolutions pursuant to Section 67 (2)(b). Accordingly, no private works have been subsidised by CTWA.

CTWA did not provide any financial assistance during the reporting period.

- G. Details of external bodies, companies and partnerships [LG (G) Reg. c.217 (1)(a6, a7, a8)]

Central Tablelands Weeds Authority was not a part of, nor did it have any legal interest in an external body, company or partnership.

- H. A statement of the activities undertaken by the council to implement its equal employment opportunity management plan. [LG (G) Reg. c.217 (1)(a9)]

Central Tablelands Weeds Authority has an Equal Opportunity Management Plan. CTWA endorses flexible working arrangements for its staff in order that they can attend to family and related duties when the need arises during otherwise normal work hours. All staff have had training opportunities and participated in training activities based on position requirements and individual training priorities. There have been no EEO related complaints during the reporting period.

- I. Details of the General Manager's total remuneration [LG (G) Reg. c.217 (1)(b)]
General Manager Tim Johnston's total remuneration package for the reporting period was \$115,578 including salary and superannuation.

- J. Details of the total expenditure on senior staff remuneration [LG (G) Reg. c.217 (1)(c)]

This matter is not applicable to CTWA, as it has no senior staff other than the General Manager.

- K. Statement of total number of persons who performed paid work on 14 February 2024 c.217(d)

Permanent/part time/temporary employees working on 14/02/2024	7 x FTE
Senior Staff working on 14/02/2024	1 x Part Time General Manager

- L. Information on storm-water levies and charges or coastal protection services [LG (G) Reg. c.217 (1)(e, e1)]

This matter is not applicable to CTWA.

- M. Information on storm-water levies and charges [LG (G) Reg. c.217 (1)(e)]

This matter is not applicable to Central Tablelands Weeds Authority.

N. Information included on government information public access activity.

One application responded 2024-2025 financial year.

O. Information included on public interest disclosure activity.

Nil public interest disclosure activity.

P. Modern slavery.

This Modern Slavery Statement is provided by Central Tablelands Weeds Authority in accordance with Section 428(4) of the *NSW Local Government Act (1993)*.

This Statement outlines CTWA's commitment to combatting modern slavery and the measures we have implement during this reporting period to reduce the risk of our procurement activities resulting in or contributing to human rights violations.

Organisational Structure and Supply Chain

Central Tablelands Weeds Authority compliance with modern slavery legislation is being supported regionally through the member Councils. All suppliers will be provided to CTWA for risk assessment to be embedded into an ongoing working program. CTWA has a dedicated resource to support procurement including compliance with modern slavery legislation.

A central database has been developed using information on suppliers provided by member Councils. The database identifies medium and high-risk suppliers.

CTWA recognises the importance of taking steps to ensure that goods and services procured by and for our Councils are not the product of modern slavery.

Our supply chain includes a variety of suppliers, contractors, partners. CTWA's highest categories of spend include fuel, electricity, herbicides.

Policy

Central Tablelands Weeds Authority has a procurement policy outlining its commitment to preventing and addressing modern slavery in all its procurement activities.

5. OPERATIONAL PLAN 2023/2024 REPORTING

What is an Operational Plan?

Section 405 of the *Local Government Act (1993)* requires that Central Tablelands Weeds Authority 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 four 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. CTWA 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 CTWA'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, CTWA'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 CTWA will undertake progressively within the subject financial year, and subsequently, towards achieving CTWA's principal 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.

END OF TERM REPORT

What is a Delivery Program?

Section 404 of the *Local Government Act (1993)* requires that Central Tablelands Weeds Authority must have a Delivery Program detailing the principal activities it will undertake to achieve the objectives established in the Business Activities Strategic Plan, within the resources available under the Resourcing Strategy.

CTWA must prepare a new Delivery Program by 30 June in the year following a local government ordinary election to cover the principal activities of the Council for the four year period commencing on 1 July following the election. It is then updated annually during the Council term.

The Delivery Program must:

- directly address the objectives and strategies of the Business Activity Strategic Plan,
- identify principal activities that council will undertake in response to the objectives and strategies,
- inform, and be informed by, the Resourcing Strategy,
- address the full range of council operations,
- allocate high level responsibilities for each action or set of actions, and
- include financial estimates for the four-year period covered by the Program.

