



# Katrina Hodgkinson MP

## Minister for Primary Industries

## Minister for Small Business

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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Wednesday 21 November, 2012

#### **INDEPENDENT, VALUABLE ADVICE AT HEART OF NEW *LOCAL LAND SERVICES***

Farmers will have better access to independent, professional advice under the new *Local Land Services* with a focus on agricultural research, development and extension that improves productivity across the primary industries sector.

“We know that our farmers value the independent advice and direct links to research which are provided by our advisory staff, and this will be one of the hallmarks of the new *Local Land Services*,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“The new Industry Development Officers based within Department of Primary Industries (DPI) will continue to conduct world class research and be a trusted source of technical information while the *Local Land Services* Advisory Officers will provide the frontline services that primary producers depend on.

“This includes holding field days, making on-farm visits and providing unfettered advice to ensure our farmers have the services to remain productive and internationally competitive.

“The *Local Land Services* model means that agricultural advice will be supported by biosecurity advice and protection; weed and pest animal control; and natural resource management in one connected service.

DPI will have 50 Industry Development positions and *Local Land Services* will initially field up to 45 Advisory Officers across the State. District Agronomists across DPI are encouraged to apply for the *Local Land Services* roles.

“One of the principles driving *Local Land Services* is the localised decision making and budget control,” said Ms Hodgkinson.

“This gives the Boards of *Local Land Services* the flexibility to employ additional services which meet the needs of local farmers – so if a *Local Land Services* region would like additional agronomists or specialist advisors, they will have the power to add these services.”

The DPI Industry Development team comprises Agronomists (Dryland, Irrigated and Pasture); Livestock Officers (Beef, Sheep, Dairy, Pigs, Poultry and Bees); Horticulture Officers (Citrus, Vegetables, Horticulture, Viticulture and Fruit) and Irrigation, Soils and Climate Officers.

The 500 people-strong DPI Research & Development team is focussed on research and industry development and is strengthening industry relationships with Rural Research & Development Corporations (RDCs) already funded by farmer levies.

“We are increasing the number of research and development positions within the DPI, including 10 new positions in Cropping with specific R&D agronomy roles located at Tamworth, Trangie, Narrabri, Wagga Wagga and Yanco,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“We have established three new post-doctoral positions to be funded in partnership with Cotton RDC and Grains RDC to be located at Wagga Wagga, Tamworth and Narrabri, and we will look at further opportunities over the next year.

“We are also increasing our R&D capability at Trangie to cover, beef, sheep, dryland and irrigated cropping, which will bring three new positions to Trangie.

“The NSW Government will continue to invest more than \$1 billion each year to support our primary producers through the DPI,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“These reforms will ensure DPI has a clearer focus on its core functions of research and development, policy and compliance.

“*Local Land Services* will be instrumental in building community and regional partnerships and disseminating the research and development for our farmers.”

Consultation on *Local Land Services* will continue over the next several months, with farmers, landowners and interested community members invited to comment via the Have Your Say website <http://haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/locallandservices>

*Local Land Services* community consultation meetings are being scheduled for early 2013.