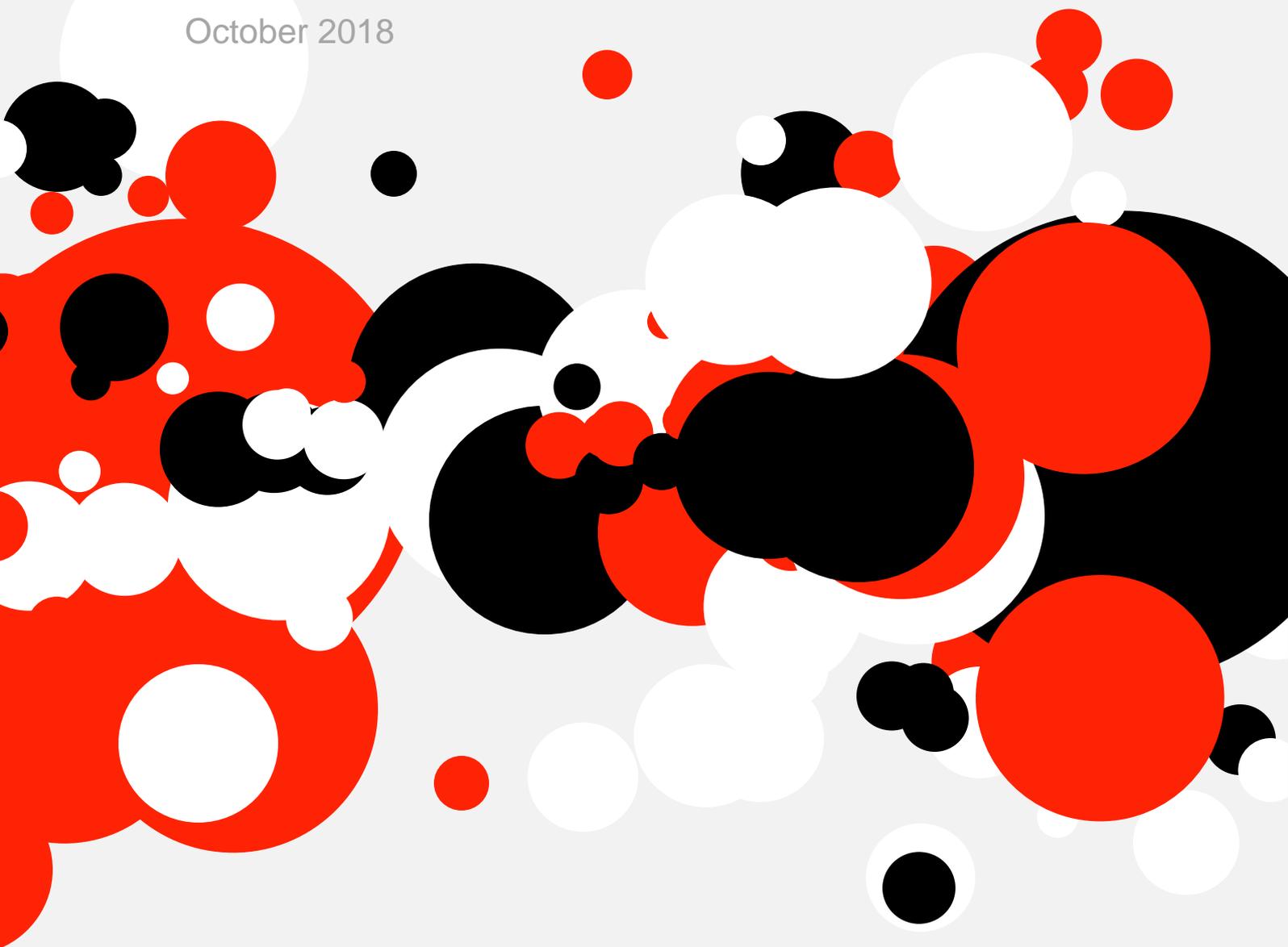


# Right to Farm Agricultural Land Use Survey

## Final Report

Prepared for the NSW Department of Primary Industries  
October 2018



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# Executive summary

## Background

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) launched the NSW *Right to Farm Policy* (*the policy*) in 2015. The policy is a comprehensive, state-wide approach that aims to address some of the land use conflicts arising from lawful agricultural practices that are part of running a productive farm.

The policy outlines a number of actions which includes establishing a baseline and ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The NSW Government is committed to working with local council and other stakeholders to identify and monitor complaints related to farming in relevant NSW Local Government Areas (LGAs).

Since 2016, the University of Technology Sydney and NSW DPI have established a series of Agricultural Land Use Surveys completed in three stages to investigate:

- the type and extent of agricultural land use conflict across NSW
- how councils manage this conflict, and
- how councils can be supported in conflict management.

A benchmarking survey and interviews with eight local councils were completed in 2016, followed by two further surveys in 2017 and 2018, and in depth interviews with eight local councils in 2017. This report is the final report in the series and draws conclusions about the research.

## Key Findings

The key findings from the research are outlined below with further details following:

- In each year of the survey 30-50 per cent of respondents reported that at least half of their agricultural land use complaints are about compliant agricultural activities.
- Complaints continue to be most commonly about intensive agricultural activities, most notably poultry farms, broad acre cropping, fruit or nut growing, livestock grazing, piggeries and vineyards
- Noise, odour, dust, spray drift and escaping livestock are the most common triggers for complaints.
- Respondents believe that the biggest factors driving conflict across 2016 to 2018 were a lack of understanding amongst new residents of the realities of living in an agricultural area and of agricultural industry operation and lack of communication within the community and between neighbours.
- One-third of respondents in 2016 and 2017 reported that land use conflict is affecting agriculture in their LGA. This increased to half in 2018.
- The most common approach local councils use to manage land use conflict is the planning system, primarily via the conditions in their local environmental plans (LEPs) and development control plans (DCPs) around permissible land uses and buffer zones.
- Around 30 per cent of respondents reported that their local council delivers community education and engagement to minimise conflict but few believe that their efforts have been effective. However, the majority of respondents indicated that increasing community

awareness of the realities of rural living, in particular new residents, would be effective to reduce land use conflict in their LGA:

- Most respondents are aware of the *Right to Farm Policy* (approximately 85%) but only half are aware of any of the actions within. Only nine per cent appear intimately familiar with the policy.
- Of those that have heard of the *Right to Farm Policy*, 29 per cent said that their local council has used it to inform decision making around agriculture in their LGA.

## Type and extent of complaints about agricultural practice

Across 2016 to 2018, 80 per cent of survey respondents across all years reported that their local council had received complaints about agricultural land use in the preceding 12 months. Half of these reported receiving on average 1-2 complaints per month. Overall eight per cent reported receiving on average at least five complaints per month, although this increased from four per cent in 2016 to 11 per cent in 2018. The most common time for complaints to be received continues to be summer (November to February).

The patterns of complaints are variable. In the majority of LGAs represented by survey respondents, complaints are concentrated around a single agribusiness (73%) and from a single (56%) or small number (17%) of complainants. In the other represented LGAs, complaints are more widely distributed.

Complaints regarding compliant agricultural practices make up a considerable proportion of complaints received by local councils. Almost all local councils reported receiving complaints about legally compliant activity. **In each year of the survey 30-50 per cent of respondents reported that at least half of their agricultural land use complaints are about compliant agricultural activities.** In all years, most respondents indicated that complaints about non-compliant agricultural activities make up the minority of the total agriculture-related complaints their local council receives.

Complaints continue to be most commonly about poultry farms and broad acre cropping. Livestock grazing, fruit and nut growing and piggeries are also common sources of complaints. Noise, odour, dust, spray drift and escaping livestock are the most common triggers for complaints.

Respondents were asked what factors they believe are driving agricultural land use conflict in their area. The biggest factors reported across 2016 to 2018 were:

- a lack of understanding amongst new residents of the realities of living in an agricultural area and of agricultural industry operation;
- lack of communication within the community and between neighbours;
- encroachment of non-agricultural uses into existing agricultural areas;
- close proximity of agricultural uses to non-agricultural properties; and
- the subdivision of agricultural properties.

Although half of local councils reported that complaints have been steady over the last five years, 18 respondents across 2016 to 2018 (20%) reported that complaints have increased over the last five years. Some local councils interviewed confirmed this or are expecting changes in the nature or volume of complaints. Local agriculture in some Local Government Areas (LGAs) is diversifying with new industries emerging, or in some cases rapidly expanding, bringing different triggers for complaints. Urban expansion, and in one LGA expansion of intensive small lot horticulture, is also bringing residents in closer proximity to agricultural activities increasing the risk of complaints. Seven local councils also reported that complaints have decreased over the last five years although the reasons were not explored.

## Impact of complaints on agricultural activity

While only one-third of respondents in both the 2016 and 2017 surveys reported that land use conflict is affecting local agriculture, this increased to 50 per cent in 2018. Furthermore, of the 18 local councils that completed the survey in both 2016 and 2018, 11 (61%) reported in 2018 that land use conflict is negatively impacting agriculture in their LGA compared to only three in 2016 (17%). This could suggest that the negative impacts of land use conflict are increasing, although it could be that local councils have increased awareness of existing impacts as a result of the *Right to Farm Policy* or this survey.

Three of the eight local councils interviewed in 2017 are preparing for agriculture to be impacted in the future by anticipated increases in complaints. Two are in growth corridors with the expectation that additional development controls and improved farm management practices will be required to minimise conflict as buffer zones reduce. There are concerns that these will make smaller agricultural operations unviable or encourage large agri-businesses to invest elsewhere.

## Approaches to managing land use conflict

The survey revealed that most local councils continue to manage conflict at the development approval (approximately 85%) and strategic planning levels (approximately 70 per cent), with community education and engagement the least employed strategy (approximately 30%). Respondents indicated that the most common approach local councils use to manage land use conflict is the planning system, primarily via the conditions in their LEP and DCP. Local councils then regulate land use and development against the conditions in these planning instruments. However, only 30 per cent of respondents reported that their local council has a clear strategy or plan for agriculture in their LGA and less than 30 per cent reported having training for planning and operational staff to manage land use conflict.<sup>1</sup>

Respondents rated managing land use conflict at the development approval level as the most effective way they currently manage land use conflict although strategic planning and operational strategies were also reported as effective by at least half of respondents. However, only around 30 per cent of respondents whose local council delivers community education and engagement rated this as effective for reducing land use conflict.

The interviews suggested that local councils are reluctant to issue infringement notices in the event of a compliance breach. A number also said that ambiguity in current regulations can make it difficult to determine if a complaint is justified as a breach of compliance. The evidence required to support regulatory action is also a deterrent for some local councils to take such action. The preference appears to be for mediation between the parties in conflict.

Several of the local councils interviewed provided insights into how they are managing agricultural land use conflict at the strategic level. Camden Council has developed a Rural Lands Strategy to protect rural lands and agriculture from urban expansion. Wollondilly Shire Council is facing similar issues and plans to confine the majority of urban growth to one town of their LGA. They are also working closely with the poultry industry, NSW DPI and the NSW Farmers Association to support farmers implement best practice farm and environmental management strategies and educate residents about the need for certain poultry industry activities that often attract complaints.

