

Hawkesbury River County Council Annual Report 2014/2015



NSW
no space 4 weeds

Local Weed Control Authority for the Councils of:



The County Council's Area of Operations

Hawkesbury River County Council is a single purpose authority for the control of declared noxious weeds, and came into existence in 1948 (Government Gazette of 24/9/1948).



The Council consists of the combined areas of the four constituent councils of The Hills Shire, Blacktown, Penrith and Hawkesbury Cities; a combined County area of 3,823 square kilometres.

Funds are provided by equal levies upon the four constituent councils. The State Government provides additional grants in which Council must achieve specific outcomes. Charges are made for services and work performed for private land holders.

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Cover Photo: HRCC staff discover a new incursion of Ming Asparagus

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Chairman's Report

It has been a privilege to lead the County Council for the past 12 months, and play a role in its continued growth and viability.

Over the last year, under the operational leadership of the General Manager, Mr Chris Dewhurst and Operations Manager Mr Chris Stanfield all of our target results have been met. With the support of the Board, we have remained focussed on providing tangible outcomes in relation to weed control and coordination throughout the local government areas of Blacktown, Hawkesbury, Penrith and The Hills Shire.

In summary, the County Council has controlled 194HA of weeds across our four local government areas. This alleviates a huge operational burden from our member Councils. By utilising economies of scale and specialisation of human resources, HRCC can provide this single service much more efficiently than four Councils could do individually.

Additional to the direct control results, HRCC undertook 2,407 private property inspections. The County staff have developed a unique approach with their inspection process, which is defined more by education and extension than regulation. All residents are offered the chance to meet personally with an inspector and have any issues explained to them in plain terms, prior to any regulatory processes coming into effect. This has led us to achieve a voluntary compliance rate of 98% with our initial inspections. This is a tremendous result for our organisations ability to develop effective relationships with our community whilst imparting the "weed aware" message.

Council also continued to consolidate its financial sustainability by finding new revenue opportunities and delivering efficient results. Operating expenditure decreased by 5% (to \$1.2Mil) on the previous year, however this was achieved primarily through reductions in depreciation due to asset lifecycle's. Our staff employment numbers (14) remain steady. This shows we are establishing a trend of financial sustainability which will allow the organisation to continue to deliver effective value for money service to the community. Our total cost to each rate payer in our County (550,000) was \$2.16 per year.

The County Council continued its regional role as the Sydney Lead Agency for the NSW Weeds Action Program. We perform this role under contract from the NSW Department of Primary Industries. This year we completed the fifth and final year of the program, the Sydney region came in within 0.01% of budget targets and having completed all on-ground targets and reporting requirements over the five year period. Additionally, HRCC was successful in continuing the lead agency role for the new WAP1520 five year program.

In conclusion, Council has spent the past 12 months improving its efficiency, productivity, strategy and communication. We are committed to ensuring that our services meet the modern needs of the community and the environment, and I am pleased to lead a team that is so wholeheartedly committed to this goal.

Clr. Jess Diaz
Chairman, HRCC

Reason for the Annual Report

The annual report is one of the key points of accountability between a council and our community. It is not a report to the Division of Local Government or the NSW Government; it is a report to our community.

The report focuses on the council's implementation of the HRCC Delivery Program 2012-2016 and HRCC Operational Plan 2012-13. A separate HRCC Financial Statement 2012/13 is also included as an appendix to the Annual Report.

The report also includes some information that is prescribed by the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005. This information has been included in the Regulation because we believe that it is important for community members to know about it – to help their understanding of how the council has been performing both as a business entity and a community leader.

Below is the additional legislative basis for the development of our annual report:

Local Government Act 1993

Following is a summary of the requirements of Section 404 of the Act:

- The council must prepare an annual report within five months of the end of the financial year.
- The report will outline the council's achievements in implementing its Delivery Program.
- The annual report in the year of the ordinary election will also include an outline of achievements in implementing the Community Strategic Plan.
- The annual report in the year of the ordinary election must include a report (State of the Environment Report) as to the state of the environment in the local government area in relation to the objectives for the environment established by the Community Strategic Plan.
- The report must contain the council's audited financial statements and notes and any information required by the Regulation or the Guidelines.
- A copy of the report must be posted on the council's website (www.hrcc.nsw.gov.au) and provided to the Minister.

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005

Clause 217 of the Regulation requires the following information to be included in the annual report:

- Details of overseas visits by councillors and council staff
- Details of mayoral and councillor fees, expenses and facilities
- Contracts awarded by the council
- Amounts incurred in relation to legal proceedings
- Private works and financial assistance
- Details of external bodies, companies and partnerships
- Details of the General Manager's total remuneration
- Details of the total expenditure on Senior Staff remuneration
- Information on stormwater levies and charges
- Information on companion animals management
- A statement of the activities undertaken by the council to implement its equal employment opportunity management plan.

Hawkesbury River County Council

Vision Statement

An improved environment through an integrated approach to weed management and building community capacity.

Mission Statement

To provide effective integrated weed management systems to all Constituent Councils fairly and equitably in accordance with the Noxious Weeds Act, 1993.

Values “Our Compass”

- Staff will act with honesty and integrity, and not tolerate a lack of it in others.
- Management will communicate with staff with openness and respect.
- Staff will communicate with openness and respect with each other, and with management.
- We will deliver measurable results for our community and the environment.
- We will build meaningful relationships within the community.
- We will maintain relationships with our member councils that are effective and productive.
- We will treat the safety of ourselves, others and the environment as the highest priority at all times.



South Creek Wharf in flood, Windsor, March 2014

Advantages of a County Council For the Control of Weeds.



Formed over a larger area boundary problems are avoided. This is critical to effective weeds management;



Concentration on a few rather than many functions leads to specialisation, more efficient and effective outcomes as the focus of management and the workforce stays centred;



Resource sharing is achieved as resources are used over a larger area of operations. The “critical mass” needed to properly do the job is more easily achieved;



An outbreak of noxious weeds anywhere within the County Council’s area means that ALL the resources are brought to bear on the problem. This is exemplified by periodic outbreaks of Water Hyacinth on the Hawkesbury/Nepean River and in 2004, a major outbreak of Salvinia in the same area;



Management and operational plans are prepared for the County area. As such, the revenue is used to focus attention on required outcomes and is not restricted to purely parochial considerations.



Aquatic Weed nursery in HRCC depot

The County Council's Role in Weed Control

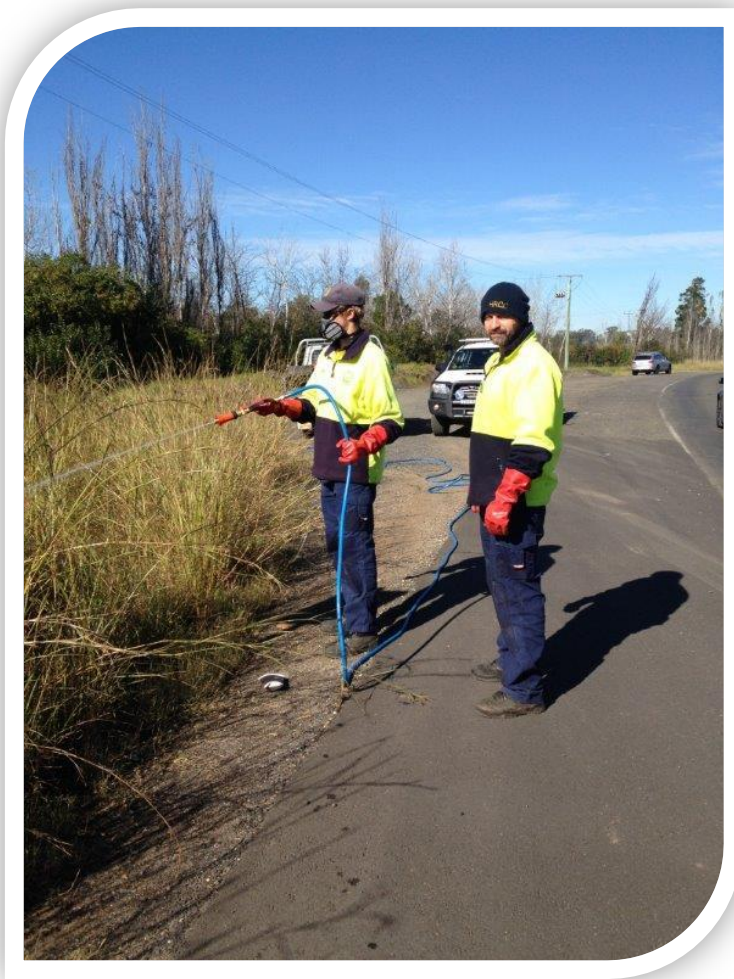
As an organisation the County Council is constituted under the Local Government Act and is specified as a Local Control Authority under the Noxious Weeds Act. It is a special (single) purpose authority formed to administer, control and eradicate declared noxious weeds. The County Council's role is summarised below:

1. Responsibility for administering the Noxious Weeds Act, 1993;
2. Control of noxious weeds on land occupied by constituent Councils.
3. To ensure, so far as practicable, that occupiers of land carry out obligations to control noxious weeds imposed under the Act;
4. To develop, implement, co-ordinate and review noxious weed control policies and noxious weed control programs;
5. Inspection of land within the local area in connection with its noxious weed control functions;
6. To report, at the request of the Minister, on the carrying out of the Local Control Authority's functions under the Act;
7. To co-operate with Local Control Authorities of adjoining areas to control noxious weeds, where appropriate;
8. Such other functions as may be conferred or imposed on the Local Control Authority by or under the Acts;
9. Supply noxious weed control services to occupiers of land including public authorities and other person and charge for the service;
10. Temporarily obstruct navigation in any waters to a reasonable extent for the purpose of the control of noxious weeds;
11. Council's inspectors have various functions including powers of entry and to issue "on the spot" fines and power to require a person in charge of machinery to treat the machine immediately to remove any notifiable weed;
12. Private property occupiers are responsible for notifying Council of the presence of certain notifiable noxious weeds. Council can inspect private properties for noxious weed infestations and the giving of directions to landowners and occupiers;

Guiding Strategies

Weed control is dynamic. It is closely linked to climate, land use and ecology and must therefore be managed in order to respond as these attributes change. There are, however, a range of guiding strategies that have been shown to be most effective across a range of conditions. The HRCC 10 Year Business Activity Statement is closely aligned with these strategies as they have been outlined in the NSW Invasive Species Plan 2008-2015. They are broad enough to allow an organisation to respond to climate and land use, but still conform to a solid set of management principals. These strategic objectives also follow the guidance provided by the development of our member Council "Community Strategic Plans".

- 1. Prevent the establishment of new weed species within our County.**
- 2. Eliminate the spread of new and existing weed species within our County.**
- 3. Reduce the impact of widespread weeds on key assets.**
- 4. Support the community, industry and government stakeholders to have the ability and long-term commitment to manage weeds.**



HRCC Staff treating a new incursion of Coolatai Grass, Clarendon

Our Delivery Program

The HRCC Delivery Program 2012-2016 sets out a number of “principle activities” which are used to deliver on the guiding strategies of the 10 Year Business Activity Statement. This is in effect what the community will see our organisation “doing” on a day to day basis. Our principle activities are outlined as follows:

1. Control of Weeds

Controlling weeds directly are the tasks most commonly thought of when the community thinks about the work of HRCC. It is a very significant function, and has a big impact on the area’s economy, environment and amenity. However, the task is undertaken in a variety of ways utilising the full spectrum of modern weed control techniques. This includes – hand weeding, spot spraying, bio-controls and mechanical harvesting. Our area is also unique in that we undertake control in both terrestrial and aquatic environments, demanding much skill and complexity from our operational staff.

2. Inspection of Properties

In many ways this is the core role of the County Council. Property inspections also involve surveillance of the entire landscape, as inspectors must not only be vigilant to movement of widespread weeds, but also new incursions landing in our County for the first time. This involves a very high level of skill and training to be able to identify and respond to any new incursions. Our private property inspection programs are developed to strategically coordinate particular precincts or communities to control specific weed issues together. This way we can assist to maximise everyone’s weed control efforts. Our inspection and surveillance programs rely heavily on mapping and reporting processes, and these are constantly under development within the organisation.

3. Community Awareness

Having our community aware of weeds, especially our “High Risk” weeds is most likely the effective long term strategy to protect our areas from huge cost impacts from weeds in the future. The HRCC Community Awareness activities have a number of roles. From website and social media presence, development of fliers to regular attendance at field days and shopping centres.

4. Governance

A strong, stable and efficient governance platform is essential for building the capacity of our organisation over the long term. Some of the key governance roles performed by HRCC include a strategic planning and regular, accountable and transparent reporting to the community.

Our Annual Operational Results

Impressive weed control results were again reached by our staff this year past. The capacity of our weed control team continues to grow as staff progress through the traineeship program to become qualified noxious weeds officers. The experience and knowledge of our workforce has definitely led to further improvement of our weed control activities across the county.

Weed control is a constantly evolving process. The noxious weeds list was updated under weed control order 30 in March 2014 by NSW DPI. The result being a shift in control categories for a number of weed species, inclusion of new species such as rhizomatous bamboo, and weeds such as Crofton weed were taken off the noxious weed list for our county.

As a result in changes to the noxious weeds list, council weed control priorities have also changed to include these new weed species. Weed control techniques have also been adapted to address these changes. Herbicide application has increased this year, although as a whole high volume spraying has dramatically decreased – other techniques such as basal barking, cut stump, frilling and scrape and paint has increased markedly. Low pressure herbicide application with backpack and hand sprayers has also been widely used by our staff to treat sensitive areas and areas that have been previously off limits to due to the inability to access these areas with traditional spray vehicles.



Aquatic Weed being managed in Woodcroft Lake, Blacktown

1. Control of Weeds

Objective	Actions	Annual Target	Annual Result
C 1.1 Remove and destroy all Class 1 & Class 2 Noxious Weeds.	When carrying out Class 3 and Class 4 noxious weed control or other principal activities, inspect for the presence of Class 1 & Class 2 Noxious Weeds.	10 HA	21.7 Ha
C1.2 Fully and continuously suppress and destroy all Class 3 Noxious Weeds.	Using the latest weed control techniques and practices, treat with herbicides and other suitable integrated weed management systems.	45 HA	71.9 Ha
C1.3 Prevent the spread and reduce the numbers and distribution of Class 4 noxious weeds.	Using the latest weed control techniques and practices treat weeds with herbicides and other suitable integrated weed management systems.	30 HA	77 Ha
C1.4 Reduce the risk from Noxious Weeds which are poisonous to humans and animals on public lands.	Prioritise treatment of poisonous Noxious Weeds on public land.	40HA	60 Ha
C1.5 Maintain the health of staff and public who may come into contact with herbicides during the noxious weed spraying program.	Staff to use herbicides in accordance with guidelines of Council, industry standards and specific guidelines on the label of each herbicide being used.	0	0

A total of 205.9 HA of land were treated for noxious weeds this year. Weed control teams traverse the county widely. Boneseed, Kidney leaf mud plantain, Kudzu and Senegal tea plant were targeted in an effort to eradicate these species from the landscape. 7.5HA of land was inspected and treated for these Class 1 and 2 weeds.

Throughout the county, weed infestation levels remain relatively stable. Control works are keeping many species from expanding their range and density and are decreasing steadily. There are a handful of weed species that are defying this trend, those being Boneseed and Ming asparagus. These two species, although low in number are being detected whilst carrying out control works for other weed species, widely across the county.

Aquatic weed populations have taken several hits from heavy rain events and flushing of waterways. Salvinia does not pose the great environmental threat it once did. Biological control agents, effective herbicides and increased knowledge of successful control strategies are having positive effects upon this species.

Water hyacinth is present, primarily off river in private dams and water ways. Council is constantly driving home the control message to landholders and mentoring them in Water hyacinth management; given this species has seed viability of up to 60 years.

Kidney leaf mud plantain (class 1 noxious weed) continues to be held in one creek system and has not been sighted outside of this area. Our team are vigilant in the control of this species, and although this species clings on to existence; eradication is still a realistic outcome in the foreseeable future.

Senegal tea plant infestations within the county are declining, the control program for this species runs over spring, summer and autumn. Herbicide application is steadily reducing the presence of this class 1 noxious weed species.

Overall, our weed control teams are having a positive effect on the county's noxious weed populations. Weed numbers are in check, and in most cases slowly declining. Due to the physical size of our county, weed control needs to have a strategic, long term approach to weed management across the landscape.

2. Inspection of Properties

Objective	Actions	Annual Target	Annual Result
I2.1 Inspect properties which have the most influence on exclusion of new weed incursions and/or protection of key landscape assets.	Systematically inspect various new areas bounded by specific landmarks, such as creek or road systems, each year. Report Noxious Weeds found, degree of infestation, location and area infested and input all data to the database system. Report action being carried out by land occupier and further action required by land occupier to Council.	1300	1,890
I2.2 Prevent the sale and transport of Class 5 Noxious Weeds.	Inspect all nurseries and other outlets involved in the sale of weeds quarterly.	250	382
I2.3 Re-inspect all properties systematically where owners are, or should be undertaking noxious plant control programs.	Systematically reinspect identified properties. Report action being carried out by land manager and further action required by land manager to Council.	60	77
I2.4 Advise, co-ordinate and implement noxious weed control programs.	Provide advice to land managers on a one-to-one basis. This advice will be provided during inspections and field days, or over the phone, by letter or by fact sheets.	100	129
I2.5 Undertake landscape surveillance to understand extent of weed control priorities.	Utilise a GIS system to spatial record extent of weed infestations.	100 HA	90 Ha

The private property inspection program is a major component of councils business and is growing in number, and success on a number of fronts. 1,890 property inspections were carried out on private properties, businesses and high risk sites to seek noxious weed species, engage landholders and disseminate weed management information. Council inspectors issued 60 section 18a notices of noxious weeds presence. Only one of these notices has progressed past this point, meaning a very high rate of voluntary compliance from our landholders. This success can be attributed to the efforts of our weed inspection staff, their professionalism and skill. The key purpose of these inspections is to build the landholder's capacity to manage weeds on their own properties, and arm them with the tools to identify new weed species that germinate on their land.

Businesses that have been inspected as part of council's high risk site inspection program include; aquariums, nurseries, pet shops, stock feed producers, online retailers, rural suppliers, stock feed retailers and agricultural machinery dealers. This year 250 inspections were conducted. The main source of weed

trade came from online retailers. 7 online sellers were contacted in regards to the sale of noxious plant material on sites such as eBay and Gumtree. All of these sellers removed their products from these sites once they had been made aware of the NSW Noxious Weeds Act 1993 and no further action was required. Local aquariums have been compliant and happy to be kept updated in regards to new plant species being listed as noxious weeds – and said weeds removed from sale.

Another key aspect of the property inspection program is the inspection of properties surrounding high priority sites on public lands. These inspections help protect council investment on public reserves and significant environmental sites by inspecting surrounding private property to prevent weed re-establishment from these areas. Approximately 349 inspections were carried out via this premise.

3. Community Awareness

Education and awareness continues to be an integral part of council's core business. The tasks of engaging the public, mentoring landholders in weed management, identifying weeds, providing property weed management plans and conducting weed control demonstrations provide far great value for the community. This includes attending agricultural shows, environmental and community events in all of our member council's areas. This year HRCC attended an average of 4 events in each of our LGA's.



Blacktown Environmental Expo

Objective	Actions	Annual Target	Annual Result
A3.1 Develop awareness of noxious and potentially damaging weeds 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.	Conduct field days, seminars and weed walks, speak at various farmer or community group meetings.	12	14
	Use various media such as newsprint, radio, television (video) and fact sheets to distribute information on Noxious Weeds.	2	2
	Promote appropriate vegetation management using integrated weed control and management techniques.	15	20
A3.2. Participate in regional advisory groups, campaigns and surveys being conducted by stakeholders with weed control interests.	Consult neighbouring Councils and their Senior Staff.	3	9
	Attend meetings which directly or indirectly affect Council's noxious plant control program.	4	10
	Complete surveys or reports which support the endeavours of other bodies interested in weed control.	4	4

Each council display stand contains live weed specimens; weed identification material, promotional bags with activities for children as well as educational material for the adults. The most important aspect of the community events is the opportunity for members of the public to engage with council staff; inspectors, weeds officers and trainees to discuss weed matters and to organise property inspections and program mentoring in weed management for landholders.

Council has been building this aspect of our business for some time now, and it is yielding positive results. People are coming to events that we attend specifically to talk to council staff about weeds and bring plants from their properties to have council staff identify them. Organisers of events such as the Penrith home show, Blacktown environment expo and Luddenham show contact council months in advance to seek council's interest in attending their events.

The trend of increased results experienced over the last two years, across the scope of works that council conduct, will plateau this coming year. Minor refinement of our property inspection process, stability within the noxious weed listing and stable staffing levels will see council outputs sustained with moderate growth compared to previous years. Staff will maintain current levels of weed management across the county, ensuring that weed populations are held under control.

Shows and Exhibits attended	Date
Bunnings Minchinbury	9-10/8/2014
Hills Privet Workshop	14/08/2014
Penrith Spring Home Show	23-24/8/2014
JAG Expo	14/10/2014
Small Farms Expo	1-2/11/2014
Hills Privet Workshop	15/11/2014
Orange Blosson Festival	13/09/2014
Blacktown Sustainability	27/09/2014
Tafe Open Day	18/10/2014
Luddenham Show	21/22 Feb 2015
Blacktown Show	7/8 March 2015
Plant Fair	12/04/2015
Castle Hill Show	13/14/15 Mar 2015
Bowen Mountain Sustainability Fair	11/04/2015
Hawkesbury Show	24/25/26 Apr 2015

3	Penrith
3	Blacktown
4	Hills
5	Hawkesbury

4. Governance

Objective	Actions	Target	Q1 Result	Annual Result
REPORTING				
G4.1 Provide ongoing information to Constituent Councils and the NSW Department of Primary Industries.	The General Manager or Operations Manager to provide feedback and reports on operations to each Constituent Council.	4		4
	Provide an annual Grant Return report to Council and in turn the Constituent Councils in summary form.	1		1
	The General Manager to provide regular updates on all major Council decisions and strategic planning processes.	6		6
STRATEGIC PLANNING				
G5.1 Achieve Management Planning Practices.	The General Manager and Operations Manager will review and monitor the Operational Plan and report to Council.	4		4
	The General Manager and Operations Manager to update Long-Term Financial Plan report to Council.	1		0
	The General Manager and Operations Manager prepare Annual Report in accordance with Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.	1		1
	The General Manager and Operations Manager will review Workforce Management Strategy and report to Council.	1		0
G5.2 Ensure level of Grant funding is maintained.	The General Manager and Operations Manager will complete applications and returns.	4		3
G5.3 Ensure Council Policies and Procedures are up to date and current.	The General Manager and Operations Manager to conduct annual policy and procedure reviews and submit to Council for adoption.	2		3
GOVERNANCE				
G6.1 Conduct Council Meetings.	Conduct 6 Council meetings per year in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993.	6		6

	Annual Target	Year to Date
Blacktown City Council		
Total Number of Properties Inspected:	325	648
Class 1 and 2 noxious weed control:	2.5 Ha	3.1 Ha
Total Weed Control:	34 Ha	43.9 Ha
Educational Events:	3	4
Hawkesbury City Council		
Total Number of Properties Inspected:	325	474
Class 1 and 2 noxious weed control:	2.5 Ha	7.5 Ha
Total Weed Control:	33 Ha	56.3 Ha
Educational Events:	3	7
Penrith City Council		
Total Number of Properties Inspected:	325	561
Class 1 and 2 noxious weed control:	2.5 Ha	2.2 Ha
Total Weed Control:	34 Ha	53.6 Ha
Educational events:	3	5
The Hills Shire Council		
Total Number of Properties Inspected:	415	724
Class 1 and 2 noxious weed control:	2.5 Ha	3.8 Ha
Total Weed Control:	34 Ha	39.7 Ha
Educational Events:	3	5

Total Inspections

2,407

Total Weed Control HA

193.5 Ha

NEW SOUTH WALES

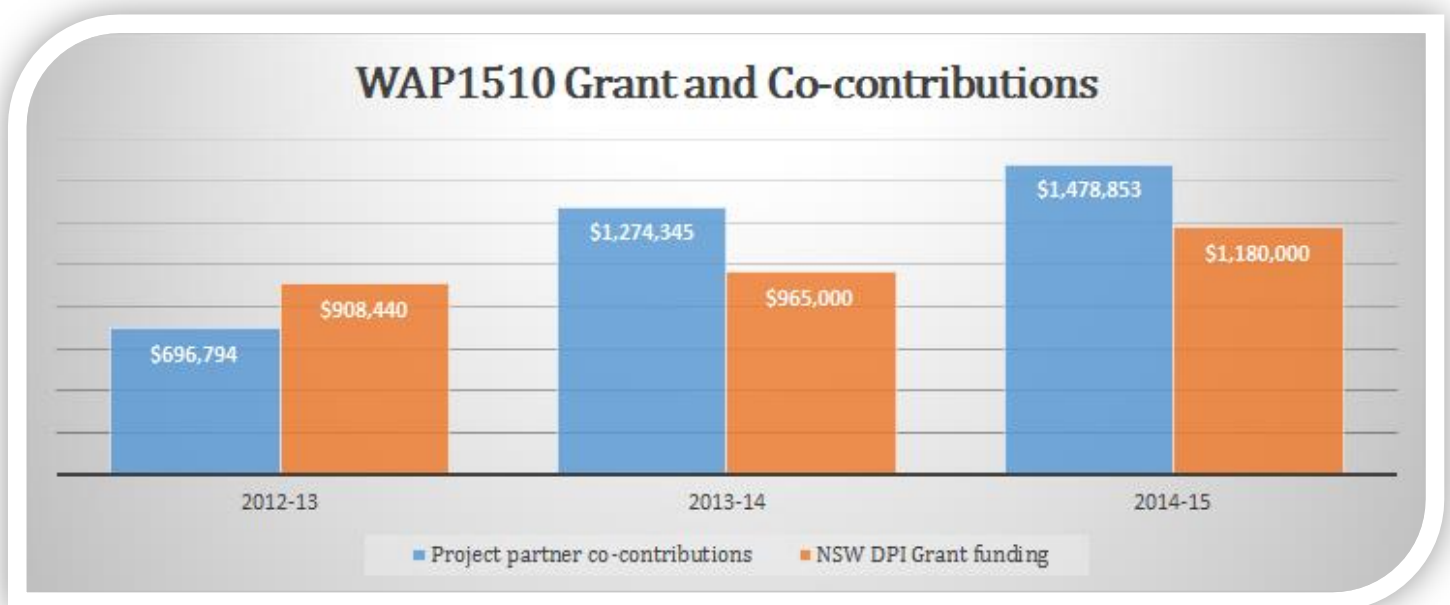
WEEDS ACTION PROGRAM

The NSW Weeds Action Program is a NSW Government initiative to reduce the impact of weeds under the NSW Invasive Species Plan. The Program replaces the traditional range of noxious weed grant programs provided by the NSW Government to local authorities. The Program will target future funding directly on outcomes in the NSW Invasive Species Plan.

HRCC is the lead agency for the Sydney Region Weeds Action Project, a partnership between the NSW Government, local government and the Sydney Weeds Committees to reduce the impact of weeds across Sydney. The project targets the highest risk weeds, including:

- preventing new weeds from establishing via inspections and monitoring,
- eliminating or preventing the spread of new weeds via monitoring and control,
- protecting significant natural assets (endangered ecological communities, wetlands and major waterways) through targeted control programs, and
- improving capacity through awareness and education targeting the weeds workforce and community.

2014-5 was the fifth and final year of the Weeds Action Program 2010-2015 project, and saw more than \$2.5million (\$1.18m from the NSW Department of Primary Industries and \$1.4m from local governments and the National Parks and Wildlife Service) spent directly on weed management activities across the Greater Sydney region.



18 local councils, 2 National Parks & Wildlife Service Regions and 1 state government agency (Greater Sydney Local Land Services) were partners in the project, which was administered by Hawkesbury River County Council. During 2014-15 project partners:



Noxious Weeds Officer releasing Crofton Rust in Strathfield LGA

- Inspected 1662 km of high risk pathways (e.g. major roads, rail corridors and waterways) for high risk weeds, including the Nepean, Hacking and Hawkesbury Rivers, Southern Highlands Railway Line, the East-West rail corridor, the Pacific, Old Hume, Great Western and Princes Highways, Mona Vale Rd and the M2, M7, M4 and M5 motorways (up 13% on 2013-14)
- Inspected 10,639 private properties and 3,578 high risk sites such as nurseries, waste facilities, florists, landscaping suppliers, car parks, boat ramps and aquariums for high risk weeds (up 11% on 2013-14)
- Managed 3,574 ha of significant natural assets (endangered ecological communities, high conservation area) to prevent high risk weeds (53% increase over 2013-14)
- Controlled 184 km (no change from 2013-14) and 1,324 ha (15% increase over 2014-15) of high risk terrestrial weeds along high risk pathways (e.g. major roads, rail corridors and waterways) and perimeter of significant natural assets
- Controlled high risk aquatic weeds along 466 km of waterways such as the Georges River and Hawkesbury-Nepean River and their tributaries, (no change from 2013-14)
- Held displays at 70 community events across Sydney to help raise community awareness of high risk weeds, (13% decrease since 2013-14), and
- Facilitated training for more than 972 volunteers and staff across Sydney to identify and control high risk weeds (12% decrease from 2013-14).

