



## Introduction

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Local Land Services is the regional natural resource management (NRM) organisation or body in NSW.

Local Land Services is an independent NSW Government Executive Agency that came into effect on 1 January 2014, bringing together the functions of the former 11 Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs), 14 Livestock Health and Pest Authorities and some agricultural extension functions of the Department of Primary Industries.

Local Land Services is a single entity organisation, strengthened by 11 regional Boards (see Appendix 1), who ensure state-wide consistency around quality and governance is balanced with regional input and knowledge to deliver programs tailored to meet the needs of investors and the community.

The organisation's focus is on the planning and delivery of programs to deliver healthy and productive landscapes that supports vibrant communities.

Through our work with community groups such as Landcare, LLS addresses long term strategic issues of national importance at a local, regional and state scale.

Through this work Local Land Services and its predecessor organisations, CMAs, have delivered measurable outcomes in many areas such as biodiversity protection, both aquatic and terrestrial, sustainable agriculture, community capacity building and partnerships with Aboriginal Communities (see Appendix 2).

## Principles

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Local Land Services works in the NRM and Sustainable Agriculture sphere by:

1. Recognising that landscape repair and sustainable use depends on community capacity and land-manager stewardship;
2. Supporting Landcare and other NRM groups to continue their traditional and distinctive roles to support and build capacity in volunteers, community groups and land stewards;
3. Supporting regional plans as the basis of landscape investment;
4. Devolving service delivery to the lowest capable level (subsidiarity);
5. Using regional plans that meet high standards of governance, community engagement and reporting;
6. Encouraging long term, stable co-investment; and
7. Aligning national, state, regional and local targets and aspirations.

Through the development and implementation of integrated five and ten year strategic plans for Local Land Services at the State and Local scale, we aim to give effect to the National NRM Regions' Localism policy.

We strongly maintain that:

1. An enabled community is a prerequisite to localism: An enabled community is aware, engaged, active, skilled and resourced.
2. To enable communities, devolution of decision making, planning and implementation is also a prerequisite.
3. For devolution and localism to be successful, resourcing is critical for both core support and program/project delivery.
4. Local people know their local area best.
5. Localism is expected to increase capacity and resilience in communities, and the spread of innovative practice.
6. Issues are best addressed at the lowest possible scale where there is existing or potential capacity to do so.
7. Localism engenders greater ownership of local problems and solutions, and leverages greater commitment in time and resources from local people and communities.
8. Localism encourages peer support, peer learning and peer review.
9. Localism respects independence as an important empowering trait.
10. Local people should have significant influence over the issues that matter most to them or affect their community.
11. Community can be diverse, uneven and sometimes messy. This is also the strength of communities that needs to be acknowledged and accommodated.
12. Clear lines of responsibility and accountability are vital for effective local governance structures.
13. An environment for meaningful partnerships with local people, groups and communities should be created. This may involve allocating more time and resources to develop genuine relationships built on mutual trust and respect.
14. Regional Bodies are in a unique position to provide valuable services in linking governments, and local groups and people, across different focal scales.

Local Land Services is committed to giving effect to localism, and by doing so, strengthen the capacity of local people and community groups. This will empower them to take effective action and assume leading roles in the sustainable development of their communities.

Local Land Services also accepts that they are accountable to the regional communities we serve and ultimately to the broader community for the public funds we invest locally.

Through our work we aim to:

1. Have our partnership arrangements supported by formal agreements;
2. Implement a level of devolution consistent with the concept of 'earned autonomy', whereby high performing partners will be provided with additional power or freedoms over time, and that these standards are jointly agreed and understood;
3. Provide enabling support for local capacity building and devolution of power in ways that result in local outcomes being delivered that align with broad government priorities;
4. Establish quality assurance arrangements to ensure the processes and outcomes delivered by our partners are valid, consistent and fair;
5. Ensure that the auspicing of services through a regional body is consistent with a planned strategy to support community capacity; and
6. Give effect to localism; decision points will be included in every program to consider partnership opportunities and devolution.

## **Conclusion**

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Through the work of predecessor organisations, Local Land Services has developed significant capacity to plan, engage, devolve, monitor and account for significant investment in NRM in NSW through many programs over the past 10 years.

Local Land Services would welcome the opportunity to discuss ways in which those learnings can ensure that future program designed supports and facilitates localism; removing barriers to community participation and ownership without losing the important accountability required to show the value of these programs for the people of Australia.

## **Further information**

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## Appendices

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Selected case study examples of work undertaken by Catchment Management Authorities under the Natural Heritage Trust and Caring for our Country programs.

Appendix 1 Local Land Services regions map

Appendix 2 Combined Catchment Management Authorities outputs

Appendix 3 Case Study: Improved habitat for threatened species – Booroolong frog & Southern Pygmy perch

Appendix 4 Case Study from Murrumbidgee CMA Annual Report 2010/11

Appendix 5 Case Study from Northern Rivers CMA: Eastern Bristlebird Habitat Recovery restoring a priority species

Appendix 6 Supporting the South Coast Dairy Industry Youtube  
video:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtZahaVsQZo>