

**UPPER HUNTER COUNTY COUNCIL**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2017/18**



The Upper Hunter County Council Annual Report has been prepared by Council staff in accordance with the requirements of Section 428 of the Local Government Act 1993 and associated Regulations

Steve McDonald  
General Manager

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## 1. Performance Management [428(2) L.G.A. 1993]

In accordance with the requirements of this section of the Local Government Act 1993, Council is required to report on its performance in relation to its principal activities. Local Government Act Regulations (General) 2005 requires County Councils to develop a Business Activity Strategic Plan. This County Council adopted its Business Activity Strategic Plan in May 2017.

To for fill the requirements for Annual Reports, a copy the County Council's review of its 2017/2018 Operational Plan follows. This report is divided into the four (4) principal activities (functions) of Council. Within each function is detailed relevant information on Council's performance for the year. The review is set out in the following pages.

## 2. Upper Hunter County Council Operational Plan Review 30 June 2018 Principal Activities

### 2.1. Control of Invasive Plants

<b>Program Goals:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To insure that regionally prioritised Invasive Plants are controlled on public roads, recreation areas and other lands controlled by Constituent Councils in accordance with the Hunter Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan.</li> <li>Support Invasive Plant control programs on private lands</li> <li>Ensure that weeds do not adversely affect the health and welfare of the community</li> </ul>
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Objective	Responsibility for Achievement	Statement of Means	Performance Target	Performance Measure	Progress to 30 June 2018
1.Prevent the establishment of new Invasive Plants on public lands under the control of constituent Councils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works Coordinator</li> <li>District Biosecurity Officers</li> </ul>	Staff instigate and conduct coordinated treatment programs on high risk sites and pathways  When conducting other principle activities staff monitor for infestations of new invasive plants.	300 ha of high risk sites monitored and all new infestations treated.	Quarterly reports to Council contain details of area monitored and area of species treated	1784 ha monitored with 13.5 ha treated.
			600 km of high risk pathways monitored and all new infestations treated.	Quarterly reports to Council contain details of area monitored	2150 km monitored
2.Fully and continuously suppress and destroy all regionally prioritise <i>eradicate</i> category Invasive Plants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works Coordinator</li> <li>District Biosecurity Officers</li> </ul>	Using the latest weed control techniques and practices, treat with herbicides and other suitable integrated weed management systems	No increase in infestations	All reported eradicate category Invasive Plants infestations treated each year in accordance with Council's Roadside Spraying Policy.	Black Creek-Hunter River (Branxton) Alligator Weed treatment program conducted in March 2018.

Objective	Responsibility for Achievement	Statement of Means	Performance Target	Performance Measure	Progress to 30 June 2018
3. Prevent the spread and reduce the numbers and distribution of Invasive Plants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works Coordinator</li> <li>District Biosecurity Officers</li> </ul>	Using the latest weed control techniques and practices treat plants with herbicides and other suitable integrated weed management systems.	Contain and reduce known infestations of regional prioritised Invasive Plants on an annual seasonal basis.	All reported invasive plants infestations to be treated each year subject to funding and in accordance with Council's Roadside Spraying Policy.	Control programs conducted on St John's Wort, African Olives, Blackberry, Pear species, African Boxthorns, Green Cestrum and Mother of Millions.
4. Eradicate targeted Invasive Plants species from designated areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works Coordinator</li> </ul>	<p>Coordinate the eradication of targeted Invasive Plants species from areas where eradication of specified Invasive Plant species is considered achievable.</p> <p>Financially assist approved projects in accordance with Council's Invasive Plant Strategic Control Policy.</p>	4 Programs developed and implemented by June 2018	<p>Programs commenced by December 2017.</p> <p>Quarterly Reports to Council on progress of control programs.</p>	<p>Areas for programs and target plant species identified.</p> <p>Control programs commenced and ongoing in the Sandy Ck area (Muswellbrook).</p> <p>Murrurundi Project to commenced in April 2018 to coincide with school holidays.</p> <p>Contractors(CVA) engaged to conduct Carrowbrook Project in May 2018</p>
5. Support Invasive Plant control programs on private lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works Coordinator</li> <li>District Biosecurity Officer</li> </ul>	<p>Support Grant applications by the public for weed control projects.</p> <p>Provide advice on control methods and assist in developing control programs</p>	Number of landholder programs assisted.	Report Quarterly to Council on the number of landholders assisted.	No landholders assisted to date.
6. Reduce the risk from Invasive Plants which are poisonous to humans and animals on public lands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works Coordinator</li> <li>District Biosecurity Officers</li> </ul>	Prioritise treatment of poisonous Invasive Plants on public land.	Reduce the extent of infestations of Invasive Plants which are considered a risk to human and animal health.	No reports of humans or animals being affected by contact with Invasive Plants on public lands.	No reports received.

Objective	Responsibility for Achievement	Statement of Means	Performance Target	Performance Measure	Progress to 30 June 2018
7. Maintain the health of staff and public who may come into contact with herbicides during the invasive weed spraying program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Manager</li> <li>Works Coordinator</li> <li>District Biosecurity Officers</li> </ul>	<p>Staff to use herbicides in accordance with guidelines of Council, industry standards and specific guidelines on the label of each herbicide being used.</p> <p>Spraying operations to cease when there is a danger of the public becoming contaminated with herbicides by spray or volatile drift onto neighbouring properties or contamination of produce likely to be consumed by the public, such as blackberry fruit.</p>	Report of no herbicide related illnesses.	No complaints or reports of ill health from the public or staff related to this activity.	No complaints received

## 2.2. Inspection of Properties

<p><b>Program Goals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspect public and private properties and to advise land managers on the implementation of Invasive Plant control programs in accordance with their GBD under Biosecurity Act, 2015.</li> <li>Report the existence, type and extent of Invasive Plant infestations.</li> <li>Monitor the effectiveness of each land manager's invasive plant control program.</li> <li>Where control programs do not comply with a land manager's GBD commence consultation and/or legal action under the Biosecurity Act, 2015.</li> </ul>
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Objective	Responsibility for Achievement	Statement of Means	Performance Target	Performance Measure	Progress to 30 June 2018
1. Prevent the establishment of new invasive weed species on private and public lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works Coordinator</li> <li>District Biosecurity Officers</li> </ul>	<p>Systematically inspect various new areas bounded by specific landmarks, such as creek or road systems, each year. Report Invasive Plants found, degree of infestation, location and area infested and input of all data to the database system. Report action being carried out by land occupier and further action required by land occupier to Council.</p>	Conduct 1353 inspections of rural properties (>1 ha) by June 2018	Inspection reports to Council to contain a summary report on all properties inspected in specific areas.	Inspections carried out on 1,461 properties (>1 ha in area)
			Conduct 290 inspections of urban properties (<1 ha) by June 2018		Inspections carried out on 99 properties (<1 ha in area)
			Inspect 2,500 km of high risk pathways by June 2018.		2,494 kms of high risk pathways inspected
			Inspect 357 high risk sites by June 2018		573 high risk sites inspected.

Objective	Responsibility for Achievement	Statement of Means	Performance Target	Performance Measure	Progress to 30 June 2018
2. Prevent the sale and transport of Invasive Plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works Coordinator</li> <li>• District Biosecurity Officers</li> </ul>	Inspect all nurseries and other outlets involve in the sale of plants quarterly.	No regional prioritised Invasive Plants sold in area of operation.	Inspections carried out on all nurseries and other outlets involve in the sale of plants quarterly.	All retail outlets inspected in the quarter.
3. Re-inspect all properties systematically who are, or should be undertaking Invasive Plant control programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works Coordinator</li> <li>• District Biosecurity Officers</li> </ul>	<p>Systematically reinspect identified properties with known infestations of Invasive Plants.</p> <p>Inspection reports to Council containing recommendations for actions required by land manager or Council within a reasonable time of the last inspection.</p>	10% reduction in area of known infestations of Invasive Plants on private lands by June 2018.	Reports to Council indicate the reduction in infestation area on properties subject to re-inspection program.	Where reinspections have occurred, changes in area of invasive plants are contained in Staff reports to Council.
4. Advise, co-ordinate and implement invasive plant control programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works Coordinator</li> <li>• District Biosecurity Officers</li> </ul>	Provide advice to land managers on a one to one basis. This advice will be provided during inspections, field days, over the phone, by letter or by fact sheets.	All land managers carry out Invasive Plant control procedures using integrated management techniques in accordance with the specified actions for the categories of Invasive Plants.	Inspection reports indicate a containment, reduction and eradication of Invasive Plants on the property.	No Biosecurity Undertakings or Direction issued.