The draft Delivery Program must be exhibited for public comment for a minimum of 28 days and public submissions must be accepted and considered before the final program is adopted.

CTWA must review its Delivery Program each year when preparing its Operational Plan.

The General Manager must ensure that progress reports are provided to the Council, with respect to the principal activities detailed in the Delivery Program, at least every six months.

The Council may choose to roll the Delivery Program forward beyond its elected term to enable effective forward planning, provided it is consistent with its Business Activity Strategic Plan and Resourcing Strategy. Where a Council does this, it is still required to report on the implementation of its initial Delivery Program. CTWA is required to prepare a new Delivery Program after each general local government election.

Where an amendment to the Delivery Program is proposed, it must be included in a CTWA business paper which outlines the reasons for the amendment and be tabled and resolved to be noted at that meeting and considered by Council at its next meeting.

Where significant amendments are proposed, the Program must be re-exhibited.

The Delivery Program aligned with the Annual Operating Plan are detailed in the tables below demonstrating achievements in the reporting period.

OPERATIONAL PLAN ACHIEVEMENTS 2023/2024

1. WEED BIOSECURITY RISK DETECTION AND MONITORING

Implement a suitable landholdings inspection regime across the CTWA district to identify and rank weed biosecurity risks and encourage the landholder or occupier to adequately meet their weed biosecurity duty.

Delivery Program 2023/24 to 2027/28	Operation Plan 2023/2024	Outcome
1.1: All areas are inspected in proportion to the Weed Action Plan target funding level.		
1.1.1 Implement a recurrent routine annual property inspection regime targeting priority weed species across all constituent council areas based on weed classifications set in the current Central Tablelands Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspect properties to assess weed invasion risk and advise landowners to fulfil their legal responsibilities in relation to weeds. 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information to landowners on priority weed control. 	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to priority weed complaints. 	Achieved
1.2: Prior notice during cooperative compliance phase according to the <i>CTWA compliance and enforcement policy</i> .		
1.2.1 Provide an appropriate level of advance notice to landholders and occupiers for routine initial inspections and follow-up inspection of properties.	Where appropriate, send CTWA "Notice to Enter and Inspect".	Achieved
1.3: Property Inspection Schedule is in accordance with the weed biosecurity risk ratings established by the <i>CTWA Compliance and Enforcement Policy</i> .		
1.3.1 Develop and implement a risk-based property 'compliance re-inspection' program that targets weed	Produce monthly a "re-inspection" list for Weed Biosecurity Officers to guide their compliance re-inspections.	Achieved

biosecurity risks based on objective risk ranking.		
1.4: An in-house review of the potential and extent of upgrades/ additional technologies is undertaken on an annual basis. As improved technologies become available as appropriate to support detection and ranking of weed biosecurity risks.		
1.4.1 Utilise geographic information systems, global satellite positioning, satellite imagery and drone technologies as appropriate to support weed biosecurity risk detection, monitoring and targeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide adequate computer facilities to run an appropriate Geographical Information System (GIS). • Continue and enhance the present practice of entering arrangements with constituent Councils, or others, for obtaining GIS data. • Continue the training of staff in the use of the CREST and associated GIS system to ensure its most effective and efficient use. 	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Advancing</p> <p>Achieved</p>

2. WEED BIOSECURITY RISK REDUCTION

Achieve a reduced overall level of weed biosecurity risk in the CTWA district through an appropriate mix of cooperative compliance and enforced compliance measures.