The recently amalgamated Mid Coast Council is currently consolidating planning and development instruments from the former LGAs with a focus on protecting and developing the rural sector. The council is working closely with a number of NSW Government agencies to identify important agricultural lands and align their new LEP and DCP with regional and local economic strategies.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Only asked in the 2018 survey.

Coffs Harbour City Council is also working with the blueberry industry and NSW DPI to address emerging issues associated with the rapid expansion of that industry.

Local councils most commonly refer land use complaints to the NSW EPA (56%), followed by Local Land Services (36%), NSW DPI (28%) and the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) (25%). Around one-third of respondents indicated that they resolve all complaints in house.

Respondents most commonly seek guidance or support to manage land use conflict from NSW DPI (approximately 80%). Support is also commonly requested from the NSW DPE (approximately 60%), NSW EPA (approximately 60%) and Local Land Services (approximately 50%).

## NSW DPI initiatives and support

The vast majority of respondents in 2017 and 2018 were aware of the *Right to Farm Policy* (approximately 85%) but only half are aware of any of the actions within it. Only nine per cent reported being aware of all of the actions.

Of the respondents that have heard of the *Right to Farm Policy*, 29 per cent said that their local council has used it to inform decision making around agriculture in their LGA. The uses include:

- Background material for the preparation of the draft Rural Lands Strategy
- As part of broader rural area development strategies
- To provide internal advice on development proposals
- To develop land use policies that outline clear objectives of land use and to clarify acceptable standards and enforcement for non-compliant practices
- To educate residents that complain about compliant agricultural practices
- To educate councillors/developers wanting to develop adjacent to farm land as a basis for developing and adopting their own Right to Farm Policy.

However, all but one of the local councils interviewed are not intimately familiar with the *Right to Farm Policy* and do not use it to support agriculture in their LGA. These local councils stated a preference for tighter statewide planning and environmental regulations, or strong industry codes of practice.

In 2018, respondents were asked whether their local council has adopted its own Right to Farm Policy. Only three indicated that they had.

Just over half of respondents reported that their local council has used support provided by NSW DPI on their website or has sought advice from the NSW DPI Agricultural Land Use Planning Team around the following:

- Development applications involving specific agricultural industries
- DCPs, LEPs and general planning strategies
- Local land use policies
- Guidelines on agricultural practices.

All respondents who reported using NSW DPI's guidance and support found it useful to some degree. The percentage that reported NSW DPI's guidance and support was very useful increased from 22 per cent in 2016, to 32 per cent in 2017 and 42 per cent in 2018.

## Other support to help reduce land use conflict

Around 75 per cent of respondents in all years overwhelmingly reported that increasing awareness amongst the community of the realities of rural living would be effective for reducing land use conflict. Given the low reported prevalence and effectiveness of education and community engagement strategies to manage land use conflict, this could be an area where local councils need support. Around 40-45 per cent of respondents felt that LEPs with clearer zones and provisions for agricultural land uses, and stronger regulatory approaches and legislative controls will be effective. There was similar support for strong industry codes of practice to promote industry self-regulation.

Of additional supports selected, respondents most commonly rated LEPs with clearer zones and provisions for agricultural land uses as likely to be the most effective (33%), followed by increasing community awareness about the realities of rural living (22%), a stronger regulatory approach to protect agriculture (17%) and strong industry codes of practice (14%).

## Recommendations

### 1. That the review of the *Right to Farm Policy* considers options for effective community education and engagement about the realities of rural living.

Almost three quarters of responding local councils reported that increasing awareness amongst the community about the realities of rural living would be effective for reducing agricultural land use conflict. However, only thirty per cent of respondents reported delivering community education and engagement to help reduce land use conflict and few believe that they have been effective. This suggests that local councils need support raising awareness in the community about the realities of rural living and what constitutes compliant agricultural practices.

### 2. That the review of the *Right to Farm Policy* considers additional guidance and support for local councils to strategically manage land use complaints and issues.

Respondents indicated that the main way local councils are managing land use conflict is via local planning controls and the development application process. A minority of local councils have a clear strategy or policy for agriculture in their LGA, including adopting their own Right to Farm Policy. Even fewer local councils appear to provide training for staff around agricultural industry-specific development considerations and resolving land use complaints.

Based on these current approaches, additional guidance and support to consider providing local councils could include the following:

- Guidance or training for local council planning staff about industry-specific considerations when assessing development applications for new or expanded farms, and encroaching residential developments.
- Education or training for local council staff in effectively responding to complaints about agriculture including understanding compliant and non-compliant activities for relevant agricultural industries; and mediation approaches.
- Support or model frameworks for local councils to develop their own Rural Lands Strategy, or Right to Farm Policy in alignment with the statewide policy.

### 3. That the review of the *Right to Farm Policy* considers ways to expand the adoption of industry codes of practice for agricultural industries attracting the most complaints, and to monitor their impact.

Survey respondents suggested that strong industry codes of practice to promote industry self-regulation would be effective for reducing agricultural land use conflict. Respondents

indicated that local councils are already referring to a wide range of industry codes for guidance. However, in some industries codes of practice are dated, not supported by a national peak body, not endorsed nationally or are not accompanied by incentives for voluntary uptake. Given this, there could be consideration for a review of ways to expand the adoption of industry codes of practice for the industries and regions attracting the most complaints.

**4. That the review of the *Right to Farm Policy* explores the feasibility of a study into the suitability of current planning controls for non-scheduled agricultural operations.**

The survey findings indicated that local councils are primarily managing land use conflict via the planning and development application system, and see this as their most effective current strategy. Respondents also indicated that LEPs with clearer zones and provisions for agricultural land uses would be effective for reducing land use conflict. A study into the suitability of current planning controls for non-scheduled agricultural operations could include the following:

- A review of zones in the Standard Instrument LEP and permitted land uses.
- Buffering guidelines for various agricultural industries, the use of buffers and ways to increase the incorporation of buffers between agricultural and non-agricultural land.
- The feasibility of establishing precincts for specific agricultural industries in different parts of NSW.

**5. That the Right to Farm Agricultural Land Use Survey is continued to monitor the impacts of any enhancements to the *Right to Farm Policy* as a result of the review, and of any other initiatives implemented to support the right to farm in NSW.**

To support ongoing monitoring of the impact of the *Right to Farm Policy* and other initiatives to reduce agricultural land use conflict, local councils could continue to be periodically surveyed. Based on the data collected as part of this study, every two to three years would suffice to allow a reasonable time for new initiatives to be implemented and their impacts to be observed.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The proportion of land used for agriculture business in Australia decreased by four per cent between 2007 and 2010.<sup>2</sup> Land use conflict has anecdotally been identified as a potential cause of agricultural land use decline. To reduce the pressure on agricultural land and help address land use conflict, NSW DPI launched the *Right to Farm Policy* in 2015. The policy is a comprehensive, state-wide approach to deal with the issues of 'right to farm' - defined as a desire by farmers to undertake lawful agricultural practices without conflict or interference arising from complaints from neighbours and other land users.

The *Right to Farm Policy* includes 12 actions to address land use conflict under six themes:

1. Reinforcing rights and responsibilities
2. Establishing a baseline and ongoing monitoring and evaluation
3. Strengthening land use planning
4. Ensuring current reviews of environmental planning instruments include consideration of options to ensure best land use outcomes and to reduce conflicts
5. Improving education and awareness
6. Considering the need for legislative options, should additional Government intervention be required.

This project addresses three of the 12 actions under themes 2, 3 and 5.

The three actions are:

- *Action 4: The NSW Government will work with local council and other stakeholders to identify and monitor complaints related to farming in relevant LGAs;*
- *Action 6: The NSW Government will work with local councils to identify any additional measures required to assist their efforts in best practice land use planning to address land use conflict issues; and*
- *Action 9: The NSW Government will enhance its current engagement with local council, and in consultation with other stakeholders, support councils proactive management and education on land use conflict issues that arise from lawful farming practices.*

More broadly this project will advance the purpose of the *Right to Farm Policy* and assist NSW DPI in its three year review of the policy.

## 1.2 This project

Since 2016, the University of Technology Sydney, Institute for Public Policy and Governance and NSW DPI have established a series of annual Agricultural Land Use Surveys to investigate:

- the type and extent of agricultural land use conflict across NSW
- how councils manage this conflict, and
- how councils can be supported in conflict management.

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<sup>2</sup> According to data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Products/4627.0~2009-10-Main+Features-Land+use+and+agricultural+activity?OpenDocument>).

The research was delivered in three stages over a two-year period.

- Stage 1 (2016) – Preliminary council interviews and benchmarking survey
- Stage 2 (2017) – Follow up survey and eight in-depth interviews with local councils
- Stage 3 (2018) – Final survey.

## 1.3 This report

This report presents the findings from each stage as a time series to enable comparison of any changes over 2016-2018. In each year only one survey was allowed per local council. Respondents were asked to engage the relevant staff across their local council to help ensure that the responses are accurate and representative of their local council's experiences with agricultural land use conflict.

The structure of this report is as follows:

- Details about the methodology (Section 2)
- The type and extent of complaints reported (Section 3)
- Approaches to manage land use conflict (Section 4)
- Case studies of local councils' responses to agricultural land use conflict (Section 5)
- Summary of key findings and recommendations (Section 6)
- The survey instrument (Appendix A)
- Details about participating local councils (Appendix B)
- The discussion guides used for interviews in Stage 1 and Stage 2 (Appendix C)

## 2 Method

### 2.1 The survey

The survey was largely consistent for all stages in order to collect comparable data over time. Some questions were added for various stages as the need for additional information was identified. The Stage 3 survey is presented at Appendix A.

The survey was administered annually using Qualtrics via a single email link to 104 local councils across NSW. Email addresses for most of these were provided by NSW DPI. A single collective response was allowed from each local council and respondents were encouraged to consult with other departments to complete the survey (e.g. compliance, environmental health etc.). The survey was directed to Land Use Planners at management level, however it is possible that the survey was delegated to officers in other areas.

Across all stages 88 per cent of respondents indicated that they are planning and/or development staff, with the remainder either environmental or compliance staff. Across all stages 75 per cent of respondents indicated that they are manager level or above.

### 2.2 The respondents

The number of respondents in each stage of the survey was as follows:

- Stage 1 – 49 (40% response rate)<sup>3</sup>
- Stage 2 – 58 (56% response rate)
- Stage 3 – 44 (42% response rate)

Using a chi-squared goodness of fit test, the final samples for each stage were representative of the sampling frame by local council classification.<sup>4,5</sup>

Fourteen local councils completed the survey in all three stages, and 18 completed the survey in Stages 1 and 3. Using a chi-squared goodness of fit test, these repeat samples were not representative of the overall sampling frame by local council classification.<sup>6</sup>

Appendix B shows the local councils that responded to the survey in each stage.

#### **A note on response rates for each question**

Throughout this report the denominator for response rates is shown in figures as the number of respondents (i.e. 'n') that completed the relevant survey question. As not all respondents completed each question, this will vary for different figures and tables.

#### **Limitations**

Any changes over three years should be treated with caution and do not necessarily indicate trends. Any variation in responses could reflect the different local councils responding to the

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<sup>3</sup> In Stage 1 the survey was sent to 124 local councils. Due to local council amalgamations the survey was only sent to 104 local councils in Stages 2 and 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ryan, R., Hastings, C., Woods, R., Lawrie, A. and Grant, B., 2015. Why Local council Matters: summary report. <Available at: [www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/WLGM-Stage-1-Report.pdf](http://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/WLGM-Stage-1-Report.pdf)>.

<sup>5</sup>  $\chi^2(2)$ ;  $p < .05$ .

<sup>6</sup>  $\chi^2(2)$ ;  $p > .05$ .

survey in each stage or variation in who completed the survey within local councils that answered the survey in two or more years.

## 2.3 Interviews with local councils

In Stages 1 and 2 telephone Interviews were conducted with land use planning and environmental staff at eight local councils. The interview guides are presented at Appendix C.

### Stage 1

The purpose of the interviews was to gain detailed insights into agricultural land use conflict in regional and remote areas of NSW and identify key themes to inform the development of the survey.

Interviews were conducted with representatives from the following local councils:

- Bathurst Regional Council (Urban regional)
- Tweed Shire Council (Urban regional)
- Maitland City Council (Urban regional)
- Bega Valley Shire Council (Urban regional)
- Tamworth Regional Council (Urban regional)
- Hawkesbury City Council (Urban fringe)
- Wollondilly Shire Council (Urban fringe)
- Cobar Shire Council (Rural and remote).

These local councils were selected to capture the diversity of agricultural practices across NSW rural local councils, including areas that likely have high land-use conflict.

### Stage 2

Eight local councils were selected for in-depth interviews based on their responses to the survey and discussion with the Project Reference Group. These are:

- Camden Council (Urban fringe)
- Wollondilly Shire Council (Urban fringe)
- Tamworth Regional Council (Urban regional)
- Coffs Harbour City Council (Urban regional)
- Mid Coast Council (Urban regional)
- Yass Valley Council (Rural and remote)
- Cabonne Shire Council (Rural and remote)
- Greater Hume Shire Council (Rural and remote)

The local councils selected all reported a high number of complaints relative to other local councils (greater than five per month on average over the year or greater than five per month during summer peak times). Agriculture is a major driver of the economy in all of these LGAs with major industries ranging from poultry (meat and eggs), intensive cattle grazing for meat production, fruit and greenhouse horticulture, cropping and vineyards.

# 3 Type and extent of complaints about agricultural practice

## 3.1 Number of complaints

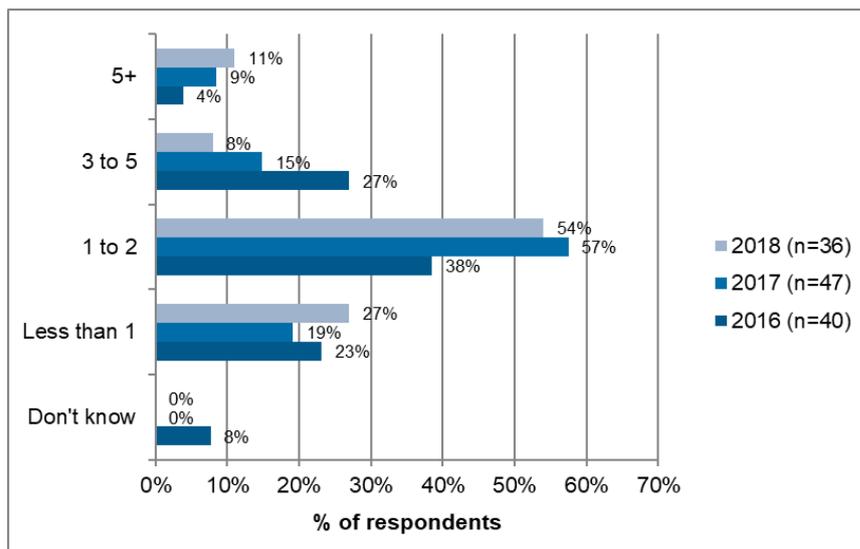
### The survey

The proportion of respondents who indicated that their local council had received complaints about agricultural land use in the previous 12 months was around 80 per cent in Stages 2 and 3, down from 93% in Stage 1. This suggests that complaints declined from 2015-2016 to 2017, although could reflect different respondents. However, the majority of local councils with agricultural lands are still receiving complaints about agricultural practices.

Figure 1 shows the average number of complaints regarding agricultural land use received per month by respondents in the 12 months preceding each year of the survey. Respondents most commonly reported 1-2 complaints per month, equivalent to 12-24 per year. The percentage of respondents reporting 3-5 complaints per month declined by 12 per cent from Stage 1 to Stage 2 but increased in Stage 3 (+4 percentage points Stage 1 compared to Stage 3). Overall the reported number of complaints received per month did not significantly differ between Stage 1 and Stage 3<sup>7</sup>

Table 1 presents the identity and characteristics of respondents that reported an average of at least five complaints per month in each of the surveys. It is clear that the majority are in relatively populated areas and have considerable intensive agriculture in their LGAs.

**Figure 1: Approximately how many complaints regarding agricultural land use do local councils receive on average per month**



<sup>7</sup> Mann-Whitney test:  $U = 516.5$ .  $p = .56$

**Table 1: Characteristics of local councils that receive the highest number of complaints<sup>a</sup>**

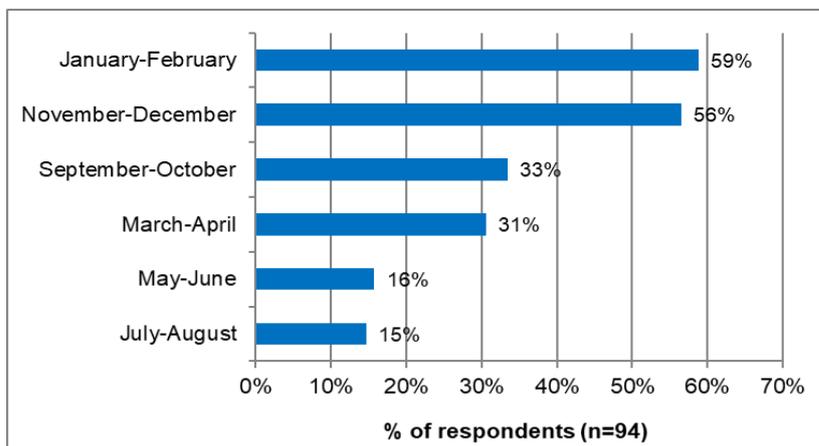
<b>LGAs with the highest number of complaints</b>	<b>LGA classification</b>	<b>Primary agricultural practices that attract complaints</b>
<b>2016</b>		
Port Macquarie-Hastings	Urban regional	Cattle grazing - meat production Dairy Fruit or nut growers
Cowra	Rural and remote	Sheep grazing Broad acre cropping Vegetable growers
Tamworth Regional	Urban regional	Poultry Cattle grazing - meat production Broad acre cropping
Gloucester	Rural and remote	Dairy Cattle grazing - meat production
Great Lakes	Urban regional	Dairy Poultry Nurseries
<b>2017</b>		
Port Macquarie-Hastings	Urban regional	Cattle grazing - meat production Poultry Piggeries Greenhouse horticulture Nurseries
Coffs Harbour	Urban regional	Greenhouse horticulture Blueberry growing
Camden	Urban fringe	Cattle grazing - meat production Poultry Small scale market gardens Greenhouse horticulture Vegetable growers Nurseries Horse studs
Yass Valley	Rural and remote	Vegetable growers Vineyards
Bega Valley	Rural and remote	Cattle grazing - meat production Poultry Piggeries
Bathurst	Urban regional	Broad acre cropping

2018		
Coffs Harbour	Urban regional	Greenhouse horticulture Blueberry growing
Yass Valley	Rural and remote	Vegetable growers Vineyards
Camden	Urban fringe	Cattle grazing - meat production Poultry Small scale market gardens Greenhouse horticulture Vegetable growers Nurseries Horse studs
Hornsby	Urban fringe	Broad acre cropping Poultry Nurseries Vegetable growers Fruit or nut growers
Cessnock	Urban regional	Cattle grazing – meat production Sheep grazing Poultry Vineyards Fruit or nut growers Pasture seed production Horse studs Goat farms

<sup>a</sup>Based on local councils reporting at least five complaints on average per month

Figure 2 shows that across all stages of the survey, warmer months and especially summer are the peak times for complaints. This was consistent in each stage of the survey.

**Figure 2: What months of the year does local council receive the most complaints**



Around half of respondents felt that the number of complaints received had stayed the same over the last five years. However, a number in both surveys reported an increase (Table 2). Also shown are respondents that reported a decrease over the last five years in any stage of the survey.

**Table 2: Local councils reporting an increase in agricultural land use complaints over the last five years**

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Decrease over the last 5 years
Bega Valley	Ballina	Albury City	Cabonne
Great Lakes	Bathurst	Balranald	Cowra
Coffs Harbour	Bega Valley	Bathurst	Gwydir
Hawkesbury	Camden	Bellingen	Hills Shire
Walgett	Carrathool	Coffs Harbour	Lake Macquarie
	Coffs Harbour	Forbes	Narrandera
	Dubbo	Goulburn	Snowy Valleys
	Edward River		
	Nambucca		
	Upper Lachlan		

### ***The interviews***

Although half of respondents reported in the online survey that complaints have been steady over the last five years, Wollondilly Shire, Camden and Coffs Harbour City Councils reported either seeing or expecting increases in the volume of complaints. Local agriculture is diversifying with new industries emerging, or in some cases rapidly expanding, bringing different triggers for complaints. Urban expansion, and in the Coffs Harbour LGA the expansion of intensive small lot horticulture, is also bringing residents in closer proximity to agricultural

activities increasing the risk of complaints. In particular, interviewees from urban fringe and urban regional LGAs expressed concern about this expansion and the potential for future agricultural land use conflict.

## 3.2 The type and source of complaints

### The survey

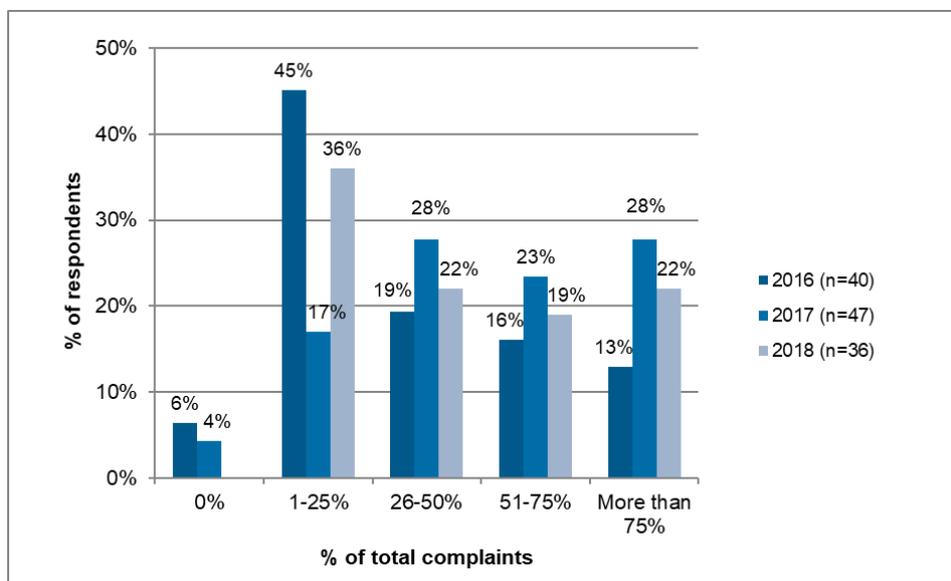
The survey asked respondents about the relative proportion of complaints they receive about compliant and non-compliant agricultural practices to understand the extent to which complaints about agriculture are legitimate.