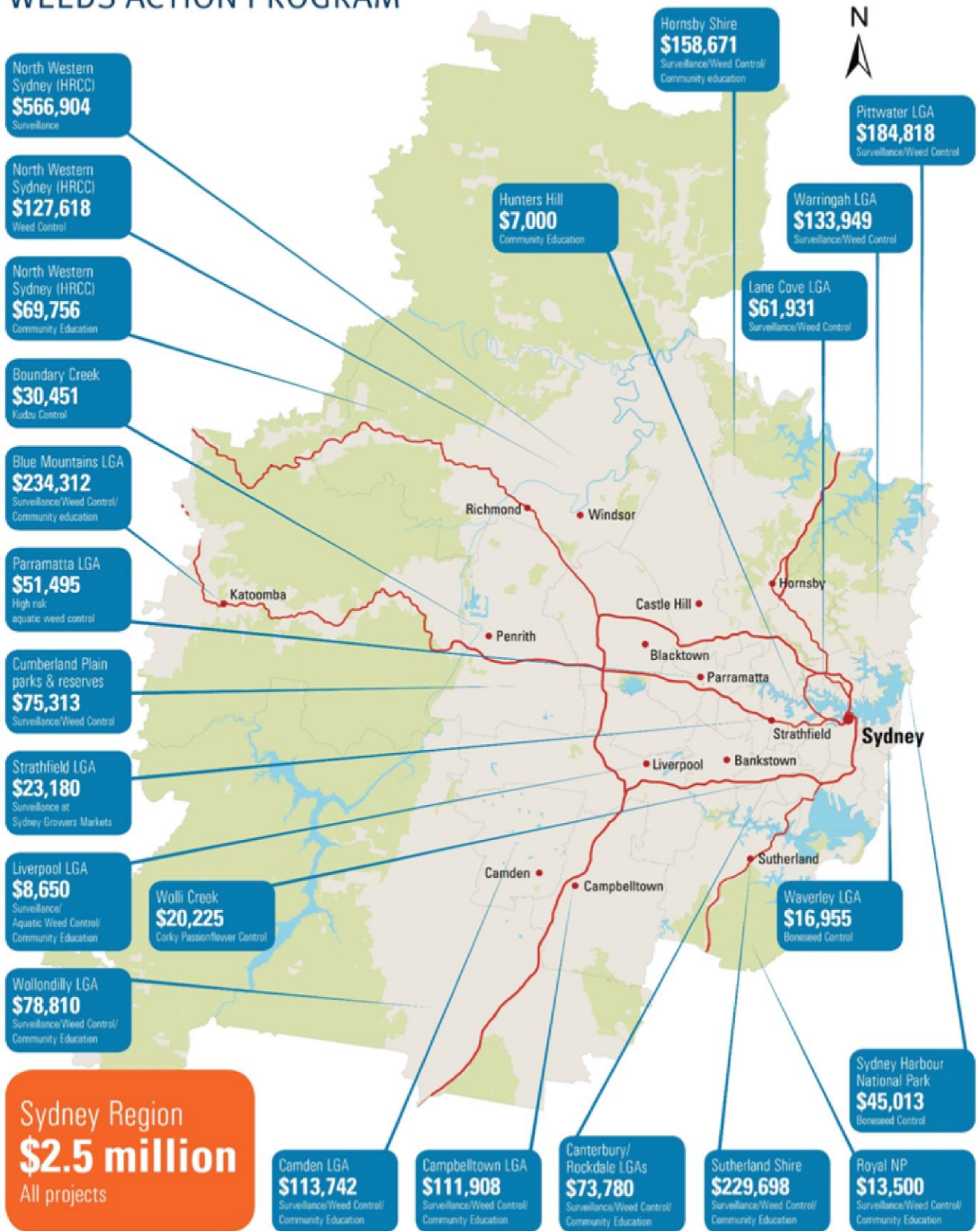
Cat's claw creeper control in Campbelltown LGA



Sydney Region 2014-2015

NEW SOUTH WALES

WEEDS ACTION PROGRAM



Weeds Declared under the Noxious Weeds Act (1993)

The Noxious Weeds Act (1993) provides for the Minister for Primary Industries to issue an Order declaring a plant noxious. This declaration may specify a plant to be noxious in a determined portion, or the whole of the State.

These noxious weeds have been listed into five (5) Classes as specified in the Act. In the Hawkesbury River County Council area, the action required for each control Class is:

- Class 1**, State Prohibited Weeds,
- Class 2**, Regionally Prohibited Weeds,
- Class 3**, Regionally Controlled Weeds,
- Class 4**, Locally Controlled Weeds,
- Class 5**, Restricted Plants.

The characteristics of each class are as follows:

Class 1 noxious weeds are plants that pose a potentially serious threat to primary production or the environment and are not present in the State or are present only to a limited extent.

Class 2 noxious weeds are plants that pose a potentially serious threat to primary production or the environment of a region to which the order applies and are not present in the region or are present only to a limited extent.

Class 3 noxious weeds are plants that pose a serious threat to primary production or the environment of an area to which the order applies, are not widely distributed in the area and are likely to spread in the area or to another area.

Class 4 noxious weeds are plants that pose a threat to primary production, the environment or human health, are widely distributed in an area to which the order applies and are likely to spread in the area or to another area.

Class 5 noxious weeds are plants that are likely, by their sale or the sale of their seeds or movement within the State or an area of the State, to spread in the State or outside the State.

A noxious weed that is classified as a Class 1, 2 or 5 noxious weed is referred to in this Act as a **notifiable weed**, and its presence must be reported to the HRCC as the Local Control Authority within 24 hours of becoming known by a person in a professional capacity.

Noxious Weeds declared (WCO30 Feb 2014) in the Local Control Authority area of Hawkesbury River County Council