## 2.3 Community Awareness

<b>Program Goals:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote an effective level of understanding of weed awareness and management strategies amongst all stakeholders.</li> <li>• To maintain membership of and/or provide assistance to:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Weeds Advisory Groups;</li> <li>(ii) Neighbouring Councils;</li> <li>(iii) Landcare Groups;</li> <li>(iv) Associated Weed Professional Associations;</li> <li>(v) Department of Primary Industries and other State Government Bodies;</li> <li>(vi) C.S.I.R.O. and other Federal Government Bodies.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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Objective	Responsibility for Achievement	Statement of Means	Performance Target	Performance Measure	Progress to 30 June 2018
1. Develop public awareness of Invasive Plants and promote good weed management practices using integrated weed management strategies and develop Weed Management Plans for Weeds of regional importance through a Regional Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works Coordinator</li> <li>• District Biosecurity Officers</li> </ul>	Conduct field days, seminars and weed walks, speak at various farmer or community group meetings.	Conduct 17 extension events by June 2018.	Report field days and other activities conducted or attended	<p>Staff attended the Merriwa, Singleton and Upper Hunter Shows (3)</p> <p>Staff attended Scone Stock Sales (12).</p> <p>Staff presented at HLLS Community Biosecurity Information Session at Denman (4 September 2017)</p> <p>Weed Display Trailer at Merriwa Festival of the Fleeces.</p>
		Use various mediums such as email, newsprint, radio, television (video) and fact sheets to distribute information on best practice on Invasive Plant control.	<p>Produce or be involved in 20 media articles by June 2018.</p> <p>Distribute 920 public awareness fact sheets and weed information guides by June 2018.</p> <p>Provide information quarterly on seasonal weed control to participating landholders.</p>	<p>Reports contain summary of articles and other promotional material distributed by staff to the public.</p> <p>Report more effective invasive plant control programs being undertaken by landholders.</p>	<p>Regional best practice information sheets are currently being developed by Hunter Regional Weed Committee.</p> <p>Staff have collect landholder preferred contact method were possible during inspections (215)</p> <p>Authority's website published April 2018</p> <p>Staff attended Martindale Landcare meetings and workshops.</p>
		Develop landholder contact database to provide seasonal information on best practice for weed control activities.			

Objective	Responsibility for Achievement	Statement of Means	Performance Target	Performance Measure	Progress to 30 June 2018
		Promote appropriate vegetation management using integrated weed control and management techniques.			
2. Participate in regional advisory groups, campaigns and surveys being conducted by stakeholders with weed control interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works Coordinator</li> <li>• District Biosecurity Officers</li> </ul>	<p>Consult neighbouring Councils and their Senior Staff.</p> <p>Attend meetings which directly or indirectly affect Council's invasive plant control program.</p>	<p>Co-ordinate activities with neighbouring Councils membership Hunter Weed Management Committees and Northern Inland Weed Advisory Committee.</p> <p>Participate in meetings of stakeholders.</p>	<p>Report attendance at Regional meetings.</p>	<p>Staff have attended Regional Weed Committee and Hunter Regional Technical Team meetings.</p> <p>Staff represented Council on MACH Energy Offset Management Committee.</p> <p>Staff attend monthly meetings with Upper Hunter LLS staff regarding coordination of activities.</p>
		Complete surveys or reports which support the endeavours of other bodies interested in weed control.		Report support to other bodies engaged in weed control activities	<p>Staff attended DPI State WAP monitoring workshop in Nov 2017.</p> <p>Staff also attended DPI State WAP Regional Coordination Meeting February 2018</p>



## 2.4. Governance

<p><b>Program Goals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure effective and continuous communication, co-ordination and co-operation with each Constituent Council and the Department of Primary Industries.</li> <li>To secure the appropriate level of contributions and grants from Constituent Councils and Department of Primary Industries, sufficient to achieve Council's Goals and Objectives.</li> <li>Ensure that the County Council complies with its Legislative Reporting and Planning obligations.</li> </ul>
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Objective	Responsibility for Achievement	Statement of Means	Performance Target	Performance Measure	Progress to 30 June 2018
<b><u>REPORTING</u></b>					
1. Provide ongoing information to Constituent Councils and the NSW Department of Primary Industries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councillors</li> <li>General Manager</li> <li>Works Coordinator</li> </ul>	<p>The General Manager or Works Coordinator to provide feedback and reports on operations to each Constituent Council.</p> <p>Provide an annual Grant Return report to Council and in turn the Constituent Councils in summary form.</p>	<p>Councillors to report to their respective Councils after each meeting, distribute fact sheets and annual reports.</p> <p>Maintain effective level of accurate cost/benefit feedback to Councils and the NSW Department of Primary Industries.</p>	<p>Elected Members/Seni or Staff's understanding and appreciation of the need for invasive weed control.</p> <p>Compare level of funds to previous year and willingness of Constituent Councils to make level of contributions sought.</p>	Reports of operations contained in Council's May Business Paper.
<b><u>STRATEGIC PLANNING</u></b>					
1. Achieve Management Planning Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councillors</li> <li>General Manager</li> <li>Works Coordinator</li> </ul>	The General Manager and Works Coordinator will review and monitor the Operational Plan and report to Council.	Annually Update and Review Council's Delivery Program as part of the development of Council's Annual Operational Plan.	Operational Plan adopted by Council by 30 June 2018.	2017/18 Operational Plan reviewed at Council's May 2018 meeting.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Manager</li> <li>Works Coordinator</li> </ul>	The General Manager and Works Coordinator to update Long Term Financial Plan report to Council.	Update Council's Long Term Financial Plan annually.	Plan update by 30 June 2018.	2018/19 Operational Budget adopted at Council's May meeting