**Figure 3 shows that complaints regarding compliant agricultural practices make up a considerable proportion of complaints received by local councils.** Compliant agricultural practices are those that are approved for the specific zoning of the land on which the practices occur. Non-compliant practices are those outside of or that exceed those that are approved.

In the Stage 1 survey 94 per cent of respondents reported receiving complaints about legally compliant activity. This was 96 per cent in the Stage 2 survey and 100% in the Stage 3 survey.

In Stage 2 the percentage reporting that at least half of their agricultural land use complaints are about legally compliant activities increased from 29 per cent in Stage 1 to 51 per cent. This decreased to 41 per cent in Stage 3 but still indicates that complaints about compliant agricultural practices are an ongoing issue.

**Figure 3: Local councils receiving complaints about legally compliant agricultural activities**



In both surveys all respondents reported receiving complaints about non-compliant agricultural practices. For most these made up less than half of all agricultural land use complaints (Figure 4) indicating that they receive most of their complaints about legally compliant activity.

**Figure 4: Local councils receiving complaints about non-compliant agricultural activities**

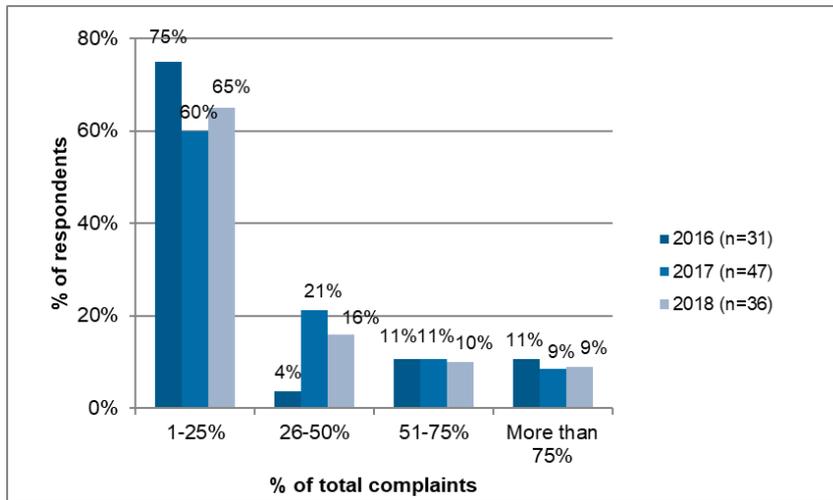
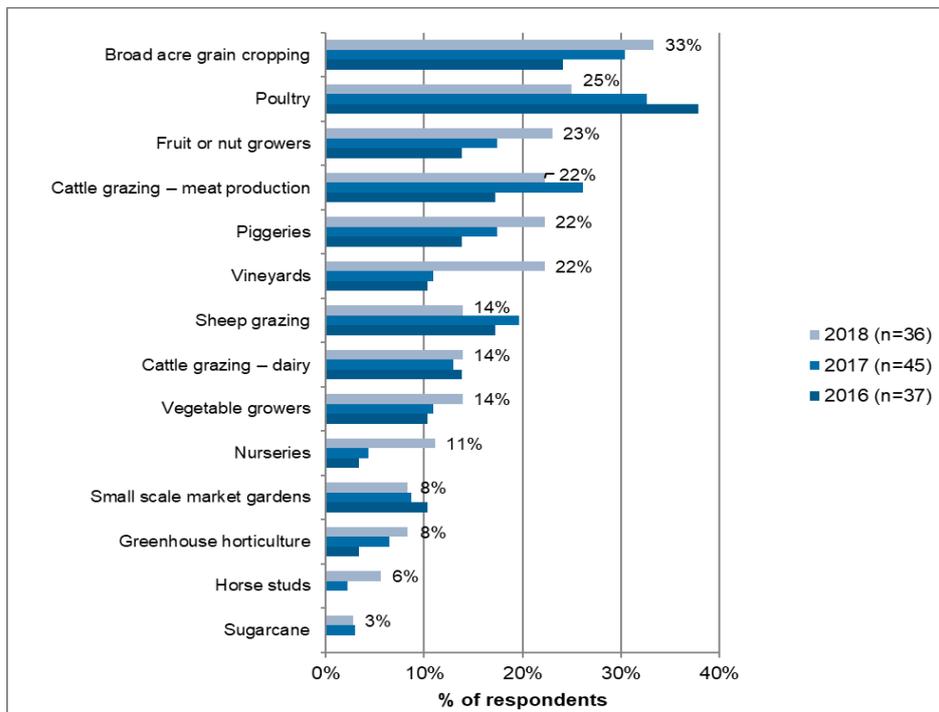


Figure 5 shows that intensive agriculture such as broad acre cropping, poultry farms, fruit or nut farms, cattle grazing, piggeries and vineyards commonly attract complaints. The variation from year to year reflects the different local councils that responded to the survey.

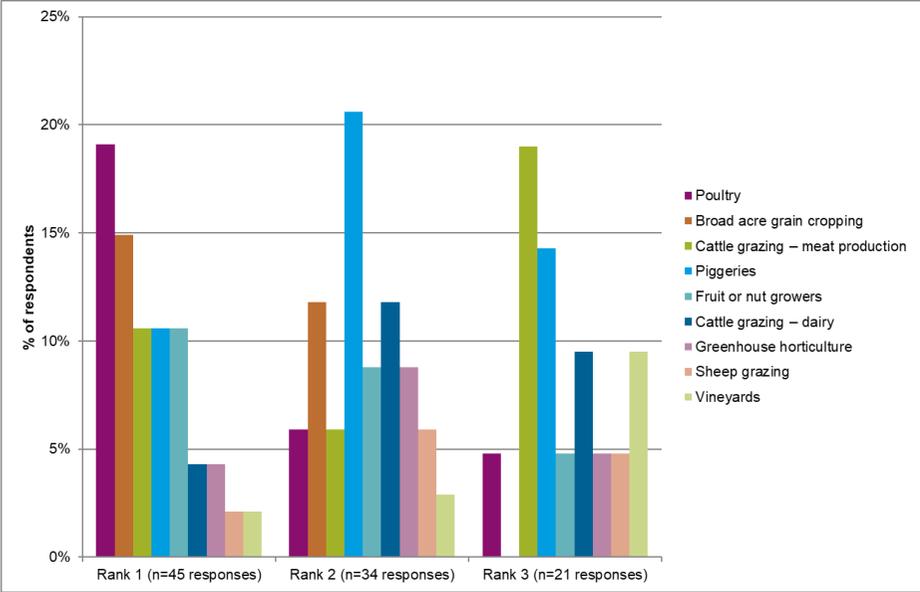
**Figure 5: What types of agricultural practices attract complaints**



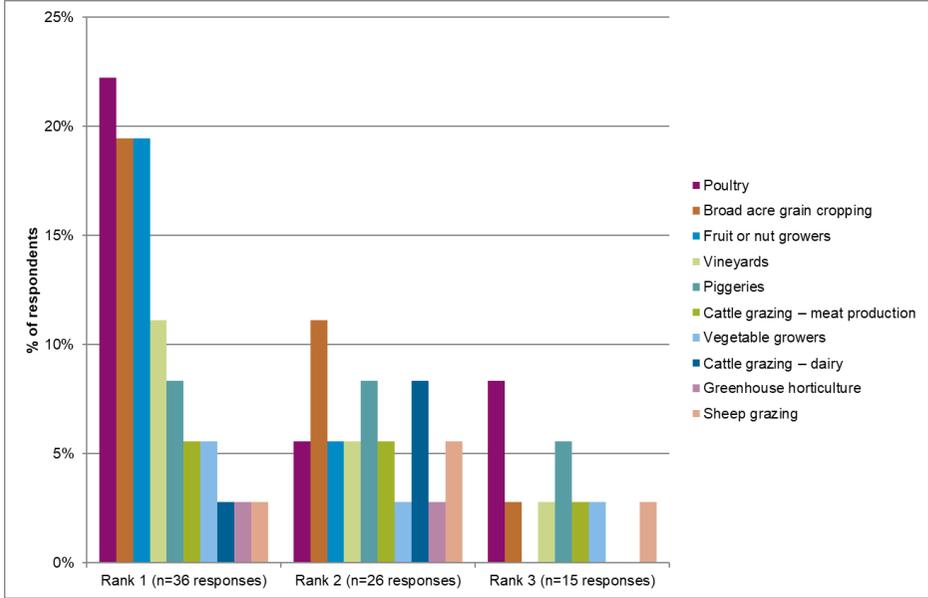
In the Stages 2 and 3 surveys, respondents were asked to rank the industries complaints are received about from most to least common. Figure 6 shows that poultry is the industry that attracts the most complaints followed by broad acre grain cropping, fruit or nut growing, cattle grazing and piggeries.

**Figure 6: Agricultural industries attracting the most complaints**

**2017**

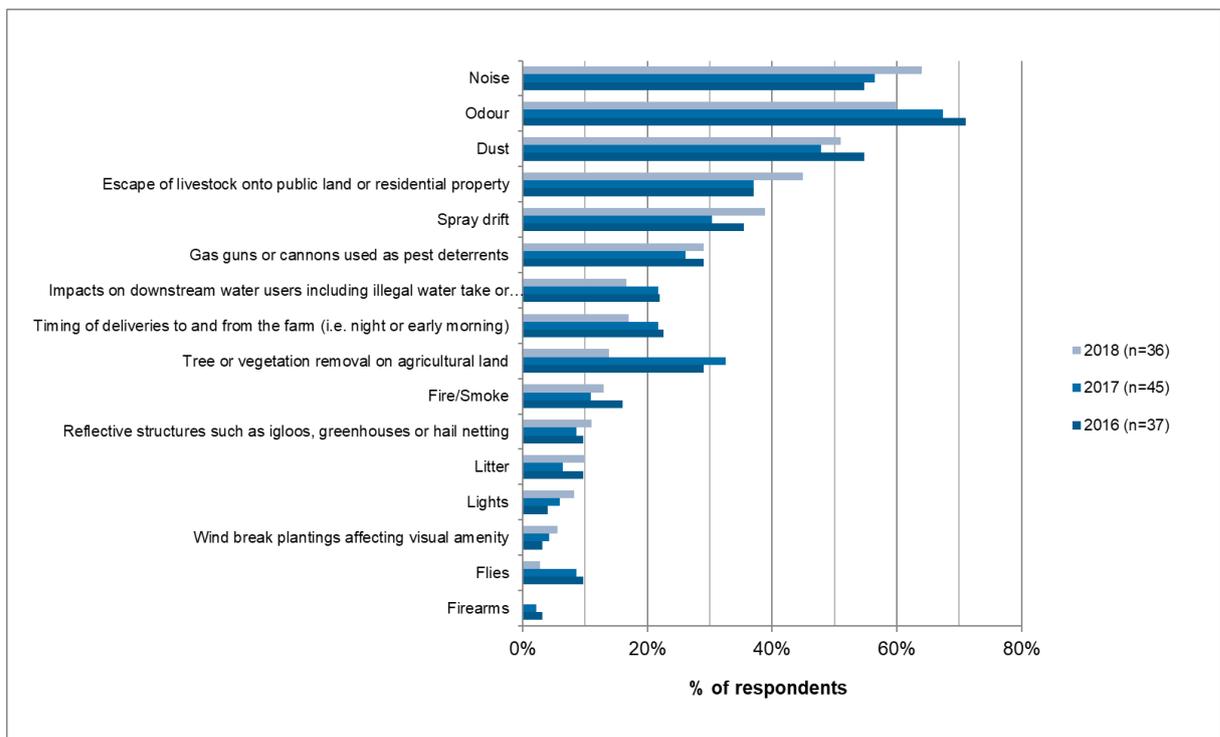


**2018**



Respondents were also asked about the triggers for complaints. Figure 7 shows that noise, odour, dust, escaping livestock and spray drift are common triggers for complaints. However, complaints are received about a very broad range of practices and issues.