Delivery Program 2022/23 – 2026/27	Operation Plan 2023/2024	Outcome
2.1: Weed biosecurity officers undertake extension work in relation to stakeholder interest group meetings, attending agricultural shows, and consulting with quarrying, agriculture and forest industry organisations.		
2.1.1 Take opportunities to engage directly and indirectly with the landholder community to educate and advise landholders and occupiers of their weed biosecurity duties and what is required of them in that regard.	<p>Where appropriate have CTWA staff attend community meetings.</p> <p>Continue to participate in the Regional Weeds Committee Meetings.</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Achieved</p>

2.2: A suite of 'property inspection reports' including for establishing weed infestation status,' weed control advice', and weed management programs are available.		
2.2.1 Develop and deliver (chargeable and no-charge) 'value-add' services to support landholders prepare realistic and acceptable programs/plans for meeting their weed biosecurity duties.	Work with landholders to help meet their biosecurity duties.	Achieved
2.3: Encourage binding biosecurity undertakings from landholders as part of the cooperative enforcement phase.		
2.3.1 Facilitate landholders and land occupiers entering 'binding undertakings' regarding a suitability staged approach to fulfilling their weed biosecurity duties.	Work with landholders to help meet their biosecurity duties.	Achieved
2.4: Enforceable direction notices are all issued in accordance with the <i>CTWA Compliance and Enforcement Policy</i> .		
2.4.1 Issue enforceable direction notices to property owners and occupiers that resist or otherwise fail to fulfil their weed biosecurity duties where significant weed biosecurity risks persist after initial advice.	Follow the Compliance and Enforcement Policy.	Achieved
2.5: Penalty Infringement Notices are all issued in accordance with the <i>CTWA Compliance and Enforcement Policy</i> .		
2.5.1 Issue on-the-spot fines (PIN's) to property owners and occupiers that fail to adequately meet their weed biosecurity duties in relation to direction notices or binding undertakings or other serious biosecurity matters.	Follow the Compliance and Enforcement Policy.	Achieved

2.6: Court proceedings are instigated against any recalcitrant owner or occupier of land in accordance with the <i>CTWA Compliance and Enforcement Policy</i> .		
2.6.1 Initiate court proceedings against property owners and occupiers that ignore statutory direction or penalty notices, otherwise seriously fail to meet their weed biosecurity duties, or to secure outstanding charges and penalties relating to weed biosecurity matters.	Follow the Compliance and Enforcement Policy.	Achieved

3. WEED BIOSECURITY RISK TREATMENT PROGRAMS

Develop, implement, co-ordinate and review weed control programs in support of cooperative landowners or occupiers seeking practical CTWA support in tackling weed biosecurity matters.

Delivery Program 2022/23 – 2026/27	Operation Plan 2023/2024	Outcome
3.1: Where seasonal conditions permit, implement a spring and autumn program annually – targeting ‘serrated tussock’ grass. Where seasonal conditions permit, implement one programs annually – targeting ‘blackberry’.		
3.1.1 Supplement the routine annual recurrent property inspection regime with an ‘opt-in’ aerial weed spraying program delivered notionally by CTWA on a cost + recovery basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise aerial spraying programs for priority weeds across the district Publicise aerial spraying programs as applicable to ensure optimum landholder participation. Organise aerial spraying (involving all inspectors) throughout the CTWA area in accordance with programs. 	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Achieved</p> <p>Achieved</p>
3.2: Engage with Forests NSW and have them participate in roadside weed spraying programs. Engage with NSW Crown Lands, Transport for NSW and National Parks in weed management and control programs.		

<p>3.2.1 Make NSW Government agencies aware of the opportunity to 'opt-in' the general aerial weed spraying program delivered notionally by CTWA on a cost + recovery basis OR a custom designed program to assist them meet their weed biosecurity duty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspect Forestry Corporation land areas and advise of weed control requirements. • Follow-up to ensure control work is carried out on priority weed risks. • Inspect unfenced road areas surrounding forest areas. • Communicate with NSW Government agencies elected employee. 	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Achieved</p> <p>Achieved</p> <p>Achieved</p>
<p>3.3: Maintain or increase the level of roadside control to constituent Council funding levels.</p>		
<p>3.3.1 Reform the established roadside weed spraying program delivered notionally by CTWA for constituent Councils at a direct full cost to CTWA – to become a direct cost (only) recovery basis OR a custom designed program to assist them meet their weed biosecurity duty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide regular communication with each constituent Council on their obligations under the Act. • Ensure that any infestations of priority weeds found on constituent Council properties are mapped and properly recorded. • Ensure that infestations of priority weeds on Council lands and roadsides are mapped and properly recorded, with reports provided to constituent Councils. • In conjunction with constituent Councils, conduct a regular and systematic program of property visits to constituent Council land. • Undertake control work on constituent Council roadsides as funded by each constituent Council. • Respond promptly to complaints about the presence of priority weeds. 	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Achieved</p> <p>Advancing</p> <p>Achieved</p> <p>Achieved</p> <p>Advancing</p>

4. WEED BIOSECURITY RECORDS & AUDITS

Keep suitable records about the exercise of the CTWA's weed biosecurity control functions to meet operational, enforcement and compliance auditing requirements.

Delivery Program 2022/23 – 2026/27	Operation Plan 2023/2024	Outcome
4.1: Maintain 'job numbers' system.		
4.1.1 Adapt CTWA's accounting system to better capture and produce a wide range of operationally oriented management accounting information.	Ensure CTWA's accounting software is kept up to date.	Advancing
4.2: Refreshed suite of operational data is recorded in biosecurity register according to procedural requirements on an ongoing basis.		
4.2.1 Refine and integrate the existing operational data collection systems to ensure a suitable range of management information becomes available in a timely manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide appropriate hardware and software to establish and maintain a database. • Ensure that it is appropriately backed up and kept secure. 	Achieved Achieved
4.3: Provide performance measures that address quality, effectiveness and efficiency for key areas of operation.		
4.3.1 Establish a sound set of operational performance measures that facilitate enhanced performance reporting to key stakeholders	At regular and frequent intervals, report to Council on additions to the database since the last report and how CTWA might modify its activities, or otherwise react to, input received.	Achieved
4.4: Self-audit undertaken annually and reported to Council in association with annual reports.		
4.4.1 Introduce self-audits of CTWA statutory compliance.	Participate in and cooperate with the newly established ARIC.	Partially achieved. ARIC established. Independent internal audit function not finalised by due date July 2024.

5. WEED BIOSECURITY STATUTORY REPORTING

To meet all statutory reporting requirements imposed under *the Local Government Act (1993)*, *Biosecurity Act (2015)* and other legislation as per reporting timetables.

Delivery Program 2022/23 – 2026/27	Operation Plan 2023/2024	Outcome
5.1: Agency data requests are met within agreed submission timeframes/deadlines.		
5.1.1 Submit to NSW Department of Primary Industries and Local Land Services, as applicable, all available weed biosecurity meta-data on a regular basis in support of regional and state level understanding of weed biosecurity risks.	Submit monthly (BIS) WAP Data reports to Department of Primary Industries.	Achieved
5.2: In a timely manner when matters arise.		
5.2.1 Present matters of key importance relating to gaps and anomalies in the biosecurity legislation to the Regional Weeds Committee and the State Weeds Committee as appropriate.	Continue to attend the quarterly Regional Weeds Committee Meetings.	Advancing
5.3: Annual report following Council consideration is submitted by the due date.		
5.3.1 Provide an annual report to the DPI Secretary (and Minister when appropriate) outlining any substantive achievements and difficulties experienced as the local control authority and information about any recalcitrant government authorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit ¾ report to LLS, indicating figures against WAP estimates. • Submit EOFY actual figures, against WAP estimates. 	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Achieved</p>

6. SUSTAINABLE RESOURCING OF THE PRINCIPAL BUSINESS ACTIVITY

Secure the allocation of sufficient financial and human resources and to optimise those scarce resources in pursuit of core business duties and obligations.

Delivery Program 2022/23 – 2026/27	Operation Plan 2023/2024	Outcome
6.1: Review to inform this 2022/23 – 2031/32 strategic business activity plan. Further review annually to transform and maintain the strategic business activity plan as a long-term sustainable model.		
6.1.1 Periodic review of the established budget structure and associated funding priorities and testing the suitability of established service priorities and pricing in view of the new more comprehensive approach to weed biosecurity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide regular investment reports. • Analyse and provide Council with quarterly Budget Review Statements. 	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Achieved</p>
6.2: Apply a zero-based approach to budget preparation before adoption of annual operating budget and ongoing thereafter. Cost/benefit testing process is in place (for new or different proposals) before adoption of annual operating budget and ongoing thereafter.		
6.2.1 Apply ongoing cost/benefit principles to testing the suitability of established and new individual budget allocations and sourcing methods and restructure where appropriate to improve business sustainability.	Analyse and provide Council with quarterly Budget Review Statements.	Achieved
6.3: Procurement Policy and Procedures in place and reviewed when required.		
6.3.1 Apply sensible market testing practises to all procurement activities by the CTWA with a view to minimising waste, obtaining best value for money, and improving financial sustainability.	Follow the Procurement Policy.	Achieved