Common Name	Botanical Name	Class
African boxthorn	<i>Lycium ferocissimum</i>	4
African feather grass	<i>Cenchrus macrourus</i>	5
African olive	<i>Olea europaea</i> subspecies <i>cuspidata</i> (syn. <i>Olea europaea</i> subspecies <i>africana</i>)	4
African turnip weed	<i>Sisymbrium runcinatum</i> and <i>S. thellungii</i>	5
Alligator weed	<i>Alternanthera philoxeroides</i>	3
Anchored water hyacinth	<i>Eichhornia azurea</i>	1
Annual ragweed	<i>Ambrosia artemisiifolia</i>	5
Arrowhead	<i>Sagittaria calycina</i> variety <i>calycina</i> (syn. <i>Sagittaria montevidensis</i> subspecies <i>calycina</i>)	4
Artichoke thistle	<i>Cynara cardunculus</i>	5
Asparagus	<i>Asparagus</i> species except <i>A. aethiopicus</i> , <i>A. africanus</i> , <i>A. asparagoides</i> , <i>A. declinatus</i> , <i>A. falcatus</i> , <i>A. macowanii</i> var. <i>zuluensis</i> , <i>A. officinalis</i> , <i>A. plumosus</i> , <i>A. racemosus</i> and <i>A. virgatus</i>	4
Asparagus fern	<i>Asparagus virgatus</i> (syn. <i>Protasparagus virgatus</i>)	2
Athel tree / Athel pine	<i>Tamarix aphylla</i>	5
Bear-skin fescue	<i>Festuca gautieri</i>	5
Bitou bush	<i>Chrysanthemoides monilifera</i> subspecies <i>rotundata</i>	2
Black knapweed	<i>Centaurea xmoncktonii</i>	1
Black willow	<i>Salix nigra</i>	2
Blackberry	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> aggregate species except cultivars: <i>Black satin</i> ; <i>Chehalem</i> ; <i>Chester Thornless</i> ; <i>Dirksen Thornless</i> ; <i>Loch Ness</i> ; <i>Murrindindi</i> ; <i>Silvan</i> ; <i>Smoothstem</i> ; <i>Thornfree</i>	4
Boneseed	<i>Chrysanthemoides monilifera</i> subspecies <i>monilifera</i>	1
Bridal creeper	<i>Asparagus asparagoides</i> (syn. <i>Myrsiphyllum asparagoides</i> , <i>Asparagus medeoloides</i>)	4
Bridal veil creeper	<i>Asparagus declinatus</i> (syn. <i>Asparagus crispus</i> , <i>Myrsiphyllum declinatum</i>)	1
Broad-leaf pepper tree	<i>Schinus terebinthifolius</i>	2
Broomrapes	<i>Orobanche</i> species except the native <i>O. cernua</i> variety <i>australiana</i> and <i>O. minor</i>	1
Burr ragweed	<i>Ambrosia confertiflora</i>	5
Cabomba	All <i>Cabomba</i> species except <i>C. furcata</i>	5
Cat's claw creeper	<i>Dolichandra unguis-cati</i> (syn. <i>Macfadyena unguis-cati</i>)	4
Cayenne snakeweed	<i>Stachytarpheta cayennensis</i>	5
Chilean needle grass	<i>Nassella neesiana</i>	4
Chinese celtis	<i>Celtis sinensis</i>	4
Chinese violet	<i>Asystasia gangetica</i> subspecies <i>micrantha</i>	1
Climbing asparagus fern	<i>Asparagus africanus</i> (syn. <i>Protasparagus africanus</i>)	2



Mexican Feather Grass



Horsetail



Black knapweed

Common Name	Botanical Name	Class
Climbing asparagus fern	<i>Asparagus plumosus</i> (syn. <i>Protasparagus plumosus</i>)	4
Clockweed	<i>Oenothera curtiflora</i>	5
Coolatai grass	<i>Hyparrhenia hirta</i>	3
Corn sowthistle	<i>Sonchus arvensis</i>	5
Dodder	All <i>Cuscuta</i> species except the native species <i>C. australis</i> , <i>C. tasmanica</i> and <i>C. victoriana</i>	5
Espartillo	<i>Amelichloa brachychaeta</i> ; <i>A. caudata</i>	5
Eurasian water milfoil	<i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>	1
Fine-bristled burr grass	<i>Cenchrus brownii</i>	5
Fireweed	<i>Senecio madagascariensis</i>	4
Flax-leaf broom	<i>Genista linifolia</i>	4
Fountain grass	<i>Cenchrus setaceus</i>	5
Frogbit / Spongeplant	<i>Limnobium laevigatum</i> and <i>L. spongia</i>	1
Gallon's curse	<i>Cenchrus biflorus</i>	5
Gamba grass	<i>Andropogon gayanus</i>	5
Giant Parramatta grass	<i>Sporobolus fertilis</i> (syn. <i>Sporobolus indicus</i> variety <i>major</i>)	3
Giant reed / Elephant grass	<i>Arundo donax</i>	4
Glaucous star thistle	<i>Carthamus glaucus</i>	5
Golden dodder	<i>Cuscuta campestris</i>	4
Golden thistle	<i>Scolymus hispanicus</i>	5
Gorse	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	3
Green cestrum	<i>Cestrum parqui</i>	3
Grey willow	<i>Salix cinerea</i>	2



Hygrophila



Green Cestrum



Water Hyacinth

Ground asparagus	<i>Asparagus aethiopicus</i> (syn. <i>Protasparagus aethiopicus</i>)	4
Groundsel bush	<i>Baccharis halimifolia</i>	3
Harrisia cactus	<i>Harrisia</i> species	4
Hawkweed	<i>Hieracium</i> species	1
Heteranthera / Kidneyleaf mud plantain	<i>Heteranthera reniformis</i>	1
Honey locust	<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	4
Horsetail	<i>Equisetum</i> species	1
Hydrocotyl / Water pennywort	<i>Hydrocotyle ranunculoides</i>	1
Hygrophila	<i>Hygrophila costata</i>	2
Hymenachne	<i>Hymenachne amplexicaulis</i> and hybrids	1
Karoo thorn	<i>Vachellia karroo</i> (syn. <i>Acacia karroo</i>)	1
Kochia	<i>Bassia scoparia</i> (syn. <i>Kochia scoparia</i>) except <i>B. scoparia</i> subspecies <i>trichophylla</i>	1
Koster's curse / Clidemia	<i>Clidemia hirta</i>	1
Kudzu	<i>Pueraria lobata</i>	2
Lagarosiphon	<i>Lagarosiphon major</i>	1
Lantana	<i>Lantana</i> species	4
Leafy elodea / Dense waterweed / Egeria	<i>Egeria densa</i> (syn. <i>Elodea densa</i>)	4
Lippia	<i>Phyla canescens</i>	4
Long-leaf willow primrose	<i>Ludwigia longifolia</i>	3

Common Name	Botanical Name	Class
Ludwigia	<i>Ludwigia peruviana</i>	3
Mexican feather grass	<i>Nassella tenuissima</i> (syn. <i>Stipa tenuissima</i>)	1
Mexican poppy	<i>Argemone mexicana</i>	5
Miconia	<i>Miconia</i> species	1
Mikania vine	<i>Mikania micrantha</i>	1
Mimosa	<i>Mimosa pigra</i>	1
Ming (Pom pom/Zig zag) asparagus fern	<i>Asparagus macowanii</i> var. <i>zuluensis</i> (syn. <i>A. retrofractus</i>)	2
Montpellier broom / Cape broom	<i>Genista monspessulana</i>	3
Mossman River grass	<i>Cenchrus echinatus</i>	5
Mother-of-millions	<i>Bryophyllum daigremontianum</i>	3
Pampas grass	<i>Cortaderia</i> species	3
Paper mulberry	<i>Broussonetia papyrifera</i>	2
Parthenium weed	<i>Parthenium hysterophorus</i>	1
Paterson's curse, Vipers bugloss, Italian bugloss	<i>Echium plantagineum</i> , <i>E. vulgare</i> and <i>E. italicum</i>	4
Pond apple	<i>Annona glabra</i>	1
Prickly acacia	<i>Vachellia nilotica</i> (syn. <i>Acacia nilotica</i>)	1
Prickly pear	<i>Cylindropuntia</i> species	4
Prickly pear	<i>Opuntia</i> species except <i>O. ficus-indica</i>	4
Privet (Broad-leaf)	<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	4
Privet (Narrow-leaf / Chinese)	<i>Ligustrum sinense</i>	4
Red rice	<i>Oryza rufipogon</i>	5
Rhizomatous bamboo	<i>Phyllostachys</i> species	4
Rhus tree	<i>Toxicodendron succedaneum</i> (syn. <i>Toxicodendron succedanea</i> , <i>Rhus succedanea</i>)	4
Rubbervine	<i>Cryptostegia grandiflora</i>	1
Sagittaria	<i>Sagittaria platyphylla</i> (syn. <i>Sagittaria graminea</i> variety <i>platyphylla</i>)	4
Salvinia	<i>Salvinia molesta</i>	3
Scotch broom / English broom	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i> subspecies <i>scoparius</i>	4



