

Upper Hunter County Council

(Upper Hunter Weeds Authority)

Business Activity Strategic Plan

2017-2027



Prepared in accordance to provisions contained in the Local Government Act 1993 and Local Government (General) Regulation 2005

Contents

Maps.....	3
Tables.....	3
Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations	4
1. Purpose of Business Activity Strategic Plan	6
2. County Council Overview.....	7
County Council- Vision and Mission Statements	7
Vision.....	7
Mission	7
2.1 Governing Body.....	7
2.2 County Council Core Business Activities	7
3. Area of Operation.....	9
4. Principal Activities	10
4.1 Control of Invasive Plants	10
4.2 Inspection of Properties	10
4.3 Community Awareness and Engagement	11
4.4 Governance	11
5. Resourcing Strategy.....	12
5.1 Long-Term Financial Plan 2017-2027.....	12
5.1.1 Income	12
5.1.2 Expenditure	12
5.1.3 Employee Provisions	12
5.1.4 Risk Analysis	12
5.1.5 Estimate Assumptions	13
5.1.6 Plan Review	13
5.1.7 Projected Financial Statements 2017-2027	13
5.2 Workforce Management Plan 2017-2021	16
5.2.1 Staffing and Organisational Structure	16
5.2.2 Operational Staff Duties and Responsibilities	16
5.2.3 Employee Age and Service Profile.....	17
5.2.4 Training	17
5.2.5 Staff Remuneration.....	17
5.2.6 Staff Performance Management	17
5.2.7 Staff Recruitment and Retention Challenges	18
5.2.8 Recruitment Strategy.....	18
5.3 Asset Management Plan.....	18
5.3.1 Vehicles.....	18
5.3.2 Depreciation	18
5.3.3 Asset Management Policy	19
5.3.4 Asset Replacement Plan	19
Appendix A –Part 5 Local Government Act 1993	21
Appendix B – Asset Management Policy.....	24

Maps

Map 1: UHCC Area of Operation	9
--	---

Tables

Table 1: Projected Income and Expenditure Statement 2017/18-2026/27	13
Table 2: Projected Balance Sheet Statement for the 10 year period 2017/18 - 2026/27	13
Table 3: Projected Cash Flow Statement for the 10 year period 2017/18 - 2026/27	15
Table 4: UHCC Current Organisational Structure	16
Table 5: UHCC Current Assets- 30 June 2017	19
Table 6: Projected Asset Replacement Program 2017-2027	19

Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

The following definitions and abbreviations are used in the Upper Hunter County Council Business Activity Strategic Plan:

BASP	Upper Hunter County Council Business Activity Strategic Plan
Constituent Councils	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.
Council	Upper Hunter County Council
County Council	Upper Hunter County Council
GDB	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 GBD 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.
HRSWMP	Hunter Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
Invasive Plant(s)	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.
LGA 1993	NSW Local Government Act 1993
NSW DPI	NSW Department of Primary Industries
NBA 2015	NSW Biosecurity Act, 2015
UHCC	Upper Hunter County Council
UHWA	Upper Hunter Weeds Authority, the Upper Hunter County Council's registered trading name

County Council Contact Details

Head Office

Muswellbrook Shire Council Administration Building
157 Maitland Rd
MUSWELLBROOK NSW 2333

All Correspondence to be addressed to:

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

Telephone: 02 6549 3802

Facsimile: 02 6549 3701

Email: uhwa@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

Web Site: <http://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au/Council-services/Environment/Weeds/Index.htm>

District Contacts

Merriwa District

Upper Hunter Shire Council Depot

12 McCartney Street.
MERRIWA NSW 2329

Telephone: 0429 683 494

Muswellbrook District

Muswellbrook Shire Council Administration Building
157 Maitland Rd
MUSWELLBROOK NSW 2333

Telephone: 0408 683 491

Score District

National Parks and Wildlife Depot

17 Hayes Street.
SCONE NSW 2337

Telephone: 0408 683 492

Singleton District

Singleton Council Administration
Cnr Queen Street and Civic Avenue
SINGLETON NSW 2330

Telephone: 0408 683 493

1. Purpose of Business Activity Strategic Plan

The Upper Hunter County Council is required to develop a Business Activity Strategic Plan which in accordance with Section 219, Local Government (General) Regulation 2005:

- a) identifies the main business activity priorities of the council covering a period of at least 10 years from when the plan is endorsed, and
 - b) establishes strategic objectives together with strategies for achieving those objectives, and
 - c) has been developed having due regard to the community strategic plans of the county council's constituent councils and in consultation with those councils.
-

2. County Council Overview

County Council- Vision and Mission Statements

Vision

To prevent, contain or reduce the biosecurity risk of invasive plants to the environment, economy and community within the County.

Mission

To provide effective integrated weed management systems utilizing the latest technology to all Constituent Councils fairly and equitably in accordance with the **Biosecurity Act, 2015**.

The Upper Hunter County Council (**UHCC**) is a single purpose Council which is responsible for the fulfilment of its **Constituent Council's** obligations under the **Biosecurity Act, 2015**. The **County Council's** governance is in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 (**LGA 1993**) with the County Council being first proclaimed on 1 January 1991. The present area of operation of **UHCC** is the local government areas of Upper Hunter, Muswellbrook and Singleton. These Councils are located at the northern end of the Hunter Valley, New South Wales.

2.1 Governing Body

As a County Council under the **LGA 1993**, **UHCC** is required to have a governing body made up of elected representatives of its Constituent Councils. Part 5 of Local Government Act 1993 (**see note 1*) outlines the formation and operation of County Councils. The application of **LGA 1993** to **UHCC** is outlined in Section 400, **LGA 1993**.