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Responsibility for Achievement</b>	<b>Statement of Means</b>	<b>Performance Target</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>Progress to 30 June 2018</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors</li> <li>• General Manager</li> <li>• Works Coordinator</li> </ul>	The General Manager and Works Coordinator prepare Annual Report in accordance with Local Government (General) Regulation 2005	Council's Annual Report submitted Annually	Council adopts and Submits Annual Report by 30 November 2017.	Annual Report presented to Council's November 2017 meeting
<b>2.</b> Ensure level of Grant Funding is maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Manager</li> <li>• Works Coordinator</li> </ul>	The General Manager and Works Coordinator will complete applications and returns.	Complete Grant Application and Returns on time.	Grant returns completed and return by 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2017.	Grant applications due date extended to 30 October 2017.
<b>3.</b> Ensure Council Policies and Procedures up to date and current.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Manager</li> <li>• Works Coordinator</li> </ul>	The General Manager and Works Coordinator to conduct annual policy and procedure reviews and submit to Council for adoption.	Review and adopt Policies and Procedures by review date.	Policies and Procedures reviewed and adopted by review date.	No reviews due in this period

### **3. Upper Hunter County Council 2017/2018 Audited Financial Report**

The Financial Accounts required by Local Government Act 1993, were prepared by Muswellbrook Shire Council staff and audited by Audit Office of NSW.

A copy of the Financial Accounts can be view via the following link:

[Upper Hunter County Council 2017/18 Financial Statements](#)

## **4. Annual Report Additional Information**

In regards to the Part 217, Local Government (General) Regulations 2005 and for the purposes of section 428(4) of the Local Government Act 1993, the County Council makes the follow declarations:

### **(a) Overseas Visits**

No Councillor, staff member or other persons undertook overseas visits representing the County Council during 2017/2018

### **(a1) Councillor Disclosures**

The County Council made no reimbursement or provision of services to Councillors during 2017/2018 for the following:

- (i) Office Equipment;
- (ii) Telephone calls;
- (iii) Attendance at conferences and seminars;
- (iv) Training and skill development;
- (v) Interstate visits;
- (vi) Overseas visits;
- (vii) Expenses of any spouse, partner or other person who accompanied a Councillor in the performance of their civic duties;
- (viii) Expenses involved in the care of a child of, or immediate family of a Councillor to allow the Councillor to undertake their civic functions.

### **(a2) Contracts**

- (i) No employment contracts were awarded during 2017/2018;
- (ii) No contracts for less than \$150,000

### **(a3) Legal Proceedings**

This County Council was not involved in any legal proceeding during 2017/2018.

### **(a4) Subsidised Private Works**

County Council did not resolve to carry out work on private lands that was either fully or partly subsidised by the County Council as per section 67 of the Local Government Act 1993 in 2017/2018.

### **(a5) Contributions Granted**

Council made no grants in accordance with Section 356 of the Local Government Act in 2017/2018.

#### **(a6) External Bodies Delegations**

No external bodies were delegated to exercise any functions of the County Council during 2017/2018.

#### **(a7) Business Controlling Interest**

The County Council held no controlling interest in any other body during 2017/2018.

#### **(a8) Partnership Participation**

The County Council didn't participate with any other bodies during 2017/2018.

#### **(a9) Equal Employment Opportunity**

In accordance with Council's Equal Employment Opportunity Plan, all staff has received training in the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity. Council's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy was review in May 2018.

#### **(b) General Manager Remuneration**

For the 2017/2018 period:

- (i) The total value of the General Manager's salary component was \$16,239;
- (ii) No bonus payments, performance payments or other payments were made to General Manager;
- (iii) There were no non-cash benefits received by General Manager
- (iv) The County Council payed no fringe benefits tax.

#### **(c) Senior Staff Remuneration**

The County Council employs no other Senior Staff other than the General Manager.

### **5. Stormwater Management, Coastal Protection Services and Companion Animals Act 1998**

These activities are not applicable to Upper Hunter County Council