

# Upper Hunter County Council

## 2026-2027 Operational Plan



Prepared in accordance with provisions contained in the Local Government Act 1993

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# Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

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The following definitions and abbreviations are used in the Upper Hunter County Council Delivery and Operational Plan:

<b>BASP</b>	Upper Hunter County Council Business Activity Strategic Plan
<b>Constituent Councils</b>	means Muswellbrook Shire Council, Singleton Council and Upper Hunter Shire Councils collectively. These local government areas constitute the area of operation for the Upper Hunter County Council.
<b>Council</b>	Upper Hunter County Council
<b>County Council</b>	Upper Hunter County Council
<b>GDB</b>	General Biosecurity Duty as it applies to weeds in the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015. This Duty requires that:  Any person dealing with biosecurity matter must take measures to prevent, eliminate or minimise the biosecurity risk (as far as is reasonably practicable). The <b>GDB</b> applies equally to a carrier of biosecurity matter and to any person who knows or ought to know of the biosecurity risks associated with the activity.
<b>HRSWMP</b>	Hunter Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
<b>Invasive Plant(s)</b>	Plants which have been regionally prioritised by the HRSWMP or contained in Biosecurity Act 2015 and associated regulations for the area of operation of the Upper Hunter County Council.
<b>LGA 1993</b>	NSW Local Government Act 1993
<b>NSW DPI</b>	NSW Department of Primary Industries
<b>NBA 2015</b>	NSW Biosecurity Act, 2015
<b>UHCC</b>	Upper Hunter County Council
<b>UHWA</b>	Upper Hunter Weeds Authority, the Upper Hunter County Council's registered trading name

# 1. County Council Contact Details

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## Head Office

Unit 2  
13 Thomas Mitchell Drive  
MUSWELLBROOK NSW 2333

All Correspondence to be addressed to:

General Manager  
Upper Hunter County Council  
PO Box 122  
MUSWELLBROOK NSW 2333

Telephone: 02 65410323  
Email: [admin@uhwa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:admin@uhwa.nsw.gov.au)  
Web Site: <http://www.uhwa.nsw.gov.au>

## District Contacts

### Merriwa District

Upper Hunter Shire Council Depot  
12 McCartney Street.  
MERRIWA NSW 2329  
Telephone: 0429 683 494

### Scone District

National Parks and Wildlife Depot  
17 Hayes Street.  
SCONE NSW 2337  
Telephone: 0408 683 492

### Muswellbrook District

Unit 2  
13 Thomas Mitchell Drive  
MUSWELLBROOK NSW 2333  
Telephone: 0408 683 491

### Singleton District

Singleton Council  
Cnr Queen Street and Civic Avenue  
SINGLETON NSW 2330  
Telephone: 0408 683 493

## 2. Legislative Requirements of the Operational Plan

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In accordance with Section 405, Local Government Act 1993 (LGA 1993), Council is required to develop an Operational Plan which:

1. Details the principal activities that Council will undertake to achieve the objectives established in the Business Activity Strategic Plan (BASP), which are within the resources available to Council as outlined in Resourcing Strategy contained in Council's BASP.
2. Includes a method of assessment to determine the effectiveness of each principal activity in achieving the objectives at which the activity is directed.
3. Statement of Revenue Policy for the year covered by the Operational Plan.

In regards to the operation of UHCC, Clause 201 Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (LGR 2021) requires the Statement of Revenue Policy to contain details of:

- a) Estimated income and expenditure
- b) Proposed rates and charges

Clause 203, LGR 2005 requires that budget review statements and a revision of estimates must be reported to Council within two (2) months after the end of each quarter (except the June quarter).

# 3. Principal Activities

## 3.1 Control of Invasive Plants

<b>Program Goals:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure 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
1. Prevent the establishment of new Invasive Plants on public lands under the control of constituent Councils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Biosecurity Officers</li> </ul>	<p>Staff instigate and conduct coordinated treatment programs on high-risk sites and pathways</p> <p>When conducting other principal activities staff monitor for infestations of new invasive plants.</p>	30 high-risk sites monitored, and all new infestations treated.	Quarterly reports to Council contain details of area monitored and area of species treated
2. Fully and continuously suppress and destroy all regionally prioritise <i>eradicate</i> category Invasive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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.
3. Prevent the spread and reduce the numbers and distribution of Invasive Plants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Responsibility for Achievement</b>	<b>Statement of Means</b>	<b>Performance Target</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>
4. Eradicate targeted Invasive Plants species from designated areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Manager</li> <li>• District Biosecurity Officers</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>	Council supports 2 programs during 2026/27	Quarterly Reports to Council on progress of control programs.
5. Support Invasive Plant control programs on private lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Manager</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.
6. Reduce the risk from Invasive Plants which are poisonous to humans and animals on public lands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Manager</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.
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>• 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.