The **UHCC** governing body meets the 4.00 pm, third Tuesday of February, May, August and November. The election of Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson occurs biennially at Council's November meeting. **Constituent Council** delegates are elected by their Council after each Council general election and represent their Council on the **UHCC** for four years. The number of representatives for each **Constituent Councils** is contained in the proclamation declaring the County Council.

***Note 1: Part 5, Local Government Act 1993 contained in Appendix A**

2.2 County Council Core Business Activities

The core role of the County Council is the enforcement of General Biosecurity Duty of land occupiers in the County Council's area of operation and the control of **Invasive Plants** on Council lands. The County Council trades as Upper Hunter Weeds Authority (**UHWA**) with its administration office located in the Muswellbrook Shire Council Administration Centre, 157 Maitland Rd, Muswellbrook, New South Wales.

The diverse range of climatic conditions within the region exposes it to large range of invasive plants which have the potential of establishing themselves within the region. The weed species that have this potential to become a serious threat include Harrisia Cactus, African Olive, Serrated Tussock and Chilean Needle Grass in the upper reaches of the Hunter Valley and Cabomba, Senegal Tea, Alligator Weed and Salvinia in lower parts of the Upper Hunter.

Along with climate variation, the risk of new weed incursions occurring within the region is compounded by the presence of major freight and transport corridors, New England & Golden Highways and Northern Rail Line. In excess of 10,000 vehicles, of which approximately 1,800 are heavy vehicles, pass through the region daily. The region's rail system transports over 100 million tons (109mt in 2016*) of coal annually as well wheat and other agricultural produce from the Northern NSW. The region is also the location of two major Australia Defence Force facilities, the Infantry Training School at Singleton and Myambat munitions storage centre located near Denman. Both of these facilities receive and dispatch personal and equipment to various Defence Force bases and training sites throughout the eastern states of Australia.

The Upper Hunter also contains a highly developed viticulture industry, is a major breeding centre for the Thoroughbred Horse Industry and home to extensive grazing and dairy enterprises. The region has fourteen (14)

coal mines using the open cut method of extraction with two more planned to be operational within next five years. Land which is undergoing rehabilitation after this mining practice is particularly vulnerable to invasion from invasive plant species.

The region also has a number of aquatic features at risk from new invasive weed incursions. These features include the Hunter & Goulburn Rivers, which transverse the region and three major water impoundments, Glenbawn Dam, Lake Liddell and Lake St Clair.

In order to protect the viability of these valuable industries, **UHCC** has historically, conducted an extensive detection and public awareness programs in the regards to **Invasive Plants**. These programs are conducted by Council's five (5) fulltime employees who have specialised training and qualifications in invasive plant control. These Staff are based in districts within each of the three **Constituent Council** areas and are responsible for day to day operations in their allocated districts.

Council has formulated an involved delivery plan with a number of operating polices regarding property inspections and control works. The focal point of the management of **Invasive Plants** in the region is the aim of inspecting every rural property within the Council area at least once every five years. To facilitate the achievement of this goal, Council has set one of its key performance indicators a total property inspection target of 2000 inspections per year.

To coordinate this inspection program, Council has for over the last fifteen years used various computer based record keeping systems to keep track of the inspection program and to generate reports for **Constituent Councils** and NSW Government Departments. In 2005 Council adopted the WeedMap systems, which allows Council Staff to electronically collect inspection information in the field, via laptop computers. One of the features of this system is it allowed staff to accurately identify properties they are inspecting through the use of this GPS enabled mapping system.

The Council uses an internet based inspection system and the associated field collection software. This system has the following features:

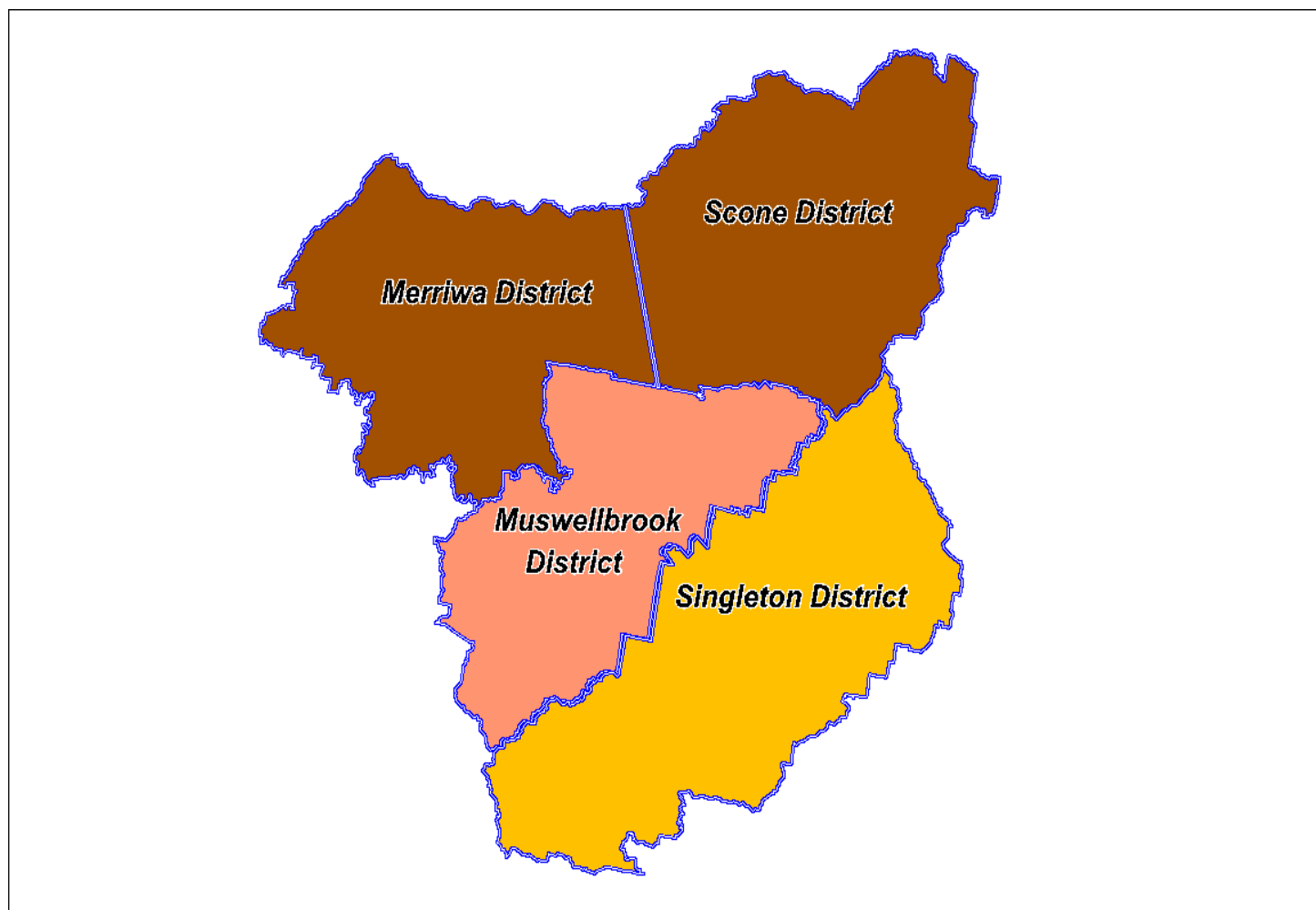
- A semi-automatic synchronisation process. This process only requires a connection to the internet and allows Council's remote sites to update inspection and treatment records daily. This process also not only allows the field units to retain all of their collected inspection and infestation data but also received the data collected by all other Staff members. This includes the shared visual display of the inspection and infestation records through the transfer of the mapping data through the synchronisation process.
- The ability of staff to access to all of Council's inspection records in the field allows for better coordination of joint inspection programs between staff and eliminates doubling up of property inspections on district boundaries.




Electronic recording and transferring of day to day workplace required records such as Activity Risk Assessments has been included as required fields in all activities.

*Port Waratah Coal Services. Retrieved on 19/01/2016 from <http://pwcs.com.au/what-we-do/operating-statistics/>

3. Area of Operation

Map1: UHCC Area of Operation



-  Upper Hunter Shire Council
-  Muswellbrook Shire Council
-  Singleton Council

UHCC area of operation comprises an area of approximately 1,636,719 ha with a population of around 50 000 people. The region has a diverse topographical range, from the temperate rainforest of the Barrington Tops to the semi-coastal regions of the lower Hunter River Valley and contains over 500,000 ha of National Park and Nature Reserves.

4. Principal Activities

4.1 Control of Invasive Plants

Program Goals

- 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.
- Support Invasive Plant control programs on private lands
- Ensure that weeds do not adversely affect the health and welfare of the community

Objectives

1. Prevent the establishment of new Invasive Plants on public lands under the control of constituent Councils.
2. Fully and continuously suppress and destroy all regionally prioritise *eradicate* category Invasive Plants
3. Prevent the spread and reduce the numbers and distribution of regionally prioritised **Invasive Plants** on Constituent Councils lands subject to adequate funding.
4. Eradicate targeted Invasive Plants species from designated areas
5. Support Invasive Plant control programs on private lands.
6. Reduce the risk from **Invasive Plants** which are poisonous to humans and animals on public lands.
7. Maintain the health of staff and public who may come into contact with herbicides during the weed spraying program

4.2 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**.

Objectives

1. Inspect all non-urban, private and public properties at least once during any five year period.
2. Prevent the sale and transport of **Invasive Plants**.
3. Re-inspect all properties systematically who are, or should be undertaking **Invasive Plant** control programs in accordance with their **GBD**.
4. Provide advice to Land Managers on **Invasive Plant** control programs

4.3 Community Awareness and Engagement

Program Goals

- To promote an effective level of understanding of weed awareness and management strategies amongst all stakeholders.
- To maintain membership of and/or provide assistance to:
 - (i) Constituent Councils
 - (ii) Weeds Advisory Groups;
 - (iii) Neighbouring Councils;
 - (iv) Landcare Groups;
 - (v) Associated Weed Professional Associations;
 - (vi) Department of Primary Industries and other State Government Bodies;
 - (vii) C.S.I.R.O. and other Federal Government Bodies.

Objectives

1. Develop 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.
2. Participate in regional advisory groups, campaigns and surveys being conducted by stakeholders with weed control interests

4.4 Governance

Program Goals

- To ensure effective and continuous communication, co-ordination and co-operation with each **Constituent Council**, Hunter Local Land Services 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.