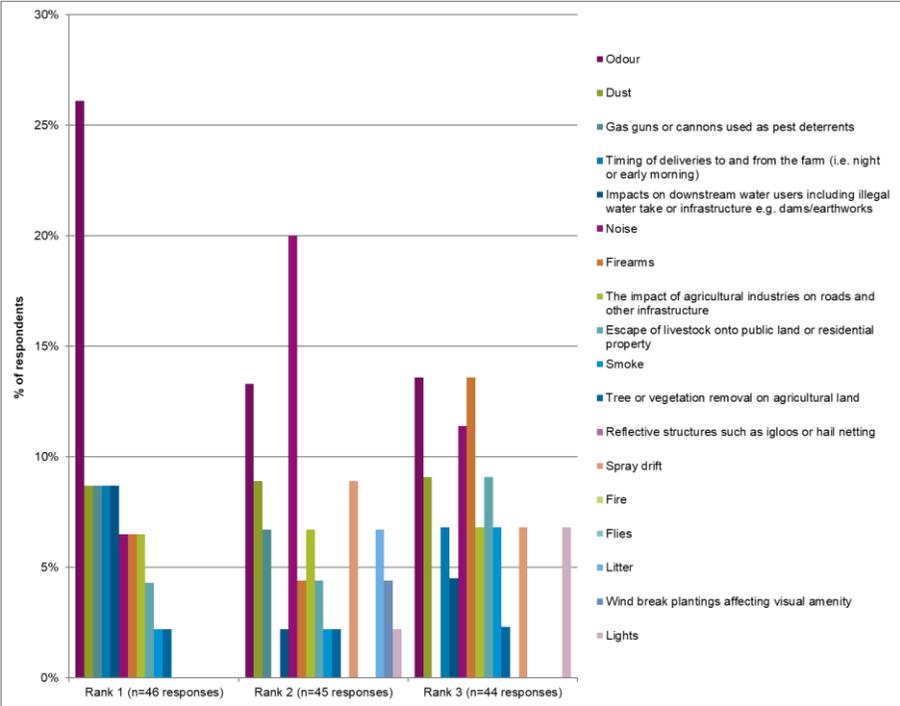
**Figure 7: What complaints about agricultural practices are about**



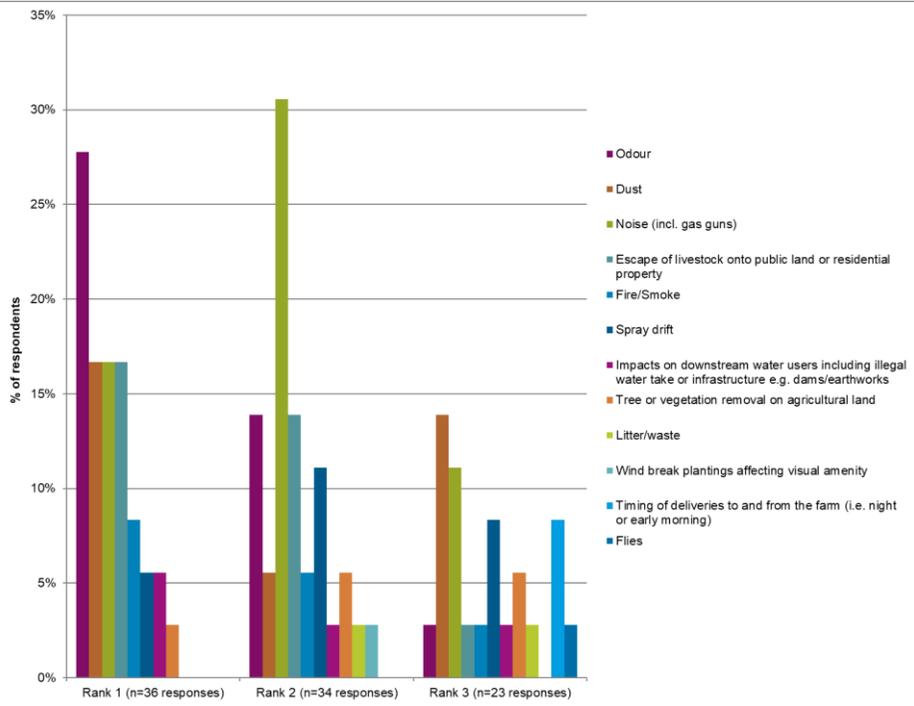
In the Stages 2 and 3 surveys, respondents were also asked to rank triggers for complaints from most to least common. Figure 8 shows that odour, dust, noise and escaping livestock are the most common triggers for complaints. These triggers are conducive to intensive agriculture practices, especially during warmer months. Dust might also be the result of increased traffic due to transporting livestock or crops, and the movement of topsoil during high winds.

**Figure 8: Agricultural practices attracting the most complaints**

**2017**

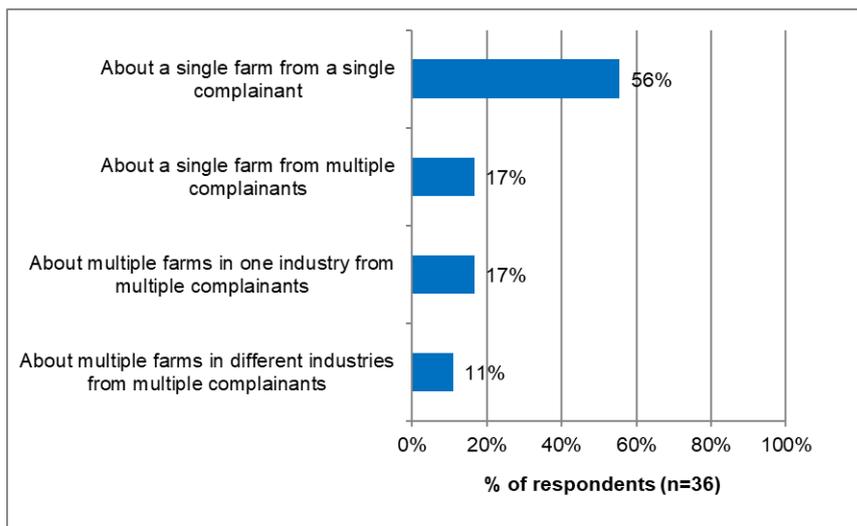


**2018**



Respondents to the Stage 3 survey were asked to describe the sources of the majority of their complaints about agriculture. Figure 9 shows that 73 per cent of local councils that received complaints about agriculture (n=36) reported that most complaints are about a single farm. Fifty six per cent of local councils reporting complaints said that most complaints come from a single complainant. Together with the frequent complaints about compliant activity, this suggests that local councils and farmers are dealing with a lot of nuisance complaints.

**Figure 9: Sources of the majority of complaints local councils receive about agriculture**



### ***The interviews***

The local councils interviewed in Stage 2 were asked about how widespread complaints are in their LGA. The urban fringe and urban regional local councils interviewed indicated that complaints come from a wide range of complainants and about a wide range of farms. However, those interviewed from rural and remote local councils indicated that repeated complaints are often made by a small number of complainants about isolated farms, supporting the survey findings. In most cases these are nuisance complaints about compliant agricultural activity, although repeated non-compliant activity from isolated farms was reported.

## **3.3 Perceived drivers of conflict**

### ***The survey***

Respondents were asked the factors they believe are driving agricultural land use conflict in their area. Figure 10 shows that the most commonly reported factors were:

- A lack of understanding amongst new residents of the realities of living in an agricultural area and of agricultural industry operation
- Lack of communication within the community and between neighbours
- Encroachment of non-agricultural uses into existing agricultural areas
- Close proximity of agricultural uses to non-agricultural properties

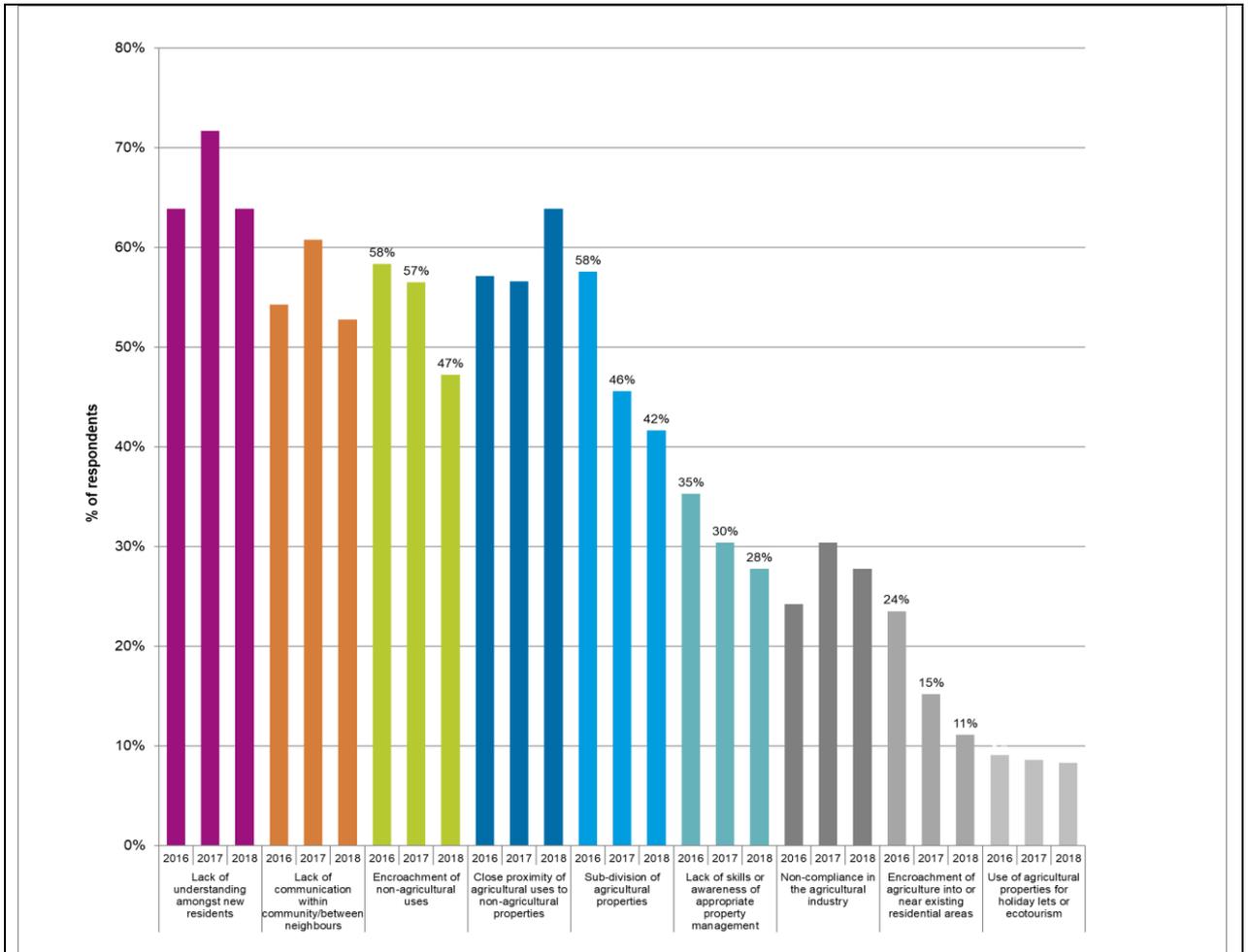
- Subdivision of agricultural properties

