



Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries

Minister for Small Business

MEDIA RELEASE

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***LOCAL LAND SERVICES* TO TRANSFORM SERVICE DELIVERY TO NSW FARMERS AND LANDOWNERS**

Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson today announced the most fundamental change since the 1940s to the way NSW primary producers access services, information and advice.

In a move long overdue, the NSW Government will give more control of local agricultural and natural resource management services to farmers and landowners.

The new *Local Land Services* will deliver locally prioritised services including:

- agricultural advice;
- plant and animal pest control and biosecurity;
- natural resource management; and
- emergency and disaster assessment and response.

“*Local Land Services* will see the end of multiple agencies providing unco-ordinated, highly duplicative, inequitable and unnecessarily expensive services to farmers and regional landowners,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“The current structures are stifling innovation, reducing productivity and making it harder for farmers and landowners to manage their land.

“The status quo is not an option. Our farmers deserve better.”

Local Land Services will be regionally-based, semi-autonomous, statutory organisations that are governed by locally elected and skills-based Board members

They will replace the 13 Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs), 14 Livestock Health & Pest Authorities (LHPAs) and incorporate agricultural advisory services currently provided by Agriculture NSW (part of the Department of Primary Industries).

“*Local Land Services* is a service delivery model for the future which links natural resource management to productive primary industries,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“Farmers and landowners will be able to easily access natural resource management, agricultural advice and biosecurity functions from one organisation.

“The structure will free up staff to work more closely with their communities, encourage innovation and integration across the landscape and be more accountable to ratepayers.

Local Land Services will also provide greater opportunities to work with community-based natural resource management organisations like Landcare NSW and Greening Australia, as well as other co-funded organisations including the Rural Research and Development Corporations.”

The creation of *Local Land Services* builds on the recommendations of the 2011-2012 Independent Ryan Review of the Livestock Health and Pest Authorities (LHPA) and considers wide stakeholder consultation and feedback.

“Our primary industries sector is worth \$9 billion and the NSW Government will continue to invest over \$1 billion each year – but we need to ensure ratepayers get better value for money,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“This is a fresh start for how the NSW Government provides advice and support for NSW farmers and landowners and I encourage people to participate in the process as we build *Local Land Services*.”

The NSW Natural Resources Commissioner Dr John Keniry AM will Chair a Reference Panel to oversee the construction of the new *Local Land Services*.

Executive Director of the Australian Farm Institute Mick Keogh will work alongside Dr Keniry with a specific role to engage industry, community and stakeholder groups in the process.

Local Land Services will be operational in January 2014. Throughout the development phase farmers and landholders will still be able to access existing services from DPI, LHPAs and CMAs.