Objectives

1. Provide ongoing information to Constituent Councils and the NSW Department of Primary Industries.
2. Ensure that Council's activities compliment and are coordinated with Constituent Council's operational programs.
3. Achieve Management Planning Practices
4. Ensure level of Grant Funding is maintained
5. Ensure Council Policies and Procedures up to date and current

5. Resourcing Strategy

The Resourcing Strategy is made up of the following three (3) elements:-

1. Long-Term Financial Plan
 2. Workforce Management Plan
 3. Asset Management Plan
-

5.1 Long-Term Financial Plan 2017-2027

5.1.1 Income

UHCC has two main sources of income; **Constituent Council** Contributions and Grants from Government agencies. From 2012 to 2015 UHCC was the Lead Agency of the Regional Weed Action Plan 2010-2015 (WAP) and is currently the lead agency of the WAP1520 Project. As lead agency the **UHCC** acts as banker and administrator for the project for which the **UHCC** receives an administration fee. The Project funds that **UHCC** receives on behalf of and redistributes to the participating Councils are included in income and expenditure for the **UHCC**.

Other sources of income include Grants (other than WAP), Fees for Weed Certificates (Clause 28 (2) Schedule 7, NBA 2015), Private Works, Interest and Vehicle Contributions.

The approximate percentages of operational income sources based on 2015/16 income (excluding WAP Project funds) represent to the **UHCC**'s total income are:

• Constituent Council Contribution	48%
• Grants (DPI)	35%
• Private Works	6%
• Other Grants	4%
• Lead Agency Fee (WAP)	4%
• Weed Certificates	1%
• Vehicle Contributions	1%
• Interest	<1%

5.1.2 Expenditure

UHCC's main area of operational expenditure is employee costs, which traditional represents approximately 65% the County Council's total operating costs.

The County Council's other major area of operational expenditure is its materials and contract costs. These costs are inflated in the 10 year estimates due the inclusion of WAP funds.

5.1.3 Employee Provisions

UHCC has a goal of having 100% of its employee provisions being fully funded at all times. However, short term cash flow events from time to time may affect the ability of Council to maintain its desired funding percentage of provisions. The 100 % funded position has been taken by Council because with only a small number of employees (5), there is risk that most or all of the employees could resign in a short period of time. In this eventually, and if the provisions could be not be funded from cash reserves, Council may have to source funding from **Constituent Councils** or sell assets to fund these provisions.

5.1.4 Risk Analysis

The major risk to the continuing solvency of the **UHCC** is the reliance on grants, in particular the NSW Department of Primary Industries (**DPI**) annual grant program. These grants have historically been allocated annually, however these grants are subject to NSW Government annual budget allocations. Although the WAP grant system initiated in 2010/11, offers some certainty in this income source as these plans cover five year periods, this grant is still subject to NSW State Government annual budgets.

A critical assumption of Council future financial planning is the need for Grant funds along with **Constituent Council** contributions to increase annually in line with the operating costs in particular employee costs. Council has actively sought to increase income from other sources such as private works and other grant sources, however if operational activities connect to these other sources of income need to be substantially increased to cover the gap in traditional funding, **UHCC** will be forced to review it's the level of its core business operational activities and staffing levels.

5.1.5 Estimate Assumptions

The following assumptions have been made when formulating the BASP projected financial statements:

- Grants and Contributions increase annually by 3%
- Employee Costs increase annually by 3% except for 2022-23 which reflect the taking of Long Service Leave (ELE) by employees.
- Interest Revenue has been estimated at 1% of the year's opening estimated Cash balance
- **UHCC** continues to act as Lead Agency of the regional **WAP** post June 2017

5.1.6 Plan Review

The Financial Plan is required to be updated annually as part development of the **UHCC** annual operational plan.

5.1.7 Projected Financial Statements 2017-2027

The following tables contain the **UHCC** projected Income and Expenditure, Balance Sheet and Cash Flow Statements for the period 2017-18 to 2026-2027.

Table 1: Projected Income and Expenditure Statement 2017/18-2026/27

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Income										
Rates and Annual Charges										
User Charges and Fees	67	69	71	72	74	76	79	81	83	86
Interest and Investment Revenue	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Other Revenues										-
Grants and Contributions- Operating	1,287	1,293	1,300	1,416	1,372	1,389	1,407	1,425	1,444	1,463
Grants and Contributions- Capital										-
Net Gain from the Sale of Assets	12	(4)	(1)	1	3	6	7	12	11	12
Total Income from continuing operations	1,367	1,359	1,371	1,490	1,450	1,472	1,494	1,519	1,540	1,586
Expense										-
Employee Costs	(444)	(457)	(471)	(485)	(500)	(335)	(502)	(518)	(535)	(556)
Borrowing Costs	-									-
Materials & Contracts	(160)	(165)	(171)	(177)	(183)	(190)	(196)	(203)	(210)	(216)
Depreciation	(38)	(43)	(38)	(43)	(35)	(39)	(30)	(36)	(30)	(34)
Other Expenses	(764)	(765)	(765)	(787)	(728)	(731)	(731)	(733)	(734)	(761)
Interest and Investment Losses										-
Net Loss From Disposal of Assets	(4)	(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(3)	(3)
Total Expenses from continuing operations	(1,405)	(1,431)	(1,445)	(1,492)	(1,446)	(1,294)	(1,460)	(1,490)	(1,510)	(1,555)
Operating Result from continuing operations	(38)	(72)	(74)	(2)	4	178	34	29	30	31

Table 2: Projected Balance Sheet Statement for the 10 year period 2017/18 - 2026/27