African Boxthorn



Rhus Tree



Johnson Grass

Common Name	Botanical Name	Class
Senegal tea plant	<i>Gymnocoronis spilanthoides</i>	1
Serrated tussock	<i>Nassella trichotoma</i>	3
Siam weed	<i>Chromolaena odorata</i>	1
Sicklethorn	<i>Asparagus falcatus</i>	2
Silver-leaf nightshade	<i>Solanum elaeagnifolium</i>	4
Smooth-stemmed turnip	<i>Brassica barrelieri</i> subspecies <i>oxyrrhina</i>	5
Soldier thistle	<i>Picnomon acarna</i>	5
Spotted knapweed	<i>Centaurea stoebe</i> subspecies <i>australis</i> (syn. <i>Centaurea maculosa</i>)	1
St. John's wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	4
Texas blueweed	<i>Helianthus ciliaris</i>	5
Tussock paspalum	<i>Paspalum quadrifarium</i>	4
Water caltrop	<i>Trapa</i> species	1
Water hyacinth	<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i>	3
Water lettuce	<i>Pistia stratiotes</i>	1
Water soldier	<i>Stratiotes aloides</i>	1
Willows	<i>Salix</i> species except <i>S. babylonica</i> , <i>S. xreichardtii</i> , <i>S. xcalodendron</i> , <i>S. cinerea</i> and <i>S. nigra</i>	4
Witchweed	<i>Striga</i> species except the native <i>Striga parviflora</i>	1
Yellow bells	<i>Tecoma stans</i>	3
Yellow burrhead	<i>Limnocharis flava</i>	1
Yellow nutgrass	<i>Cyperus esculentus</i>	5



Black Willow



Sagittaria



Mexican Poppy

Administration

Condition of Public Works

Council operates as a special (single) purpose authority which is to control declared noxious weeds on the four constituent Councils roads and reserves. Council does not own public facilities as referred to in Section 428(2)(d) of the Local Government Act, 1993.

The only non-current assets held by Council are listed below:

A. Freehold Land

Re-valued August, 2014.

B. Works Depot/Administration Office

Re-valued August, 2014.

Building in satisfactory condition.

C. Vehicles & Other Plant and Equipment

(i) Vehicles are only kept generally for 3 years or 60,000 km, whichever occurs first.

All vehicles are in first class condition.

(ii) Other plant and equipment are all in good condition.

D. Furniture and Fittings

Most is in a good condition.

Legal Proceedings

No legal proceedings were taken during the year for offences involving the failure to control declared noxious weeds.

There were no outstanding legal matters carried forward.

Elected Members

Council has adopted a policy, "Payment of Expenses and the Provision of Facilities to Members". The objective of this policy is to reimburse the chairperson and members for expenses reasonably incurred in performing their duties and to provide them with a standard and range of facilities in discharging the functions of civic office.

The following allowances, fees and expenses have been provided to Members or incurred as a result of their activities during 2013/2014:

Chairperson's Allowance	\$9,779
Members' Fees	\$42,886
Travelling Expenses	\$1,060
Conference & Delegates Expenses	\$800
Local Government Association Subscriptions	\$1,335
Insurance	\$5,581
Miscellaneous Council Expenses	\$2,000

Limited use of facilities is available in accordance with Council's policy and no other expenses were incurred.

Attendance at Meetings by Board Members 2014/15 (Maximum 6)

Clr. Bob Porter	6
Clr. Walter Smith	6
Clr. Marcus Cornish	5
Clr. Jess Diaz (Chair)	5
Clr. Andrew Jefferies	4
Clr. Warwick Mackay OAM	4
Clr. Kevin Cramer OAM	6
Clr. Mark Taylor (Deputy)	5

Senior Staff Remuneration

The total remuneration provided during the year, comprising the salary and employer's contribution to superannuation, including payments of accumulated benefits was \$122K.

The General Manager is the only Senior Staff member. He commenced his duties on 1 November 2010.

Major Contracts Awarded

No major contracts were awarded during the year.

Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Program

Council is a special (single) purpose authority charged with responsibilities for Declared Noxious Weeds. Thus, bush fire activities are not within Council's functions.

Private Works

Council provided a contract spraying and aquatic weed harvesting service at a charge of \$28,000. Most of the work carried out during the year was undertaken on behalf of Constituent Councils, State Government Agencies or Departments, regular private property weed control activities is taking place, however these are generally of low economic value. Quite a proportion of these works arise from requests from landholders whom have been visited by council inspectors.

Contributions/Donations

There were no contributions or donations under Section 356 of the Local Government Act.

Human Resources Activities

Most staff undertook a number of training courses to assist them in their career development, and necessary, to meet appropriate certification and license requirements. Please also refer to Noxious Weeds Control Operations Report and Performance Management Report for further Human Resources Activities.

Activities to Implement EEO Management Plan

An Equal Opportunity Management Policy and strategies were adopted in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993. All Council articles and policies adhere to EEO policies. A harassment policy and anti-bullying policy has been adopted and a contact officer has been appointed as the first point of contact. EEO and anti-discrimination publications and articles concerning sexual harassment are all distributed to staff when received.

Number of Staff

Full-time	6
Trainee	5
Part Time	3
Casual	0
TOTAL EFT (Equivalent Full Time)	13.6

External Bodies Exercising Council Functions

There were no external bodies to which Council delegated any of its functions.

Controlling Interest in Companies

Council did not hold a controlling interest in any companies either singularly or jointly with other Councils.

Partnerships, Co-operatives and Joint Ventures

Council was not a party to any partnerships, co-operatives or joint ventures.

Rates and Charges Written Off

Council is not a rating authority and therefore rates and extra charges are not written off. No debts were written off.

Overseas Visits Funded by Council

There were no overseas visits undertaken during the year by Council Members or staff.

Activities for Children

Council is a single purpose authority charged with the administration of declared noxious weeds. Thus activities for children are not within Council's functions.

Access and Equity Service to All

Council advertised services and access to services, as required by the Local Government Act. However, for this "single purpose" County Council, only minimal advertising was necessary.

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act) – Statistical Report

The statistics for requests for information via GIPA Act were as follows:

	2013/2014
Public Info Requests	Nil
Public Info Results	Nil

There are no circumstances in which the Ombudsman has made enquiries of Council.