6.4: Ongoing scanning for opportunities and applications made where there is a clear cost/benefit evident.		
6.4.1 Assess alternative funding options for both replacing future capital funding requirements with recurrent expense alternatives and attracting/ devising new recurrent funding opportunities.	Monitor and apply for suitable grant opportunities.	Partially achieved

7. INNOVATION AND QUALITY

To continuously innovate, adapt and apply initiative in decision-making and problem solving with a view to achieving an efficient, effective and quality-focused business.

Delivery Program 2022/23 – 2026/27	Operation Plan 2023/2024	Outcome
7.1: Evidence of achievements presented to and recognised by the Council on an ongoing basis.		
7.1.1 Foster an organisational culture that supports innovation and targets excellence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct regular team meetings. Participate in multi-organisational meetings where appropriate. 	Achieved Achieved
7.2: Drone inspection fleet be maintained in support of biosecurity officer in their field.		
7.2.1 Operate aerial drone technologies as an enhancement to operational effectiveness and staff productivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct training in the operation of drones. Ensure all records, appropriate licences and insurances are kept up to date. 	Achieved Achieved
7.3: Subject to cost/benefit result and available funds – ongoing review on available technology.		
7.3.1 Investigate and introduce the use of satellite imagery as an aid to identifying, monitoring and ranking weed biosecurity risk at a catchment, district, or other relevant local boundary.	Continue to cooperate with and communicate with those conducting research and development in remote sensing technology.	Not Achieved

7.4: Subject to cost/benefit result and available funds – refined or upgraded GIS system and support mechanisms in operation.		
7.4.1 Review and refine the existing use of geographical information systems with a view to achieving enhanced integration with information capture, reporting and monitoring outcomes.	Work with GIS technicians to achieve best outcomes.	Advancing

8. BIOSECURITY ADVICE & INFORMATION

To leverage of information and material created by NSW DPI and LLS with a view to enhancing the impact of target educational and advisory functions (i.e. achieve greater cooperative compliance with biosecurity duties).

Delivery Program 2022/23 – 2026/27	Operation Plan 2023/2024	Outcome
8.1: Relevant information prepared/obtained and provided with all Intention to Inspect Notices.		
8.1.1 Provide a relevant and targeted suite of weed biosecurity information and information sources to landholders in conjunction with property inspections and re-inspections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add DPI created fliers on related weeds with Weed Control Notices. • Continue to hand our DPI created weed treatment handbook 	Achieved Achieved
8.2: Targeted advice annually. Public advice on an ongoing basis.		
8.2.1 Remind the real estate and land conveyance industry in the district of the availability and benefits of obtaining BOTH a Weed Biosecurity Information Notice (about outstanding fees, charges or penalties etc) as well as a Weed Status Assessment before agreeing to buy a property or as a benefit before trying to sell a property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to supply Certificates as to Adverse Affectations. • Continue to supply Subdivision Weed Certificates 	Achieved Achieved
8.3: Liaise closely on an ongoing basis with NSW DPI and LLS regarding available information sources.		

<p>8.3.1 Make full use of established weed biosecurity information, data and advisory opportunities available through NSW DPI and LLS where appropriate.</p>	<p>Refer landholders to DPI website and app Weed Wise.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
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9. WEED BIOSECURITY ENFORCEMENT

To strengthen and expand the effectiveness of the CTWA's regulatory role and enhancing credibility in the regulatory process – particularly in terms of fairness and consistency.