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
ASSETS										
Current Assets										
Cash & Cash Equivalents	245	166	104	95	97	245	285	300	337	324
Investments										
Receivables	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Inventories	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
Other	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Non-current assets classified as held for sale										-
Total Current Assets	304	227	166	158	161	310	351	368	405	393
Non-Current Assets										
Investments										
Receivables										
Inventories										
Infrastructure, Property, Plant & Equipment	261	279	248	285	253	270	240	262	235	259
Investments accounted for Equity method										
Investment Property										
Intangible Assets										
Other										
Total Non-Current Assets	261	279	248	285	253	270	240	262	235	259
TOTAL ASSETS	565	506	414	443	414	580	591	630	641	652
LIABILITIES										
-										
Current Liabilities										
Payables	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Borrowings										
Provisions	222	243	265	288	312	177	195	214	234	259
Total Current Liabilities	237	258	280	303	327	192	210	229	249	274
Non-Current Liabilities										
Payables										
Borrowings										
Provisions										
Total Non-Current Liabilities										
TOTAL LIABILITIES	237	258	280	303	327	192	210	229	249	274
NET ASSETS	328	248	134	140	87	388	381	401	391	378
EQUITY										
Retained Earnings	328	248	134	140	87	388	381	401	391	403
Revaluation Reserves										
Council Equity Interest										
Minority Equity Interest										
TOTAL EQUITY	328	248	134	140	87	388	381	401	391	378

Table 3: Projected Cash Flow Statement for the 10 year period 2017/18 - 2026/27

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Cash Flows from Operating Activities										
Receipts:										
Rates & Annual Charges										
User Charges & Fees	67	69	71	73	76	78	81	83	86	89
Investment & Interest Revenue Received	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Grants & Contributions	1,302	1,308	1,315	1,431	1,387	1,404	1,422	1,440	1,459	1,478
Bonds & Deposits Received										
Other	(38)	(43)	(38)	(43)	(35)	(39)	(30)	(36)	(30)	(34)
Payments:										
Employee Benefits & On-Costs	(424)	(436)	(449)	(462)	(476)	(199)	(484)	(499)	(515)	(531)
Materials & Contracts	(160)	(165)	(171)	(177)	(183)	(190)	(196)	(203)	(210)	(216)
Decrease in ELE	-	-	-	-	-	(135)	-	-	-	-
Other	(764)	(765)	(765)	(787)	(728)	(731)	(731)	(733)	(734)	(761)
Net Cash provided (or used in) Operating Activities	(15)	(32)	(36)	36	42	189	62	53	57	26
Cash Flows from Investing Activities										
Receipts:										
Sale of Infrastructure, Property, Plant & Equipment	54	73	58	78	62	84	66	90	70	92
Other Investing Activity Receipts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Payments:										
Purchase of Infrastructure, Property, Plant & Equipment	(100)	(119)	(84)	(123)	(102)	(125)	(88)	(128)	(90)	(131)
Other Investing Activity Payments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net Cash provided (or used in) Investing Activities	(46)	(47)	(26)	(45)	(40)	(41)	(22)	(38)	(20)	(39)
Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash & Cash Equivalents	(61)	(78)	(62)	(9)	2	148	40	15	37	(13)
plus: Cash & Cash Equivalents - beginning of year	306	245	166	104	95	97	245	285	300	337
Cash & Cash Equivalents - end of the year	245	166	104	95	97	245	285	300	337	324
plus: Investments on hand - end of year										
Total Cash, Cash Equivalents & Investments	245	166	104	95	97	245	285	300	337	324