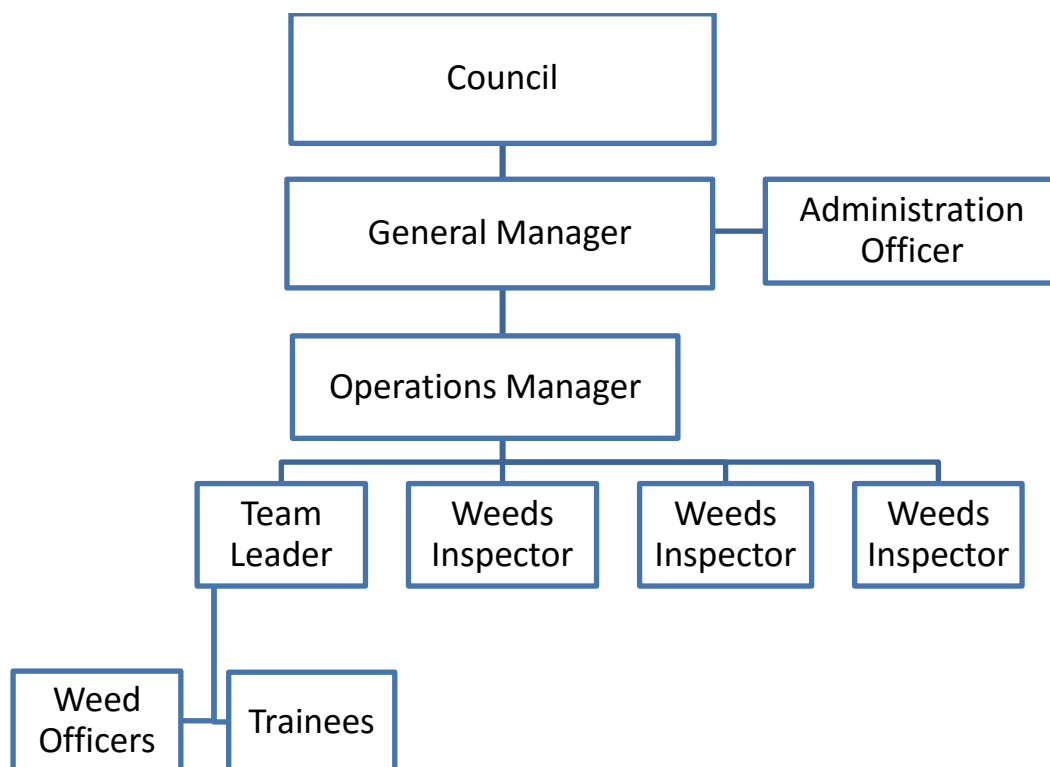
Council has published its "Publication Guide" on the website under the guidelines of the Act. This guide navigates public access to Council information.

National Competition Policy

Under National Competition Policy Council is to report as follows:

- A complaints handling system for competitive neutrality complaints (from 1/7/1997) has been established.
- No complaints were received during the year.
- Private Works (Weed Control) has been identified as a Category 2 business undertaking (under 2m turnover).
- The “Corporatised Model” for pricing and costing purposes has been adopted with the inclusion of a profit margin and taxation equivalent regime payments. As Council has no debt, a debt guarantee fee is not applicable nor a rate of return calculation as the activity has no assets.

HRCC Organisational Structure



Planning and Policy Documents

Council participates in the discharge of the following legislation, policy and plans:

State Legislation

Local Government Act 1993 (and Regulations) (NSW)
Noxious Weeds Act 1993 (NSW)
Workplace Health and Safety Act 2012 (NSW)
Pesticides Act 1999 (NSW)
Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)

State Weeds Strategies

NSW Invasive Species Plan 2008-2015

Council Policies

Code of Conduct
Code of Meeting Practice
Complaints Policy
Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities to Council Members
Procurement Policy
Protected Disclosures Act 1994 – Internal Reporting
Records Management
Anti-Bullying Policy
Vehicle Leaseback Management Policy
Investment Policy

Local Procedures and Plans

Financial Reports; Auditor's Reports and Annual Reports to the Community
Delegation of Authority – via Council Minutes.
10 Year Business Activity Statement 2012-2022 (includes Resourcing Strategy)
4 Year Delivery Plan 2012-2016
Operational Plan 2013/14
Pesticide Use Notification Plan 2013
Minutes of Council and Committee Meetings
Noxious Weeds Inspectors – Authority and Powers of Entry
Pecuniary Interest Disclosures – Members, General Manager, Operations Manager, Weeds Inspectors
Register of Investments
Register of Meetings Closed to the Public
Summary and Statement of Affairs
Process for Inspection of Private Properties
MOU – Sydney Regional Weeds Committee x 4
MOU – Weeds Action Program Project Partners x 19
Administration Procedures for WAP Lead Agency Role

Employee Management

Personal Files
E. E. O
O. H & S
Special Leave for Emergencies and Fire Fighting
Staff Recruitment & Procedures
Anti-Bullying Policy

Council Information

Role of Council Members.

Members' duties include attending Council and Committee meetings, and organised site inspections as required. They are responsible for making major decisions and deciding on policies which set the direction Council will take in its operations, services and activities. They are not paid a salary but receive a fee. Most Councillors have other full or part-time jobs.

Your Representatives:

The Hills Shire Council			
	<p>Andrew Jefferies PO Box 75 CASTLE HILL NSW 2154 Private: Mobile: 0427 928 111 Fax:</p>		<p>Mark Taylor PO Box 75 Castle Hill NSW 2154 Private: Mobile: 0419 618 790 Fax:</p>
Blacktown City Council			
	<p>Jess Diaz 97 Main Street Blacktown NSW 2148 Private: Mobile: 0428 280 931 Fax: (02) 9831 3982</p>		<p>Walter Smith 27-29 Brighton Street Riverstone NSW 2765 Private: Mobile: 0417 202 571 Fax:</p>
Hawkesbury City Council			
	<p>Warwick Mackay 269 Grono Farm Road Wilberforce NSW 2756 Private: (02) 4579 9036 Mobile: Fax: (02) 4579 9042</p>		<p>Bob Porter 279 Grono Farm Road Wilberforce NSW 2756 Private: (02) 4579 9547 Mobile: 0408 437 510 Fax: (02) 4579 8001</p>
Penrith City Council			
	<p>Marcus Cornish 7 Darwin Drive Lapstone NSW 2773 Private: Mobile: 0481 033 419 Fax:</p>		<p>Kevin Cameri OAM 344 Second Ave Llandilo NSW 2747 Ph: (02)4732 8104 Mob: Fax: (02)47775435</p>

Each of the four constituent Councils elect two delegates from amongst their Councillors to comprise the governing body of the Hawkesbury River County Council. If the number of Councillors seeking election is no more than the required two delegates, then membership of the County Council is by appointment of the constituent Council.

These elections or appointments take place after the constituent Councils quadrennial (four yearly) elections are finalised or, to fill a casual vacancy.

The resultant eight, in the case of this County Council, comprise the governing body. For County Councils these delegates are referred to as "Members". The Chairperson is elected or, if unopposed appointed, in October each year.

The County Council meets regularly on a two monthly basis and at other times when required.



Kidney Leaf Mud Plantain – an isolated Class 1 Weed being controlled by HRCC

Finance, Accounting and Administration

Functions/Activity – Cost Report

Council's audited financial results are presented in the form of General Purpose Financial Statements. This same financial information is used in compiling this report which is based on the following functions/activities:

(i) Health – Noxious Weeds

Administration, inspections and weed control activities associated with noxious weeds.

(ii) Economic Affairs

Private Works (Category 2 Business Activity) related to weed control on private lands and training services for O.H & S.

(iii) Governance

Costs relating to the Council's role as a component of democratic government, including members' fees and expenses, subscriptions to local authority associations, meetings of council and policymaking committees, reporting, area representation and public disclosure and compliance, together with related administration costs.

(iv) Administration

Costs not otherwise attributed to other functions.

A copy of Council's Audited HRCC Financial Statement 2014/15 is contained as a separate Appendix to this Report.