The time series shows that from Stage 1 to Stage 3, the percentage of respondents that reported the following factors as major drivers of agricultural land use conflict decreased:

- Encroachment of non-agricultural land uses into existing agricultural areas (-11 percentage points)
- Subdivision of agricultural properties (-16 percentage points)
- Lack of skills or awareness of appropriate property management (-7 percentage points)
- Encroachment of agriculture into or near existing residential areas (-13 percentage points)

As the importance of these factors decreased steadily from Stage 1 to Stage 3, the responses suggest that local councils are becoming more effective at managing the interface between agricultural and residential properties, and that farm management practices are improving.

**Figure 10: Drivers of agricultural land use conflict**



*n=35 in 2016; n= 47 in 2017; and n=36 in 2018*

*Note: Percentages are respondents that reported a factor as driving agricultural land use conflict in their LGA either a lot or a fair amount.*

## The interviews

The above reasons were confirmed by local councils interviewed in Stage 2. All but Coffs Harbour City Council cited urban or residential expansion as the underlying cause of agricultural land use conflict. Depending on the location, this either brings ‘tree changers’ or families seeking affordable housing into close proximity of agriculture without an understanding of the realities of rural living. In Stage 1, interviewees also suggested that the majority of complaints are from residents in new developments located near agricultural activity, due to a lack of familiarity with the realities of rural living.

Coffs Harbour City Council cited the rapid expansion of small lot intensive horticulture as the issue in their LGA, with new operations encroaching existing rural-residential zones. In addition to increasing conflict with residents, this is having environmental impacts.

Camden and Wollondilly Shire Councils are expecting future sub-division or reductions to minimum lot sizes to escalate conflict in the future. These are both within the South West Sydney Growth Corridor which will bring rapid growth in their LGAs.

## 3.4 The impact of conflict on agriculture

### The survey

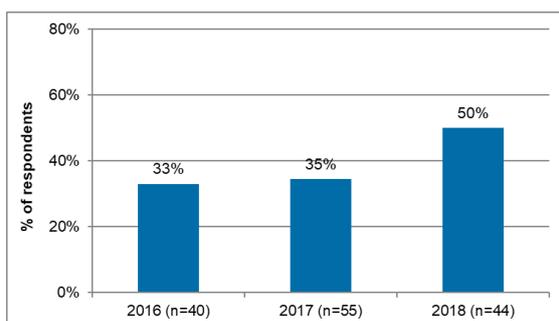
The survey asked local councils about the impact of agricultural land use complaints on agriculture in their LGA.

Figure 11 shows that one third of respondents in Stage 1 and Stage 2 reported that land use conflict is affecting agriculture in their LGA. However, this increased to half in Stage 3. This could suggest that land use conflict is starting to have bigger impact on agriculture. It could also indicate that through the *Right to Farm Policy* or this survey local councils are becoming more aware of the impacts of land use conflict in their LGA. Alternatively, the change reported in the Stage 3 survey could reflect differences in the final sample compared to Stages 1 and 2.

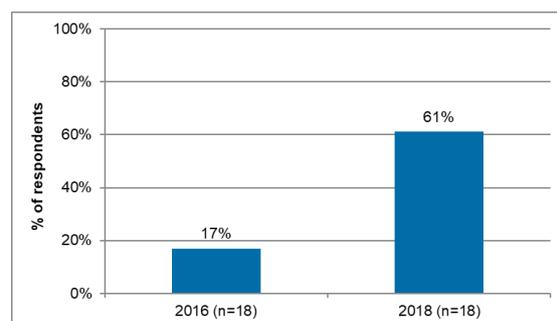
However, of respondents that completed the survey in both Stage 1 and Stage 3, 11 reported in Stage 3 (61%) that land use conflict is impacting agriculture in their LGA compared to only three in Stage 1 (17%). This suggests that either land use conflict is having a bigger impact on agriculture in these LGAs now than it did in 2016, or that there is greater awareness of the impact than there was previously. Irrespective of the explanation, it is clear that land use conflict is having a significant adverse impact on agriculture and a further response is needed.

**Figure 11: Local councils reporting that agricultural land use conflict is negatively impacting local agriculture**

Local councils that completed the survey in any stage



Local councils who completed both Stage 1 and Stage 3



Respondents that reported that land use conflict is affecting agriculture in their LGA were not limited to urban fringe local councils although several are represented. A number of urban regional and rural and remote local councils also reported that land use conflict is negatively impacting agriculture in their LGA suggesting that the issue is widespread.

Four of the respondents that reported a decrease in complaints over the last five years in either stage of the survey also reported that land use conflict is negatively impacting agriculture in their LGA. This could indicate a decrease in agricultural production or investment in those LGAs as a result of conflict, although this would need to be substantiated.

### ***The interviews***

In the interviews, Camden Council and Wollondilly Shire Council, both urban fringe, reported that land use conflict is having an impact on local agriculture. In both of these LGAs, urban development and the resource implications of improving farm management to avoid conflict has reportedly resulted in a small number of smaller poultry farms ceasing operation. Tweed Shire Council indicated that conflict was driving agriculture out of the LGA, contributing to an overall transition away from agriculture in the LGA. Maitland City Council also cited anecdotal evidence that conflict is reducing the extent of existing agriculture in their LGA.

Cabonne Shire Council commented that evolving industry best practice and ongoing management by them are helping to minimise complaints. An example cited was the trend towards netting to protect from pests instead of noise deterrents in the wine and horticulture industries. Although this change is being driven by production benefits rather than complaints, it is nonetheless minimising conflict. However, in Coffs Harbour this move towards netting is impacting the visual appeal of the landscape and is an emerging source of complaints.

Camden Council, Wollondilly Shire Council and Coffs Harbour City Council commented that they are preparing for agriculture to be impacted in the future by anticipated increases in complaints. Camden and Wollondilly Shire LGAs are in growth corridors with the expectation that additional development controls and improved farm management practices will be required to minimise conflict as buffer zones reduce. There are concerns that these will make smaller agricultural operations unviable or encourage large agri-businesses to invest elsewhere.

These local councils are exploring strategies to promote or support relocation of affected farms. Coffs Harbour LGA has experienced such rapid growth of horticulture in their LGA that the local council is exploring additional consent conditions for further agricultural development. While this will not impact existing operations, it could impact further expansion of the industry.

# 4 Approaches to manage land use conflict

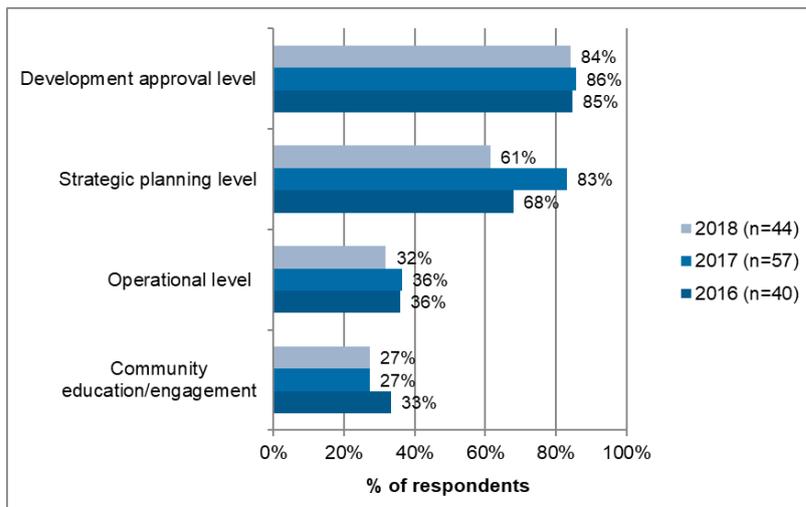
## 4.1 Current strategies used by local councils

### *The survey*

Respondents were asked about strategies they employ to manage land use conflict. Figure 12 shows that most continue to manage conflict at the development approval level (approximately 85%). Around two-thirds reported managing land use conflict strategically. Community education and engagement was reported to be the least employed strategy.

The responses were largely consistent across all three stages apart from a 15 per cent increase from Stage 1 to Stage 2 in the percentage that indicated that they manage land use conflict at a strategic planning level. This increase reverted amongst Stage 3 respondents so presumably reflected the difference in the local councils that responded to the survey in the different stages.