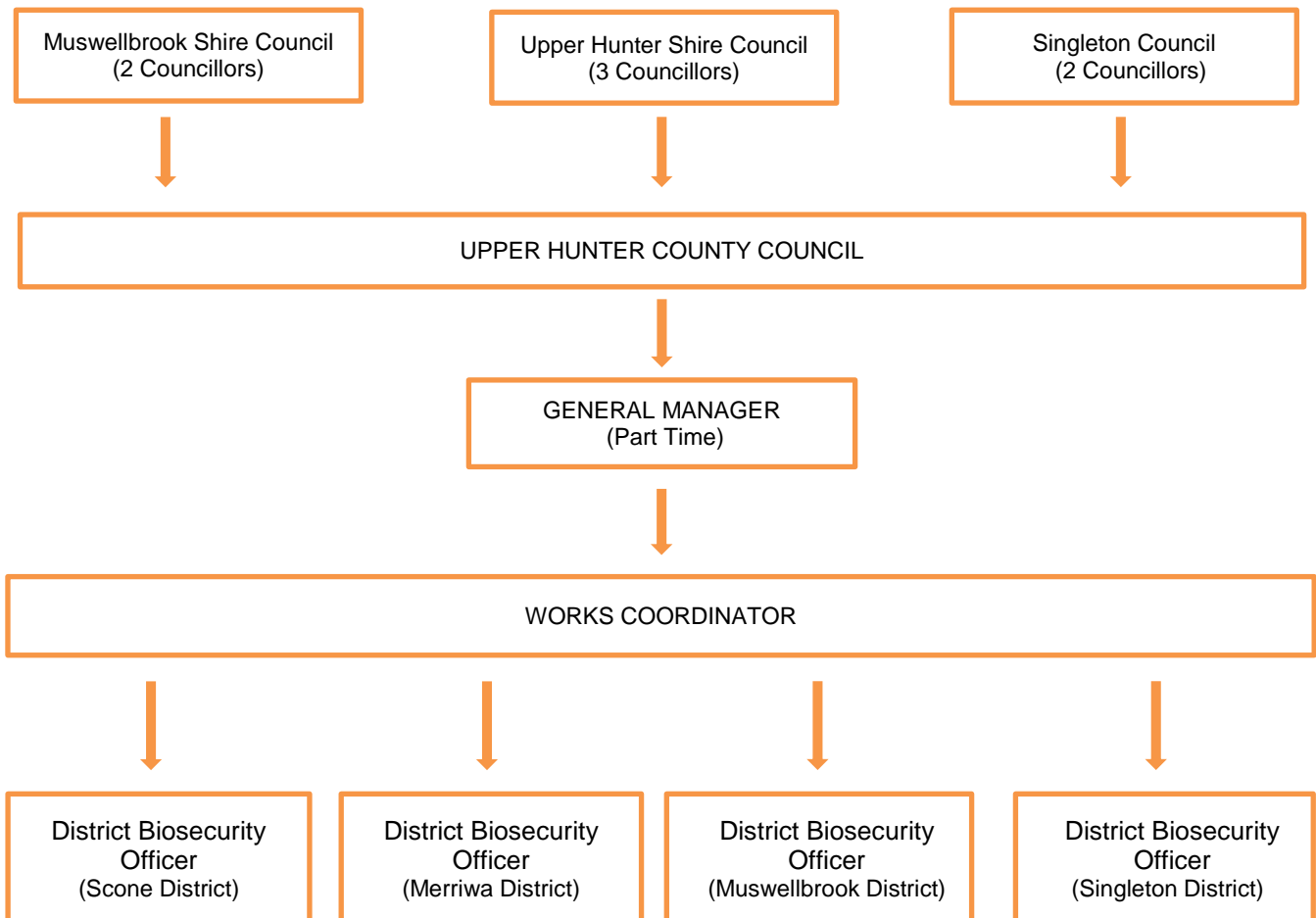
5.2 Workforce Management Plan 2017-2021

5.2.1 Staffing and Organisational Structure

The current staff structure of the Council consists of a part time General Manager, a Works Co-ordinator and four District Biosecurity Officers.

The County Council's current structure is outline in Table 4. The County Council expects this governance and organisational structure to continue for 2017-2021 period.

Table 4: UHCC Current Organisational Structure



5.2.2 Operational Staff Duties and Responsibilities

General Manager

This position is a part time and currently held by the General Manager, Muswellbrook Shire Council. The General Manager is responsible for the management of the **UHCC** in accordance with **LGA 1993**.

Works Coordinator

This position is a full time position with the Works Coordinator responsible for the day to day administration of **UHCC** and supervision of District Biosecurity Officers.

District Biosecurity Officer

These positions are full time and whose duties include property inspections for the presence of **Invasive Plants** on private lands, control of **Invasive Plants** on council controlled lands and public awareness programs in their designated districts.

5.2.3 Employee Age and Service Profile

Council's current operational workforce age ranges from 42 to 65 years of age with two (2) employees having twenty – five (25) years or more in the Local Government invasive plant control. It is expected that the employee age range for the next four (4) years will change with retirements to between 40-60 years of age, with any new employees recruited expected to be between 30 to 50 years of age.

The use of retractable spray equipment and other technology has reduced the physical load of operational activities on employees which is a major consideration with the age of the current workforce. The scheduling of control activities on **Invasive Plants** during the cooler morning hours of summer months is an example of measures that Council undertakes to reduce heat load and fatigue on employees.

5.2.4 Training

Staff receive specialise training through the **NSW DPI** training program for weed Biosecurity Officers. Council's training program is formulated by qualifications needed by employees to achieve a Certificate IV in Conservation and Land Management (weeds).

1.2.5 Staff Remuneration

Staff are currently remunerated as part of Muswellbrook Shire Council's Mercer pay system. This system uses statistical information from NSW Local Government Councils to place employee positions within the system. This pay system has two components with the first of half of the pay level based staff achieving levels of competency for increases in remuneration. Once staff have completed all of their position's competencies, increases in remuneration can be achieved through performance.

5.2.6 Staff Performance Management

Performance Management Reviews are conducted quarterly with the progressive results of these reviews to constitute the District Biosecurity Officer's Annual Performance Management Review.

Aims of Performance Management Review

1. To outline Council's expectations of the scope and conduct of the District Biosecurity Officer's duties.
2. To enable Council to achieve the objectives within its management plan.
3. To provide staff with a guide for the planning of activities to achieve their position's key responsibilities and duties.
4. Provide feedback to staff regarding their performance.
5. To provide staff with a fair and equitable Performance Management Review.

Areas of Performance Management Review

1. Inspection of Private Properties.
2. Control of **Invasive Plants** on Public Lands Controlled by Constituent Councils.
3. Community Awareness of **Invasive Plants**.
4. Legislation and Policy and Procedure Compliance.
5. Occupational Health & Safety.
6. Work Practices, Professional Development and Communication.

5.2.7 Staff Recruitment and Retention Challenges

The **UHCC**'s location in the Hunter Valley has placed, and is expected to do so in the future, pressure on recruitment and retention through competition from the region's major industries Mining and Thoroughbred Breeding. This competitive employment environment, with the associated high cost and lack of availability of accommodation in most centres in the region, places further pressure on Council's ability to recruit and retain of staff.

Historically, **UHCC** staff turnover has been low, with only four resignations and associated recruitments, in the past 15 years. During the period 2017-2021, Council is expecting the retirement of at least one staff member, whose position, at this point in time, will be need to be filled.

The main challenges that Council faces in retaining and recruiting staff is:

- Continual upward pressure on wages to retain existing staff and recruit prospective staff due to the wage structure of the mining and associated industries. With employee costs currently represent approximately 66% of Council's total operating budget (excluding WAP funds) and the annual increase Council's traditional revenue sources being restricted, any large increase in wages with the current staffing structure would drastically affect Council's solvency. If this occurred, major organisational restructure would need to be initiated, include a review of staffing levels and core business activities.
- The high cost of accommodation, affects Council's ability to recruit staff from outside the region. This compounded by the Council's logistical need to have staff reside in their principle district of operation. This may restrict the pool of prospective employees to those already residing in the district of operation.
- Due to the specialised qualifications and experience, mainly in regards to the enforcement of the **NBA, 2015** it is unlikely that candidates for positions with the County Council will have the full skill set required.
- Limited career advancement unless senior staff vacates their position.

5.2.8 Recruitment Strategy

Through the recruitment process, Council will be targeting prospective employees who have a rural or horticultural background who already reside in the prospective district area of operation or have sufficient resources to relocate to the area. One of the attributes of the operational positions with Council is that all of the positions have high degree of self-management with employees responsible for the day to day operations in their designated operational districts. This positional attribute can be used by Council in recruitment process.

Due to the increasing use of technology by Council, prospective employees will need to familiar with information technology.

Sources for prospective employees include former Local Land Services staff, Local Government Staff, nursery staff and rural workers.

5.3 Asset Management Plan

UHCC assets presently consist of the operational vehicles and plant used by staff on a day to day basis. Council has no fixed assets in regards to buildings or other infrastructure.

5.3.1 Vehicles

Council currently maintains a fleet of five (5) vehicles. The County Council's strategy for the past 4 years has been to replace these vehicles biennially in order to minimise maintenance costs and maximise trade in values. This biannual plant replacement program is funded from the operational budget via the changeover cost being in line with the depreciation of the vehicles.

Council other major plant asset is the Argo®. This amphibious vehicle is used by Authority staff to conduct treatments and inspections on infestations of aquatic weeds in the **UHCC** area of operation.

5.3.2 Depreciation

Depreciation of **UHCC**'s plant and equipment is calculated using the straight line method in order to allocate an assets cost (net of residual values) over its estimated useful life

Estimated useful lives for **UHCC** plant and equipment include:

-Office Equipment	5 to 10 years
-Office Furniture	10 to 20 years
- Vehicles and equipment	5 to 8 years

The following Table 5 lists assets of **UHCC** as of 30 June 2017 with a value after depreciation greater than \$1000.

Table 5: UHCC Current Assets- 30 June 2017

Argo Quikspray	3,138
Argo Frontier	24,913
Trailer	1,105
Quikspray ATV 300	4,168
Quikspray ATV 300	4,168
Quikspray ATV 300	4,168
Quikspray ATV 400	5,994
Tablets	14,800
Works Coordinator Vehicle	29,489
Scone Inspector Vehicle	36,982
Singleton Inspector Vehicle	24,743
Merriwa Inspector Vehicle	24,743
Muswellbrook Inspector Vehicle	36,982
Total Current Assets less Depreciation	215,393

5.3.3 Asset Management Policy

UHCC Asset Management Policy is attached to the **BASP** as Appendix B.

5.3.4 Asset Replacement Plan

Table 6 outlines the Council's projected asset replacement plan for period 2017-2027

Table 6: Projected Asset Replacement Program 2017-2027

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
Purchases										
Works Coordinator Vehicle		35,000		37,000		37,000		38,000		39,000
Scone Officer Vehicle		42,000		43,000		44,000		45,000		46,000
Singleton Officer Vehicle	42,000		42,000		43,000		44,000		45,000	
Merriwa Officer Vehicle	42,000		42,000		43,000		44,000		45,000	
Muswellbrook Officer Vehicle		42,000		43,000		44,000		45,000		46,000
Tablets	16,000				16,000					
Total Purchases	100,000	119,000	84,000	123,000	102,000	125,000	88,000	128,000	90,000	131,000

Sales

Works Coordinator Vehicle	16,500		18,000		22,000		22,000		22,000	
Scone Officer Vehicle	28,000		30,000		32,000		34,000		35,000	
Singleton Officer Vehicle	27,000		29,000		31,000		33,000		35,000	
Merriwa Officer Vehicle	27,000		29,000		31,000		33,000		35,000	
Muswellbrook Officer Vehicle	28,000		30,000		32,000		34,000		35,000	
	54,000	72,500	58,000	78,000	62,000	86,000	66,000	90,000	70,000	92,000

Appendix A –Part 5 Local Government Act 1993

Part 5 County councils

383 Proposal to establish or dissolve a county council or amend its constitution

- (1) A council, a county council, a public authority or the Director-General may make a proposal to the Minister to establish or dissolve a county council or to amend the constitution of a county council.
- (2) The Minister may propose to establish or dissolve a county council or to amend the constitution of a county council.

384 Public notice to be given of a proposal

The Minister must give at least 28 days' public notice of a proposal made to the Minister that the Minister decides to proceed with or of a proposal initiated by the Minister.

385 Making of representations

Within the period of public notice, representations concerning the proposal may be made to the Minister by anyone affected by the proposal.

386 Minister's recommendation concerning the proposal

After considering all representations received concerning the proposal, the Minister may recommend to the Governor that the proposal be implemented, with or without modifications, or may decline to recommend that the proposal be implemented.

387 Formation of county councils

- (1) The Governor may, by proclamation, establish county councils for the purposes of this Act.
- (2) A proclamation under this section must contain the following particulars:
 - (a) the name of the county council,
 - (b) a description of the county council's area of operations,
 - (b1) the name of each council (referred to in this Part as a **constituent council**) whose area lies wholly or partly within the county council's area of operations,
 - (c) the number of persons to be elected by each **Constituent Council** to the county council's governing body,
 - (d) a description of the county council's functions.
- (3) A proclamation under this section conferring functions on a county council as to the control of **Noxious Plants** on land is to be made only with the concurrence of the Minister administering the [Noxious Weeds Act 1993](#).

