



# Hunter Region Landcare Network & Hunter Local Land Services

## **PARTNERSHIP - MEMORANDUM of UNDERSTANDING**

This version (dated 5<sup>th</sup> Novemebr, 2019) has been developed on the model of the 2015 Landcare NSW / Local Land Services Memorandum of Understanding published by Local Land Services

Hunter Region Landcare Network and Hunter Local Land Services have jointly contributed to the development of this document.



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## 1 Context

Thirty years ago, the then Australian Government recognised that effective land rehabilitation and management required broader community engagement, supported by government to work together on addressing the nation's land degradation problems. As a result Landcare was born, along with government structures that engaged, supported and maximised the efforts of Landcarers.

There were a number of Landcare groups in the Hunter Region that took up the challenge of land rehabilitation in this state, such that some of the oldest Landcare groups are in this region. The formation of the Hunter Region Landcare Network(HRLN) in 1996 came from an expression of concern that Landcare groups, formed in the Hunter Valley since 1989, were not being heard or not receiving support for their activities from those bodies which acted as sources of funding, knowledge, skills instruction or other support. Since that time, HRLN has acted as a voice for issues and problems that groups have encountered and as a conduit for funding on-ground works required to enable positive outcomes for the environment.

A well-resourced, engaged Landcarer can make a considerable contribution to natural resource management on public and private land, across a wide range of land-uses. A group of Landcarers working together, to address local issues, is even better. A network of Landcare groups, that provide structures to support Landcarers is capable of working together to address catchment, district, regional and state level issues.

Commencing operations in 2014, Hunter Local Land Services was formed as part of a NSW Government reform to provide a regionally based structure that supports natural resource management, agricultural advisory services, biosecurity and emergency management at the local level.

Hunter Local Land Services(HLLS) supports structures and government funded programs to facilitate, and resource, co-designed projects that are guided by science and make the best possible use of the resources available, both financial and human. Together they record and celebrate strategic, best practice Landcare actions that have been identified in consultation with their community. A true collaboration will deliver on the NSW Government State Plan, organisational Strategic Plans and Catchment Action Plan outcomes.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been developed to recognise the partnership between HRLN and HLLS. Both organisations are reliant upon external resourcing to enable their operations. The design and delivery mechanisms of State and Federal programs impact on the operational capacity of both organisations, at the state and regional scale.

This MoU documents the foundation for a relationship between Hunter Region Landcare Network and Hunter Local Land Services at a sub-regional level, and provides guidance for the building of similar effective relationships from the model at a state level.

This MoU has been developed in the context of previous activities at the State and Federal Level. A listing of documents used to inform the process is included in the Appendix A.

## 2 Partnering organisations

This MoU is between:

**Hunter Region Landcare Network (HRLN)**

and

**Hunter Local Land Services (HLLS)**

## 3 Background

Local Land Services (LLS) and Landcare NSW signed an MOU in 2015 for the purpose of establishing a foundation for collaboration between the two parties. The objectives for this MOU were to provide guidance and a framework to build capacity of both parties, to provide consistency of underlying principles across LLS regions,



while allowing flexibility on a region by region basis to implement relevant actions, and to establish methods to harness skills, knowledge and resources of both parties to meet common goals, objectives and vision.

"Landcare NSW and Local Land Services as a government and community partnership are stronger together in achieving outcomes for communities and landscapes"

Through the state level partnership, LLS and Landcare NSW have worked together to achieve investment at a state level for a range of initiatives, including the NSW Landcare Coordinator Initiative and NSW Landcare Program 2019-23. This has enabled multiple Landcare networks state-wide to employ key staff (over 70 state-wide) to support Landcare engagement and services in local areas.

Hunter Local Land Services, working within the state partnership MOU, are growing the partnership with Hunter Region Landcare Network and have been able to provide services to increase capacity for Landcare Coordinators to deliver initiatives within their region with support from the HLLS Landcare Partnerships program between HLLS and Landcare networks, and HLLS staff support and other program opportunities (such as HLLS Community Small Grants program) to deliver a range of localised activities and capacity building opportunities.

### **Hunter Region Landcare Network**

The Hunter Region Landcare Network reflects a community-based approach to managing and restoring Australia's natural environment, improving the sustainability of agricultural activities, and building the resilience of communities, and is active across the lower, central and upper Hunter (Hunter sub-region). HRLN works with any community based group operating in the sphere of sustainable agriculture and natural resource management in NSW Hunter sub-region and includes, but is not limited to, groups that describe themselves as Landcare, Bushcare, Coastcare, Dunecare, Friends of groups and Producer groups. There are currently around 300 such groups in the Hunter Region Landcare area.

Established in 1996, HRLN is the voice of grassroots Landcare in the Hunter region and is incorporated under the *NSW Associations Act 2009*. It exists to improve the resourcing of, and support for, community led action to improve natural resource management, promote sustainable agricultural practices, and increase community resilience. HRLN is a participating member of Landcare NSW which is governed by a 22-member Council comprised of endorsed representatives from all regions of NSW and four members co-opted for their specific skills. A small executive committee oversees the operations of the organisation.

### **Hunter Local Land Services**

Hunter Local Land Services brings together agricultural production advice and extension, biosecurity, natural resource management and emergency management into a single State government organisation. Hunter Local Land Services was established in 2013 under the *Local Land Services Act 2013* (NSW). It is one of 11 Local Land Services regions governed by 11 local Boards across NSW.

HLLS is accountable for delivering services that add value to local industries, enhance natural resources, protect industries from pests and disease and help communities respond to emergencies such as flood, fire and drought. Due to the local nature of each Local Land Service organisation, service delivery is able to be planned and prioritised on a regional basis, reflecting regional priorities that deliver on the State goals and objectives. Local Boards operate within regional LLS's and work closely with landholders, communities and industry.

The Hunter Local Land Services Board provides strategic direction and oversight to strategic matters. The Hunter LLS General Manager oversees regional delivery through the Healthy Landscapes, Agricultural Production and Protection, and Business Operations teams.

There are over 60 full and part time staff working within HLLS, within the Hunter sub-region (Upper and Lower Hunter), and MidCoast region. HLLS staff work to support ratepayers both agricultural and other

land managers, this includes support to landcare groups (NRM, biosecurity, agriculture, production, pest and weeds and other community based groups involved in land management).

## 4 Partnership statement

Hunter Region Landcare Network and Hunter Local Land Services as a government and community partnership are stronger together in achieving outcomes for communities and landscapes.

## 5 Governance

It is recognised that the relationship between Hunter Region Landcare Network and Hunter Local Land Services is vital to deliver on the partnership statement.

The HRLN Chair(or nominated representative) and nominated representative of HLLS (endorsed by the HLLS Chair) will act to have joint responsibility and accountability to manage the partnership and relationships.

A Working Group comprising members from both organisations will meet regularly (at most quarterly, at minimum 6 monthly) to review and maintain the MoU. The Working Group will maintain a record of each meeting, and include the following agenda items as part of the partnership:

1. Communications and information sharing (local issues and matters arising)
2. Partnership activities (existing and new)
3. Challenges, problem solving and planning
4. Resourcing arrangements(including existing financial arrangements, partner projects/contractual arrangements or other interdependent arrangements)
5. Review of the relationship as it relates to the MoU
6. Monitor progress against the outcomes for the partnership (see 7 Partnership Foundations)
7. Support development of an annual report on progress against the outcomes of the partnership

Working Group members will be formed based on agreement between HRLN and HLLS representatives, and may include Chair, Advisors, Landcare Coordinators, Regional Coordinators from the HRLN, and a HLLS Team Leader (or equivalent), Community Engagement Officers, Regional Agricultural Landcare Facilitator or other representatives as nominated and endorsed by each party.

## 6 Goals and objectives

The goal of this MoU is to establish a foundation for collaboration between HRLN and Hunter Local Land Services on a broad range of natural resource management and farm productivity issues, and aspects of biosecurity and emergency management.

The objectives of this MoU are:

- to provide a framework to ensure a productive partnership that builds the capacity of both HRLN and Hunter Local Land Services.
- to provide consistency of underlying principles across Hunter Local Land Services to implement actions in a way that respects the unique attributes of the region and its peoples, and incorporates the desires of the communities within those regions; and
- to establish methods consistent with this MoU to harness the skills, knowledge and resources of both HRLN and Hunter Local Land Services to meet common goals, objectives and vision.



## 7 Partnership foundations

This MoU articulates the intent of HRLN and Hunter Local Land Services to work collaboratively while building on existing relationships, principles and co-contributions. The partnership between HRLN and Hunter Local Land Services allows both organisations to:

Key outcomes of the partnership will be to:

1. Increase engagement with local community through the partnership
2. Increase communications of each others roles, initiatives and services
3. Develop opportunities for partnership activities that benefit both organisations
4. Maintain and grow the landcare movement within the Hunter

Annually the partners will report on these outcomes to capture and communicate the benefits or achievements gained through the MoU and partnership arrangements.

### 7.1 Common purpose

HRLN and Hunter Local Land Services share a common purpose in addressing significant challenges faced by land managers and communities in NSW across natural resource management, biosecurity, farm productivity and community and social viability.

### 7.2 Complementary skills and resources

HRLN and Hunter Local Land Services recognise and acknowledge that they are working towards a common objective and often their work is interdependent. Each party can bring complementary strengths to this relationship to enable effective collaboration. For this purpose, the particular relevant strengths of each party are:

#### 7.2.1 Hunter Region Landcare Network

- Developing local ownership of issues, solutions and landscape changes;
- Broad recognition and good reputation in the community;
- Informal structures that enable flexibility and the capacity to quickly respond and adapt to emerging issues and changed circumstances;
- Good local knowledge that supports local innovation and solutions;
- Ability to leverage financial and in-kind resources; and
- Access to skills within and from the community, community groups and members.

#### 7.2.2 Hunter Local Land Services

- Regional perspectives of landscapes and communities;
- Engaging communities and other stakeholders in developing and implementing plans for landscape enhancement;
- Institutional and organisational capacity;
- Enablers of practice change;
- Technical skills and expertise in natural resource management, catchment management, agricultural production, biosecurity and emergency management;
- Ability to lever resourcing and collaborative programs at a regional or state level with a range of stakeholders/partners



The partnership between HRLN and Hunter Local Land Services brings together the resources and complementary skills and values of the respective organisations to strengthen delivery and maximise delivery capability.

### **7.3 Shared values**

It is recognised that collaborations between Landcare and Local Land Services will vary across the region, and operate at a range of scales. Both parties aspire to a relationship based on trust, respect, connection and understanding. To be successful this collaboration is founded on agreed values, intentions, practices and working together towards a common purpose.

HRLN and Hunter Local Land Services aspire to be:

- Conscious of regional diversity;
- Simple, local and long term
- Leaders;
- Complementary;
- Innovative;
- Adaptive;
- Supportive; and
- Resilient.

### **7.4 Principles**

HRLN and Hunter Local Land Services recognise that the success of this partnership will be enabled by:

- Shared and agreed common goals;
- Appropriate and strategic collaboration;
- Aligning funding and other resources for shared purposes;
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities;
- Effective communication between parties;
- Strong capacity and leadership within community groups;
- Sharing knowledge in a framework of trust;
- Measuring, acknowledging, promoting and celebrating achievements;
- Investing time in relationships;
- Transparent decision making;
- Practical support being provided for leaders, drivers and staff;
- Diverse and resilient groups and networks; and
- Strong and effective, accountability and leadership.

## 8 Delivery

This partnership is founded and builds upon the successes achieved to date and the strengths of the existing relationship between HRLN and Hunter Local Land Services (and its preceding organisations). This MoU sets the partnership foundation for strong leadership at the regional level which will inform, guide and support regional relationships and natural resource management activities.

The objectives of this partnership will be delivered through:

- Open, regular and effective communication processes between the partners including:
  - Dialogue between HRLN Committee and staff and the Hunter Local Land Services staff and management;
  - Collaborative networking opportunities at the sub-regional level; and
  - Clear regional and local communication pathways.
- Development, alignment and adaptive improvement of strategic planning processes through collaboration and sharing of information and knowledge;
- Development, refinement and implementation of innovative community capacity building strategies through collaborative and open processes;
- Identification and securing of investment and resources using the strength of the partnership to leverage greater outcomes;
- Establishment of a collaborative partnership approach to implementation through support of regional delivery processes which capitalise upon the strengths of the respective partners;
- Active and collaborative promotion of the capability provided by the partnership to Government, investors and key stakeholders;
- Provision of mutual support for each other as genuine and respected partners;
- Active support for the regions to develop effective monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement mechanisms to accurately report on resource condition including community capacity change; and
- Adaptive management which will monitor, review and evaluate the success of the partnership to guide adaptive improvement.

The mechanisms listed above provide leadership, guidance and support to inform the development of regional relationships.

## 9 Relationship review

HRLN and Hunter Local Land Services acknowledge the importance in ensuring this MoU remains relevant to the needs of a collaborative working relationship at the sub-regional and local scale. As such, they will consult on an ongoing basis on possible variations of the MoU with the aim of making arrangements for its continuing and effective implementation. The primary purpose of this relationship review is to ensure this MoU is used at all scales to frame the partnership and enact collaboration.

This MoU will also be supported by a monitoring plan including key performance indicators that can be modified over time to reflect both the needs of the parties and the requirements of the current programs that support both HRLN and Hunter Local Land Services.

The nominated HRLN representative and HLLS representative will jointly review this MoU every two years from signing (i.e. 2021, 2023, 2025 etc) or within another period as mutually agreed, against mutual partnership foundations.

## **10 Partnership benefits**

Through adoption and delivery of the principles and delivery components espoused in this MoU, the mutual benefits will need to be tangible for the partnership to succeed. This partnership is anticipated to provide a range of benefits, as outlined below, to the partner organisations and the broader community:

### **10.1 Benefits for the partner organisations include:**

- Skills and knowledge of the respective organisations harnessed for better outcomes;
- Coordinated, innovative and supported approach to planning and delivery at the relevant scales;
- Stronger relationships between Landcare groups and members and Local Land Services;
- Mutual support and acknowledgement;
- Reduced potential for conflict resulting from collaborative, adaptive, innovative and outcome focused relationships;
- Symbiotic outcomes achieved across program design, MERI, etc.;
- Greater volunteer support and increased on ground outcomes; and
- Effective and efficient delivery of regional plans and achievement of organisational strategies.

### **10.2 Benefits to the broader community:**

- Greater public value from investment of public funds;
- Actively engaged, supported, empowered and resilient communities;
- Greater awareness of support available and appreciation of the organisations roles and functions;
- Enabled local communities that are aware, engaged, active, supported, skilled and resourced;
- Simple and flexible processes to support landholder and community engagement; and
- Sustainable, productive agricultural industries and improved natural resource condition.

## **11 Communication and media**

HRLN and Hunter Local Land Services agree to inform each other with respect to any communication with the media or third parties, and any public communications, that involve issues of mutual interest or issues which concern the other party. Where possible, where a matter involves issues of mutual interest, HRLN and Hunter Local Land Services will work together to develop a joint and consistent approach to the communications strategy.

Both parties will actively cross promote key news and information relevant to the Landcare community, and where possible co- brand and support development of communication products through a joint approach (as relevant).



A shared message for communications around the MoU the following partnership text can be applied:

*The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU 2019) between Hunter Region Landcare Network and Hunter Local Land Services reflects the shared vision at a state MoU level that "Landcare NSW and Local Land Services as a government and community partnership are stronger together in achieving outcomes for communities and landscapes".*

*Both Hunter Region Landcare Network and Hunter Local Land Services are working together to deliver this shared vision for communities of the Lower Hunter, Upper Hunter, Port Stephens and Lake Macquarie areas of the HLLS region.*

Where this shared message needs to be shortened, the shorter partnership statement is able to be used:

*Hunter Region Landcare Network and Hunter Local Land Services as a government and community partnership are stronger together in achieving outcomes for communities and landscapes.*

Both parties agree to allow public access to this MoU agreement (i.e published on respective web pages).

## **12 Commencement, duration and termination**

This MoU commences on the date it is signed by all the parties, and remains in force until it is terminated in accordance with the paragraph below.

### **Conflict Resolution and Termination**

- a) Where an issue cannot be resolved, both parties agree to bring in a third party to facilitate resolution of that issue, both parties will contribute shared cost of contracting a third party, unless otherwise agreed.
- b) In the instance, the issue or relationship cannot be resolved/maintained, the MoU may be terminated at any time by either party; however termination requires at least 3 months' written notice of an intention to terminate or such other notice as agreed.
- c) Any termination may only be effected by the Chair of HRLN and the HLLS Chair, on advice by the HLLS nominated representative.

## **13 Status of MoU**

This MoU is administrative in nature and is not intended, in whole or in part, to create, maintain or govern legal relations or obligations between the parties. Any obligations arising under legislation for each organisation are not affected by this MoU.

Nothing in this MoU or activities carried out pursuant to it give rise to or create a legal partnership or relationship of principal and agent between HRLN and Hunter Local Land Services.

This MoU does not create an exclusive relationship between HRLN and Hunter Local Land Services. Any existing agreements between the parties and other entities are not affected by this MoU, and each party may engage with any other individuals or community groups to form relationships or partnerships with respect to the same or similar subject matter in this MoU.

## 14 Signatories

Each party signs this MoU to acknowledge that it will use its best efforts to work collaboratively with the other party to reach the objectives stated in this MoU.

Hunter Region Landcare Network (HRLN)	Hunter Local Land Services (HLLS)
Name: Mr. Leslie J Pearson	Name: Lindy Hyam
Title: Chair, HRLN	Title: Chair, HLLS
Signature: 	Signature: 
Date: 7-11-2019	Date: 7 November 2019