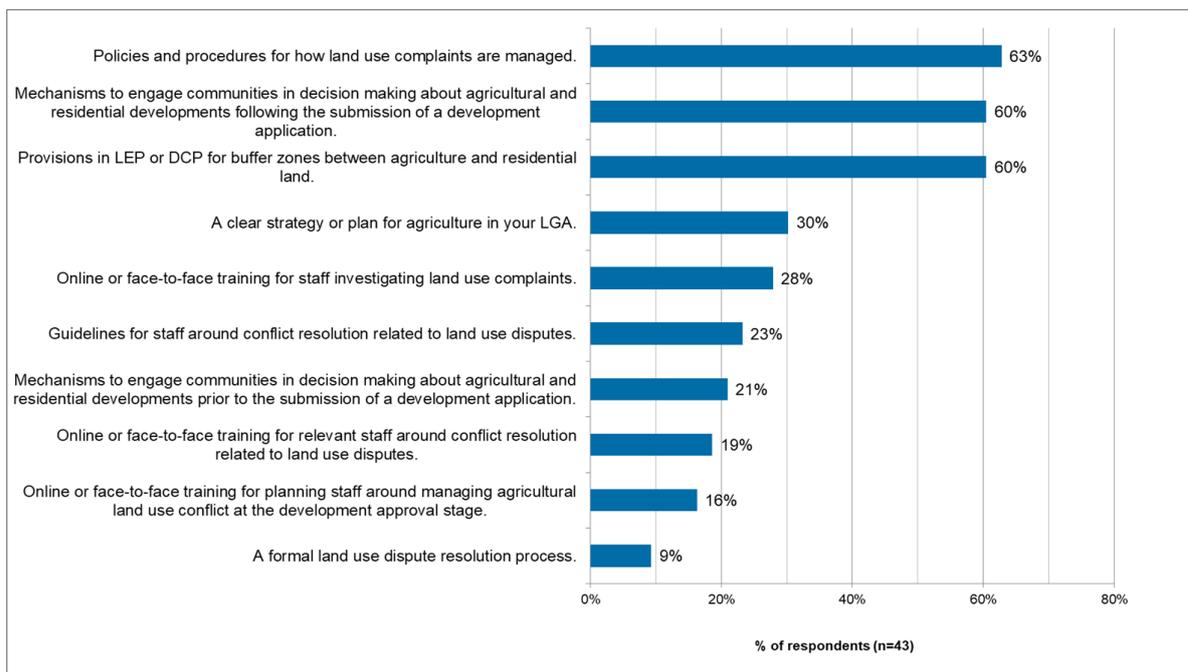
**Figure 12: Strategies used by local councils to manage agricultural land use conflict**



Across the 94 local councils that responded to the survey in any stage, 20 per cent indicated that they had completed a rural lands study or adopted a rural lands strategy. Only a small number indicated that they undertake community education which appears to be via guides and fact sheets, or Rural Living Handbooks. Operational strategies appear to be standard complaints investigation according to complaints management policies.

In Stage 3, respondents were also asked to indicate which of a range of specific initiatives their local council have in place to help manage land use conflict. Figure 13 shows that almost one-third have complaints handling procedures, community engagement about residential and agricultural developments following submission of a development application, and provisions in their LEP or DCP for buffer zones. Only 30 per cent reported a clear strategy for agriculture and even fewer have training for staff in responding to and managing land use complaints. Only nine percent have a formal dispute resolution process.

**Figure 13: Percentage of local councils with mechanisms in place to help reduce land use conflict**



### **The interviews**

None of the local councils interviewed in Stage 2 were delivering substantial community education about compliant agricultural practice, although two use either the *NSW Right to Farm Policy* or their own Right to Farm Policy to signal their support of compliant agricultural practice.

Interviewees reported that resource constraints limit their ability to quickly investigate incidents. They also reported that ambiguity in NSW State Government environmental and planning legislation make it difficult to enforce penalties for non-compliant activity. The preference appears to be to mediate between landowners unless there is a breach of legislation.

All interviewed local councils in Stages 1 and 2 reported that zoning and consent conditions in their LEP and DCP are important for managing the interface between agricultural and residential developments. This also requires public consultation on major developments, adding a further safeguard against conflict. The examples below highlight the approaches two local council are taking via their LEP and DCP to minimise land use conflict.

#### **Mid Coast Council**

Mid Coast Council was formed in 2016 by an amalgamation of Gloucester Shire Council, Great Lakes Council and City of Greater Taree Council. Each had their own LEP and DCP with variable zoning and consent conditions for development. As part of the amalgamation, the Mid Coast Council is currently working to consolidate plans from the former LGAs with a focus on protecting and developing the rural sector in the future. The new plans are being informed by a NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) led Regional Economic Development Strategy and a council-led Rural Opportunities and Land Use Strategy. The latter is being supported by a mapping project with NSW DPI to identify important agricultural lands, and will involve extensive stakeholder and community consultation. The project is also supported by NSW DPE.

### **Yass Valley Council**

Yass Valley Council is at the interface between expanding residential development from the ACT and existing agricultural land. To minimise conflict, Yass Valley Council has backed a five-kilometre buffer zone (RU6 zone) on the ACT's northern border where sub division by farmers will be restricted to a minimum 40 Ha lot size.

Other local councils are taking a different but also strategic approach to managing future agricultural land use conflict.

### **Camden Council**

Camden Council is part of the NSW DPE's South West Priority Growth Area to increase the supply of affordable housing in the Sydney region. This will reduce rural land in the LGA by 17 per cent which is anticipated to threaten agricultural industries, reduce buffer zones between agricultural and residential properties, and increase the risk of land use conflict. In response to this, the council commissioned a rural land study which has informed a recently endorsed Rural Land Strategy outlining key future planning principles to protect agriculture and scenic vistas in the LGA.

### **Wollondilly Shire Council**

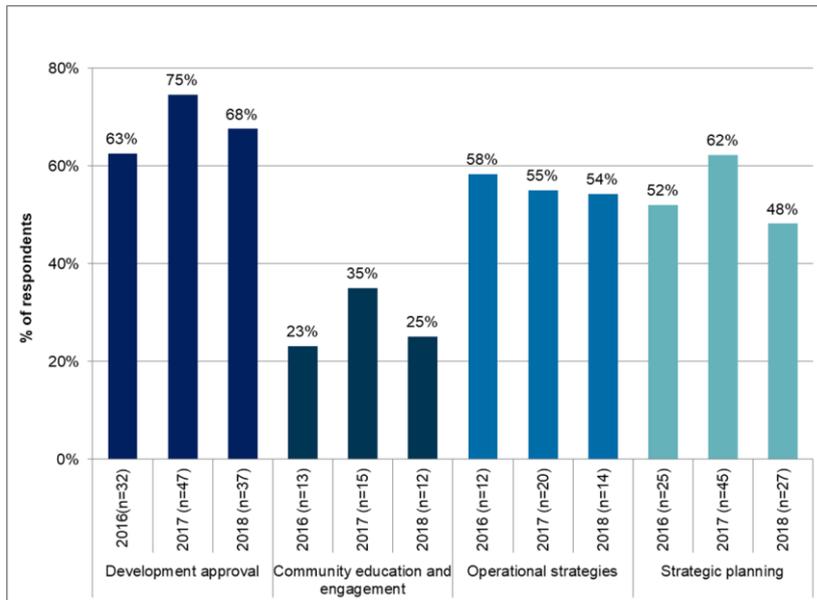
Wollondilly Shire Council is also taking a strategic approach to managing NSW DPE's plans for peri-urban growth. Wollondilly Council have planned to concentrate the majority of growth around one town in the LGA. They have pledged not to support significant urban growth anywhere else in the LGA. Wollondilly Shire Council is also working closely with the poultry industry, the residential community, NSW DPI and the NSW Farmers Association. Together they have educated poultry farmers and developed voluntary Environmental Management Plans and a Good Neighbour Charter for the poultry industry. These clarify responsibilities for implementing best practice farm management and the animal welfare reasons behind certain triggers for complaints about the poultry industry, to mitigate any conflict.

## **4.2 The perceived effectiveness of current strategies used by local councils**

### ***The survey***

Respondents were also asked to rate the effectiveness of the strategies they use to manage land use conflict. Figure 14 shows that managing conflict at the development approval level is seen as the most effective way to currently manage land use conflict followed by strategic planning. Although employed less frequently, current operational strategies are also seen as effective, but current community engagement and education activities less so. Given that a lack of understanding by residents is seen as a major driver of land use conflict, this suggests that local councils could benefit from support to deliver effective community education and engagement and campaigns around agricultural land use.

**Figure 14: Local councils rating current land use conflict management strategies as effective**

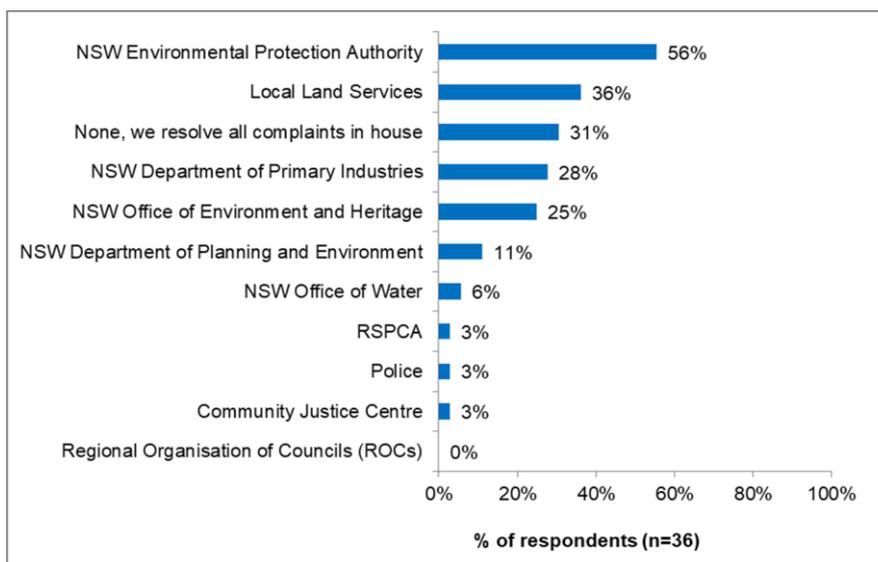


### 4.3 Support to manage land use conflict

#### *The survey*

Figure 15 shows that the NSW EPA is the most common agency complaints are referred to (56%). Around one-quarter to one-third of local councils also refer complaints to Local Land Services, NSW DPI and the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH). Thirty one per cent of respondents reported that their local council deals with all land use complaints in house.

**Figure 15: Agencies local councils refer agricultural land use complaints on to**



Local councils were also asked where they obtain guidance or support to manage land use conflict. NSW DPI was the most commonly reported source in all stages. Local councils also commonly reported seeking guidance or support from the NSW EPA, NSW DPE and Local Land Services (Figure 16).

**Figure 16: Agencies local councils seek guidance or support from to manage land use conflict**

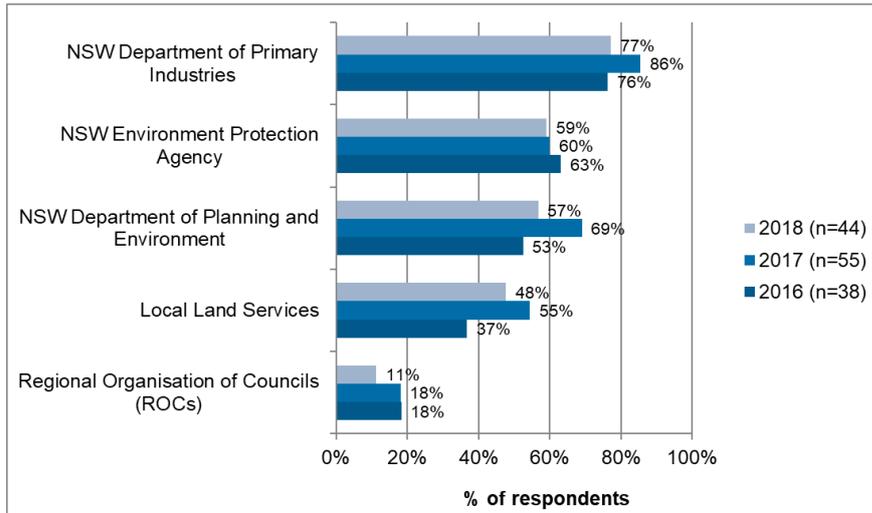
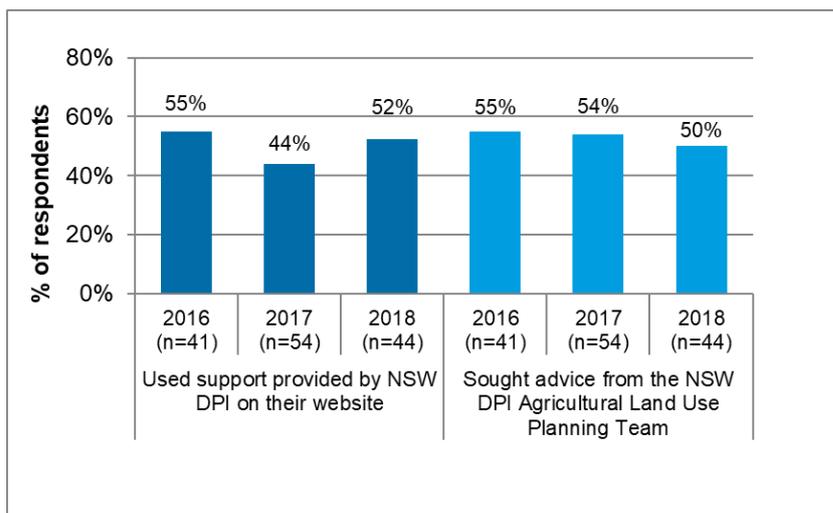


Figure 17 shows that around half of respondents in all stages of the survey indicated that they have used support provided by NSW DPI on their website and have sought advice from NSW DPI Agricultural Land Use Planning Teams.