388 Legal status of county councils

- (1) A proclamation establishing a county council operates to constitute the county council as a body politic of the State with perpetual succession and the legal capacity and powers of an individual, both in and outside the State.
- (2) A county council is not a body corporate (including a corporation).
- (3) A county council does not have the status, privileges and immunities of the Crown (including the State and the Government of the State).
- (4) A law of the State applies to and in respect of a county council in the same way as it applies to and in respect of a body corporate (including a corporation).

389 What is a county council's name?

The name of a county council is to be "X County Council", where "X" is the name specified by the proclamation.

390 Who comprise the governing body?

- (1) A county council must have a governing body elected by its constituent councils.

- (2) Provisions concerning the membership of a county council's governing body are to be as prescribed by the proclamation establishing the county council.
- (3) A member of a county council is to be elected from among the councillors of the constituent councils in accordance with the regulations.
- (4) The governing body of a county council is responsible for managing the affairs of the county council.

391 The chairperson

- (1) The chairperson of a county council is the person elected to the office of chairperson by the members of the county council from among their number.
- (2) The chairperson holds office for one year, subject to this Act.
- (3) The office of chairperson:
 - (a) commences on the day the person elected to the office is declared to be so elected, and
 - (b) becomes vacant when the person's successor is declared to be elected to the office, or on the occurrence of a casual vacancy in the office.

391A What are the functions of the chairperson?

The role of the chairperson of a county council is:

- (a) to preside at meetings of the county council, and
- (b) to exercise such other functions of the county council as the county council determines.

392 Vacancy in office of member

- (1) A member of a county council vacates that office on ceasing to be a councillor of a constituent council.
- (2) This section does not limit the other circumstances in which a member of a county council vacates that office.

393 Area of operations of county council

The area of operations of a county council may, in accordance with a proclamation made for the purposes of this Part, comprise the whole or any part of one or more local government areas.

394 Functions of county council

- (1) The functions of a county council may, in accordance with a proclamation made for the purposes of this Part, comprise any one or more of the functions of a council under this or any other Act.
- (2) A council may not undertake a function conferred on a county council whose area of operations includes the whole or any part of the council's area, subject to the regulations or a proclamation made for the purposes of this Part.
- (3) Subsection (2) does not prevent a council from exercising a function delegated to it by a county council.

395 General Manager of county council

- (1) A county council must employ a general manager.
- (2) The general manager of a county council has the same functions in relation to the county council as the general manager of a council has in relation to the council.

396 How often does a county council meet?

A county council is required to meet at least 4 times each year.

397 Amendment and dissolution of county councils

- (1) The Governor may, by proclamation, amend or revoke a proclamation in force under section 387 for the purpose of amending the constitution of, or of dissolving, a county council.
- (2) A proclamation for the purpose of amending the constitution of a county council:
 - (a) may change the name of the county council, or

- (b) may vary the county council's area of operations, or
- (c) may vary the number of persons who comprise the county council's governing body, or
- (c1) may vary the number of persons to be elected by each **Constituent Council** to the county council's governing body, or
- (d) may vary the county council's functions.

398 Facilitating provisions of proclamations

A proclamation of the Governor for the purposes of this Part may include provisions of the same kind as are referred to in section 213.

399 Making of financial contributions by constituent councils

The regulations may make provision for or with respect to the making of financial contributions to a county council by the constituent councils, including the following:

- the purposes for which contributions may be made
- the circumstances in which contributions may be required
- the assessment of contributions
- the payment of contributions
- the recovery of contributions.

400 Application of Act to county councils

- (1) This Act (except Part 1 and Divisions 1 and 2 of Part 2 of Chapter 9, Chapter 10, section 365 and the provisions of Chapter 15 concerning the making and levying of ordinary rates) applies:
 - (a) to county councils in the same way as it applies to councils, and
 - (b) to the members of county councils in the same way as it applies to the councillors of councils, with such exceptions and modifications (if any) as the regulations may provide.
- (2) In the application of this Act to county councils and members of county councils:
 - (a) a reference to the mayor of a council includes a reference to the chairperson of a county council, and
 - (b) a reference to mayoral office includes a reference to the office of the chairperson of a county council, and
 - (c) a reference to a councillor includes a reference to a member of a county council.

400AA Special provisions relating to Cudgegong (Abattoir) County Council

Schedule 9 has effect.

400A (Repealed)

Appendix B – Asset Management Policy



Asset Management Policy

OVERVIEW

The Upper Hunter County Council's assets presently consist of the operational vehicles and plant used by staff on a day to day basis. Council has no fixed assets in regards to buildings or other infrastructure.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

This policy provides the overall framework to guide the sustainable management of Council's asset portfolio.

POLICY STATEMENT

To ensure effective asset management, Council will endeavour to:

- Utilise assets to their fullest potential to maximise usage and economic performance.
- Ensure that asset renewal, disposal, upgrade or new asset provision is carried out in accordance with the adopted resourcing strategy that includes demonstrated need, life cycle costing, alternative modes of delivery and sustainability.
- Ensure asset management practices conform to legislative requirements and reflect best practice in the industry.
- Ensure that all asset purchase, maintenance, rehabilitation and replacement shall be guided by Council's Asset Management Plans and annual budgetary process.
- Assets meet specifications and quality standards; and
- Assets meet requirements for public safety, OH&S and maintainability.

POLICY REFERENCE (E.G. LEGISLATION, RELATED DOCUMENTS)

Local Government Act 1993

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005

Local Government Amendment (Planning and Reporting) Act 2009

UHCC Business Activity Strategic Plan 2017-2027

Author

Works Coordinator

Date

6/02/2017

Adopted by Council 16 May 2017