<p>Delivery Program 2022/23 – 2026/27</p>	<p>Operation Plan 2023/2024</p>	<p>Outcome</p>
<p>9.1: Compliance and enforcement policy for implementing the <i>Biosecurity Act (2015)</i> in place and reviewed. Ensure compliance and enforcement policy is implemented in a consistent and equitable manner tested by peer review process.</p>		
<p>9.1.1 Implement a biosecurity compliance and enforcement policy and associated procedures to carefully guide authorised officers throughout the whole compliance inspections and enforcement activities journey.</p>	<p>Review policy to ensure it is “best practice”.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>9.2: Direct contact between CTWA's GM and each key agency (Forests NSW; Crown Lands; Transport for NSW; NPWS) creating and maintaining a binding undertaking. Direct contact between CTWA, Local MP and relevant Ministers of the Crown regarding each key agency (Forests NSW; NPWS; Crown Lands; Transport for NSW) seeking a binding undertaking if an agency declines to cooperate.</p>		
<p>9.2.1 Pursue an initial cooperative compliance approach (and later a forced compliance approach if required) to ensuring NSW Government agencies meet their weed</p>	<p>Follow the Compliance and Enforcement Policy</p>	<p>Achieved</p>

biosecurity duties as set out in the <i>Biosecurity Act (2015)</i> .		
9.3: Forced compliance actions ‘ramp-up’ according to the <i>CTWA Compliance and Enforcement Policy</i> from the start of 2018/2019. Direct enforcement action by CTWA against each key agency (Forests NSW; NPWS; Crown Lands; Transport for NSW;). <i>(IF REQUIRED)</i>		
9.3.1 For recalcitrant landholders – including NSW State Government agencies – those who ignore or otherwise fail to meet or reasonably progress with their weed biosecurity duty – commence forced compliance options including legal action.	Follow the Compliance and Enforcement Policy	Achieved
9.4: A risk-based assessment model, tailored for the CTWA district circumstances is the basis for ranking weed biosecurity risk (and hence subsequent levels of enforcement activity) according to the <i>CTWA Compliance and Enforcement Policy</i> .		
9.4.1 That the local weed biosecurity inspection, monitoring and enforcement regime is based on an objective ‘risk based’ process to establish the degree of weed biosecurity risk/weed biosecurity compliance level for each property.	Follow the Compliance and Enforcement Policy	Achieved and being promoted to other weeds authorities in NSW.

10. AN EXEMPLARY BIOSECURITY WORKFORCE

To leverage off the experience and understanding of weed biosecurity matters, held by CTWA staff, LLS and DPI to evolve the CTWA Biosecurity Officers into the new proactive and motivational era of weed biosecurity under the *Biosecurity Act (2015)*.

Delivery Program 2022/23 – 2026/27	Operation Plan 2023/2024	Outcome
10.1: The training plan maintained and reviewed. Incremental planned and staged training delivery. On an ongoing basis.		

<p>10.1.1 Identify and provide a comprehensive targeted training program providing skills and knowledge enhancement associated with weed biosecurity to ensure they are highly skilled, confident and well informed in all aspects of their role.</p>	<p>Collaborate with CTWA staff to create individualised training programs.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>10.2: Involve weed biosecurity officers in all stages of creating and refining operational and enforcement procedures and guidelines that they are required to implement iterative feedback and continuous refinements to documented systems and processes as they are implemented on an ongoing basis.</p>		
<p>10.2.1 Develop a full suite of appropriate procedures and guidelines (for implementing legislation and policy) to support biosecurity decision-making by officer in the field and in association with enforcement activities.</p>	<p>Review and update policies.</p>	<p>Policy development achieved.</p>
<p>10.3: Liaise closely on an ongoing basis with DPI and central tablelands LLS regarding updated information and guidance information.</p>		
<p>10.3.1 Make full use of established weed biosecurity procedures and guidelines prepared and updated from time to time by NSW DPI and LLS where appropriate.</p>	<p>Review DPI and LLS procedures and guidelines.</p>	<p>Moderately achieved. DPI Weed Policy and Procedures dates 2018.</p>
<p>10.4: Continue to engage regionally on an ongoing basis with NSW DPI and LLS and related advisory committees regarding weed biosecurity matters.</p>		
<p>10.4.1 Work closely with NSW DPI and LLS, and other local control authorities where appropriate to share knowledge and experience and keep up</p>	<p>Communicate with Regional Weeds Coordinator on a regular basis.</p>	<p>Achieved.</p>

to date with contemporary weed biosecurity issues.		
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11. MEASURING WEED BIOSECURITY ACTIVITY AND OUTCOMES

To suitably monitoring organisational achievements and measure outcomes accordingly as a means of demonstrating value for money to stakeholders and informing the organisation about areas for attention.