## 3.2 Inspection of Properties

- Program Goals:**
- 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.
  - Report the existence, type and extent of Invasive Plant infestations.
  - Monitor the effectiveness of each land manager's invasive plant control program.
  - Where control programs do not comply with a land manager's GBD commence consultation and/or legal action under the Biosecurity Act, 2015.
  - Prevent the establishment of new Priority Invasive Plant species
  - Advise land managers on Priority Invasive Plant Species best practice control methods

Objective	Responsibility for Achievement	Statement of Means	Performance Target	Performance Measure
1. Prevent the establishment of priority Invasive Plant species on private and public lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District Biosecurity Officers</li> </ul>	<p>Systematically inspect various new areas bounded by specific landmarks, such as creek or road systems, each year.</p> <p>Systematically reinspect identified properties with known infestations of Invasive Plants.</p> <p>Report Invasive Plants found, degree of infestation, location and area infested and input of all data to the database system.</p>	Conduct 1000 inspections of rural properties (>1ha) by June 2027	Inspection reports to Council to contain a summary report on all properties inspected in specific areas.
			Conduct 180 inspections of Prohibited Matter sites by June 2027	
			Conduct 100 inspections of urban properties (<1 ha) by June 2027	
			Inspect 3,915 km of high-risk pathways by June 2027.	
			Inspect all historical prohibited matter sites monthly	

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Responsibility for Achievement</b>	<b>Statement of Means</b>	<b>Performance Target</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>
2. Prevent the sale and transport of Invasive Plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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.
3. Advise, co-ordinate and implement invasive plant control programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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.

### 3.3 Community Awareness

<p><b>Program Goals:</b></p>	<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) Constituent Councils</li> <li>(ii) Weeds Advisory Groups.</li> <li>(iii) Neighbouring Councils.</li> <li>(iv) Landcare Groups.</li> <li>(v) Associated Weed Professional Associations.</li> <li>(vi) Department of Primary Industries and other State Government Bodies.</li> <li>(vii) 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
1. Develop public awareness of Invasive Plants and promote good weed management practices using integrated weed management strategies and develop Weed Management Plans for Invasive Plants of regional importance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Manager</li> <li>• District Biosecurity Officers</li> </ul>	Conduct field days, seminars and weed walks, speak at various farmer or community group meetings.	Conduct 16 extension events by June 2027.	Report field days and other activities conducted or attended.
		Use various mediums such as email, newsprint, radio, television (video) and fact sheets to distribute information on best practice on Invasive Plant control.	During inspection and extension activities provide landholders sources of information on control and identification of invasive plants	Reports contain summary of articles and other promotional material distributed by staff to the public.
		Increase landholders' knowledge of invasive plant control and identification by providing information to public on information sources such as Council, regional and State Government websites		
		Promote appropriate vegetation management using integrated weed control and management techniques.		

Objective	Responsibility for Achievement	Statement of Means	Performance Target	Performance Measure
		Assist Constituent Councils in developing and implementing strategies to fulfil their invasive plant biosecurity obligations.	Initiate consultation with relevant staff of Constituent Councils to define the role of each entity in invasive plant management and assist in the development of operational procedures to minimise the risk of spread and/or introduction of invasive plants.	Report on the progress of the adoption of strategies to fulfil Constituent Councils and the County Council's biosecurity obligations regarding invasive plants.
2. Participate in regional advisory groups, campaigns and surveys being conducted by stakeholders with weed control interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Manager</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 operations.</p>	<p>Co-ordinate activities with neighbouring Councils through membership of Hunter Weed Management Committees.</p> <p>Participate in meetings of stakeholders.</p>	Report attendance at regional meetings.
		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.

## 3.4 Governance

### Program Goals

- To ensure effective and continuous communication, co-ordination and co-operation with each Constituent Council and the Department of Primary Industries.
- 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.
- Ensure that the County Council complies with its Legislative Reporting and Planning obligations.

Objective	Responsibility for Achievement	Statement of Means	Performance Target	Performance Measure
<b>REPORTING</b>				
1. Provide ongoing information to Constituent Councils and the NSW Department of Primary Industries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members</li> <li>• General Manager</li> </ul>	<p>The General Manager 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 &amp; Regional Development.</p>	<p>Elected Members/Senior 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>

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Responsibility for Achievement</b>	<b>Statement of Means</b>	<b>Performance Target</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members</li> <li>• General Manager</li> </ul>	The General Manager review and monitor the Operational Plan and report to Council.	Update and Review Council's Delivery Program as part of the review of Council's Annual Operational Plan	Operational Plan reviewed and adopted by Council at quarterly Ordinary meetings.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members</li> <li>• General Manager</li> </ul>	The General Manager prepares 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 2026.
Ensure level of Grant Funding is maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Manager</li> </ul>	The General Manager to complete applications and returns.	Complete Grant Applications and Returns on time.	Grants returns completed and return by due dates.
Ensure Council Policies and Procedures up to date and current.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Manager</li> </ul>	The General Manager conduct policy and procedure reviews as required and submit to Council for adoption.	Review and adopt Policies and Procedures by review date.	Policies and Procedures reviewed and adopted by review date.