Delivery Program 2022/23 – 2026/27	Operation Plan 2023/2024	Outcome
11.1: Management Information System (MIS) devised and activated and reviewed.		
11.1.1 Establish a suitable Management Information System for CTWA that allows for and supports a comprehensive reporting and information source for staff, Council and other stakeholders as appropriate.	Maintain CTWA's property inspection register.	Moderately achieved.
11.2: Reports to be provided on an ongoing basis.		
11.2.1 Provide periodic information reports to key stakeholders (including constituent Councils) to assist their understanding of the status and progress with addressing weed biosecurity matters in the district.	Create and provide Council regular property inspection reports which includes high risk inspections, low risk inspections and re-inspections that are yet to be inspected and have gone beyond 90 days.	Achieved
11.3: Contact meetings between CTWA and the constituent Councils twice annually or otherwise by agreement.		
11.3.1 Liaise periodically with the constituent Councils regarding weed biosecurity matters relevant to each council local area of operations.	Conduct meetings with nominated constituent Council employees to collaborate and advise on weed biosecurity matters.	Moderately achieved

12. SUPPORT GOOD ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE

To ensure that CTWA governance structures and processes are designed (and appropriately implemented) to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation.

Delivery Program 2022/23 – 2026/27	Operation Plan 2023/2024	Outcome
12.1: All mandatory policies and procedures linked to statutory requirements are refreshed and up to date and reviewed annually or biannually thereafter. All discretionary policies and procedures reviewed annually or biannually.		
12.1.1 Review and update CTWA's manual of policies, codes and procedures to ensure they meet regulatory requirements.	As stated.	Achieved
12.2: The Annual Report following Council consideration is published/submitted by the due date.		
12.2.1 Provide an annual report to the OLG CEO (and Minister when appropriate) compliant with all the requirements of the <i>Local Government Act (1993)</i> .	As stated.	Achieved
12.3: Designated documents including annual financial and auditors' reports, management plans and various codes, agendas, business papers and minutes of meetings; information contained in certain registers; as well as plans and policies will be listed in the CTWA's <i>Agency Information Guide</i> updated annually.		
12.3.1 Have all relevant designated open access information available to the public as per the <i>Government Information (Public Access) Act (2009)</i> .	Abide by all relevant GIPA legislation.	Achieved.
12.4: Annual Auditor General's Report contains no substantial qualifications.		

<p>12.4.1 CTWA's financial, asset management and procurement functions meet all statutory procedural and reporting requirements and are implemented in accordance with all relevant policies, codes and regulatory requirements.</p>	<p>Review procedures surrounding these functions to ensure they meet all relevant requirements.</p>	<p>Financial Statements and Auditor Report Achieved.</p>
<p>12.5: All relevant codes, standards and regulatory requirements for Council, Council meetings and Councillors are adhered to.</p>		
<p>12.5.1 Council is provided with frank and fearless advice, Council business is properly transacted, decisions of the Council are implemented in a timely manner, and Council meetings are conducted in an orderly manner.</p>	<p>As stated.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>12.5.2 CTWA renews, updates, and develops as required a comprehensive suite of the policies and procedures necessary for meeting statutory duties and obligations and others to ensure the safe, efficient and effective undertaking of works and delivery of services.</p>	<p>As stated.</p>	<p>Moderately achieved</p>

APPENDIX 1: AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The *NSW Local Government Act (1993)* in Section 428 (2) (a) requires the audited financial reports be included in CTWA's Annual Report.

Those audited financial reports are provided as Appendix 1 herein.