# 4 Annual Statement of Revenue Policy

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## 4.1 2026-2027 Financial Estimates

		<b>Estimates 2025/26</b>
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>		
<b>Grants</b>	<b>Subsidy-Weed Control &amp; Co-Ordination</b>	319,827
	<b>Grants- Weed Control Projects</b>	30,000
<b>Constituent Councils</b>		
	<b>Muswellbrook Shire Council</b>	118,863
	<b>Upper Hunter Shire Council</b>	215,857
	<b>Singleton Council</b>	118,863
<b>Sundry Income</b>		
	<b>Biological Control Taskforce</b>	45,000
	<b>External Fund Administration</b>	5,000
	<b>Crown Lands</b>	20,000
	<b>Private Works</b>	20,000
	<b>Interest on Investments</b>	50,000
	<b>Fines &amp; Costs</b>	2,000
	<b>Sundry Income</b>	6,427
	<b>Profit on Sale of Assets</b>	
	<b>Total Operational Income</b>	<b>951,837</b>

**EXPENSES**

<b>Administration - General Manager</b>	172,000
<b>Administration Support</b>	35,000
<b>Advertising</b>	400
<b>Alligator Weed Control</b>	17,350
<b>ARIC Committee Fees</b>	7,027
<b>Audit Fees</b>	30,000
<b>Bank Fees</b>	150
<b>Biological Control Taskforce</b>	150,000
<b>Chairman's Allowance</b>	4,499
<b>Conferences</b>	8,000
<b>Crown Lands</b>	20,000
<b>Depot &amp; Store Expenses</b>	8,000
<b>Field Days</b>	8,000
<b>HLLS Weeds</b>	30,000
<b>Insurances</b>	28,287
<b>Internal Audit</b>	9,056
<b>IT Expenses</b>	35,000
<b>Meetings</b>	9,035
<b>Member Fees &amp; Allowances</b>	14,697
<b>Office Expenses</b>	2,772
<b>Printing &amp; Stationery</b>	2,142
<b>Private Works Expenses</b>	5,175
<b>Property Inspection - Office</b>	80,000
<b>Property Inspections &amp; Roads</b>	230,232
<b>Rent</b>	

	43,706
<b>Small Tool Replacement</b>	5,000
<b>Staff Training</b>	23,920
<b>Subscriptions</b>	2,124
<b>Telephone &amp; Internet</b>	9,067
<b>UHWA Eradication Projects</b>	60,000
<b>UHWA Priority Invasive Plant Control</b>	50,000
<b>Wild Dog - Contractor Payments</b>	150,000
<b>Depreciation - Office Equipment</b>	6,430
<b>Loss on Asset Sale</b>	7,406
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<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>1,258,250</b>
<b>Result Continuing Operations</b>	<b>(296,623)</b>
<b><u>Non-Operational Expenses</u></b>	
<b><u>Officer Vehicles</u></b>	110,000
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<b>Total Asset Purchases</b>	110,000
<b><u>Sale of Assets</u></b>	45,000
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	<b>(65,000)</b>
<b><u>Transfer from Restricted Assets</u></b>	
Biological Control Taskforce	105,000
Wild Dog	150,000
Alligator Weed Project Funds	5,000
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<b>Total</b>	<b>260,000</b>

## 4.2 Fees and Charges

### **Constituent Council Contributions**

The three Constituent Councils forming the County area agree to provide the level of contribution set each year by the County Council.

### **Private Works**

All work requested by landholders on their private land will be charged on a full plant and labour costs and a 70% Administration Overhead applied to the total costs. A minimum fee of \$140.00 (GST exclusive) is set for private works.

### **Categories exempt from Private Work Charges.**

Categories of control works which are carried out on private lands which are exempt from Council's private work fees are:

- a) approved Council Invasive Plant Eradication Projects,
- b) special purpose grants received by Council,
- c) Approved regional response activities - \$85/hr (GST exclusive) per control unit (1 staff & plant), \$56/hr (GST exclusive) per additional staff.

### **Inspections**

Property Owners/Occupiers may be charged a fee for all subsequent property inspections relating to a Biosecurity Direction or Undertaking. This fee will be full plant and labour costs with a 70% Administration Overhead applied to the total costs. A minimum fee of \$140.00 (GST exclusive) is set for these inspections.

Property Owners/Occupiers may be charged a fee, where staff, after giving written notice are unable to access a property for the purpose of an inspection relating to the Biosecurity Act 2015. This fee will be full plant and labour costs with a 70% Administration Overhead applied to the total costs. A minimum fee of \$140.00 (GST exclusive) is set for these inspections.

### **Development Application Weed Biosecurity Consultation Certification.**

Where Constituent Council's Development Applications request proponents to consult with UHCC regarding weed biosecurity during construction and to obtain from UHCC proof of consultation a fee of \$140 may apply if an inspection of site is required.

### **Borrowings**

There are no proposed borrowings in accordance with Section 622 of the LGA, 1993