**Figure 17: Use of NSW DPI initiatives and support**



Open ended responses indicated that the local councils are using NSW DPI's published guidance on best practice in various agricultural industries, various factsheets and research

publications, specific guidance on development applications for various agricultural industries and the *NSW Right to Farm Policy*.

Local councils that have sought advice from the NSW DPI Agricultural Land Use Planning Team were asked to what advice they sought. Table 3 shows the coded responses from the 51 local councils that indicated seeking advice in the Stage 2 or Stage 3 survey.

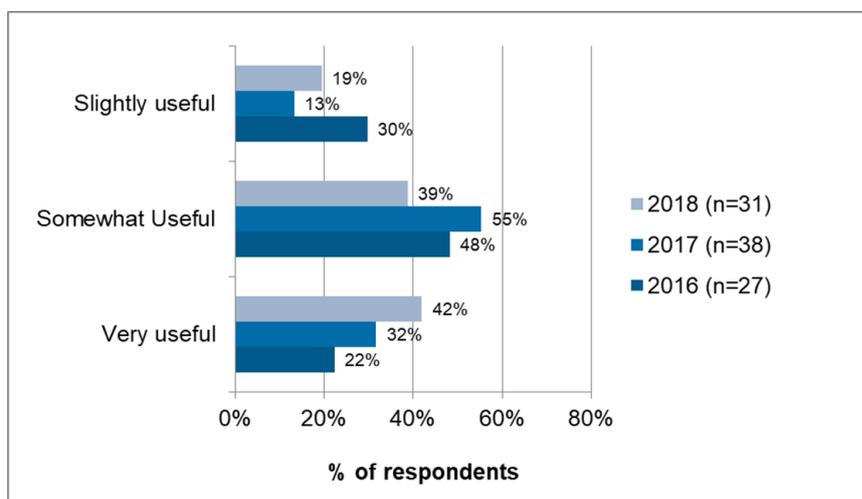
**Table 3: Advice sought from NSW DPI Agricultural Land Use Teams**

	No. of local councils
Sought advice on development applications	15
Sought advice on LEPs, DCPs and general planning matters	14
Sought advice on policies/strategies	14
Sought advice/guidelines on agricultural practices	10

All respondents who reported using NSW DPI’s guidance and support found them useful to some degree (Figure 18). In the Stages 2 and 3 surveys a higher percentage of respondents reported that the initiatives and support are somewhat useful or very useful compared to the Stage 1 survey (88% Stage 2; 81% Stage 3; 70% Stage 1). Furthermore, since the Stage 1 survey the percentage of local councils that reported that the guidance and support offered by NSW DPI is very useful increased by 20 percentage points (42% in Stage 3).

Open ended responses indicated that local councils appreciate the relevance and accuracy of the guidance and support provided by NSW DPI with only a small number commenting that some of the information provided is too generic for their specific issues. Across all years around one-third of respondents commented that more communication from NSW DPI would help raise their awareness of new or updated resources, guidelines and initiatives; and changes to relevant policies and regulations.

**Figure 18: Usefulness of guidance and support provided by NSW DPI**



Responses to the Stage 3 survey (n=44) also indicated the following:

- 39 per cent of respondents have used the 'Living and Working in Rural Areas Handbook'
- 32 per cent have used industry best practice guidelines
- 14 per cent have used the 'Land Use Risk Assessment Guide'

Open ended responses indicated that the following industry guidelines have been used by responding local councils:

- Poultry farms
- Piggeries
- Beef cattle feedlots
- AUSVETPLAN disease strategies
- Range land goats
- NSW Office of Water buffer distances to water courses
- NSW DPI
- Aerial spraying
- Cattle and sheep welfare
- Aquaculture
- Australian Macadamia Industry Code of Sound Orchard Practices

### ***The interviews***

All local councils interviewed in Stages 1 and 2 valued the advice, resources and guidelines available from the NSW DPI and NSW EPA. This guidance primarily helps them understand compliant and best practice farm management, particularly around emerging industries. Tweed Shire, Bega Valley and Hawkesbury Councils reported regularly using NSW DPI guidance on development approvals and control plans, and guidance on subdivisions.

Wollondilly Shire and Bathurst Regional Councils also reported regularly engaging with the NSW DPI Agricultural Land Use Planning Team. Bathurst Regional Council noted that NSW DPI provided assistance during the development of council's previous land use strategy and that they would call on support again as they develop their new strategy.

Tweed Shire Council also commented that the 'Living in Rural Areas: A Handbook Managing Land Use Conflict Issues on the NSW North Coast' is useful. Maitland City Council have also used the handbook but would like a similar resource specific to their region.

None of the local councils interviewed reported receiving significant operational support from NSW Government agencies to manage agricultural land use conflict, although NSW DPI and NSW DPE are supporting Camden and Mid-Coast Councils to develop strategies to manage current and potential land use conflict.

Four local councils commented that they would like greater consultation and collaboration from and between NSW DPE and NSW DPI on district planning. They commented that at present the limited apparent collaboration between state government agencies and their local councils is limiting synergies between state and local council strategic land use planning.

All but one of the local councils interviewed manage the majority of agricultural land use complaints themselves. Only Tamworth Regional Council reported referring most of the

complaints they receive to the NSW EPA. This is because most complaints relate to NSW EPA licenced poultry farms and ancillary industries.

## 4.4 Awareness and use of the Right to Farm Policy

### **The survey**

In the Stages 2 and 3 surveys, respondents were asked about their awareness and use of the Right to Farm Policy. This was not asked in the Stage 1 survey. Table 4 shows that around 85 per cent of respondents reported being aware of the policy but just under half are aware of any of the actions within. Only nine per cent reported being intimately familiar with the policy.

**Table 4: Awareness of Right to Farm Policy**

	2017 % (n=55)	2018 % (n=44)
I have never heard of the Right to Farm Policy	16%	14%
I am aware of the Policy but not the actions within	35%	39%
I am aware of the Policy and some of the actions	40%	39%
I am aware of the Policy and all of the actions within	9%	9%

Of the 84 respondents that had heard of the *Right to Farm Policy* across both stages, 24 said that their local council has used it to inform decision making around agriculture in their LGA.

Open-ended responses by these local councils indicated that they have used the policy for:

- Background material for the preparation of a Rural Lands Strategy
- As part of broader rural area development strategies
- To provide internal advice on development proposals
- To develop land use policies that outline clear objectives of land use and to clarify acceptable standards and enforcement for non-compliant practices
- To educate residents that complain about compliant agricultural practices
- To educate councillors/developers wanting to develop adjacent to farm land

In Stage 3, respondents were asked whether their local council has adopted its own Right to Farm Policy. Only Cabonne Shire, Kyogle and Bellingen Shire Councils indicated that they had. It is possible that other local councils that did not respond to the Stage 3 survey have also adopted their own Right to Farm Policy.

### **The interviews**

The interviews also did not indicate widespread knowledge of the actions within the *Right to Farm Policy*. Only Cabonne Shire Council reported being intimately aware of the Policy, using it to frame community engagement around land use conflict and reinforce their position.

Six of the remaining local councils reported indifference about the *Right to Farm Policy* and its usefulness. For these local councils, planning regulations and environmental legislation are operationally seen as more useful than a statewide policy.

Camden Council commented that referencing the *Right to Farm Policy* in their strategic plans for rural land use has helped communicate to their communities that their plans align with state government priorities. This has helped legitimise the direction they are taking.

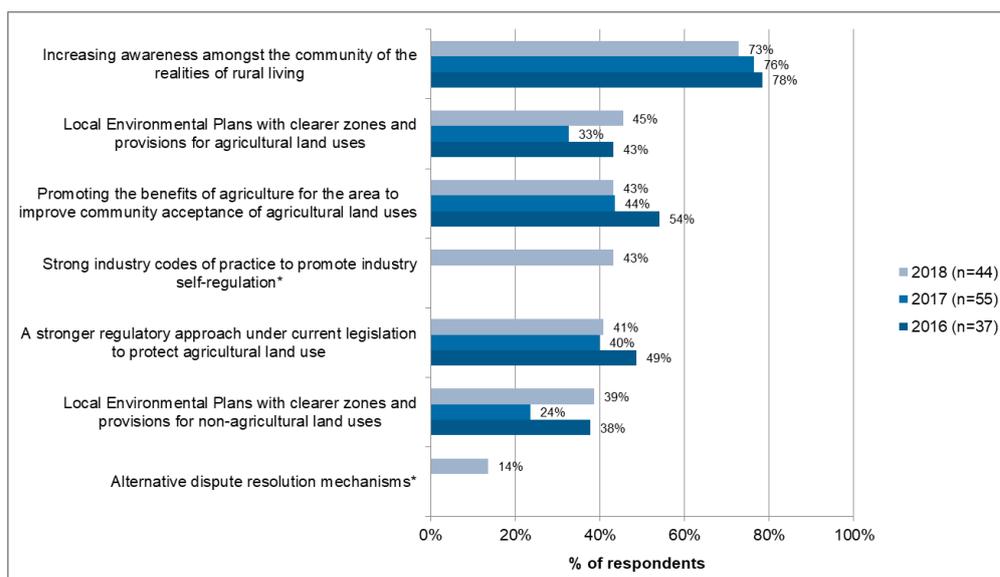
However, one local council commented that the *Right to Farm* policy has been counterproductive for the issues they are facing in their LGA around emerging intensive horticulture industries. The policy is viewed as limiting support to address agricultural encroachment into rural-residential zones that is creating substantial conflict in their community.

## 4.5 Other support to help minimise agricultural land use conflict

Survey respondents were asked what they think would be most effective for reducing land use conflict in their LGAs. Figure 19 shows that the most common response in all stages was increasing awareness amongst the community about the realities of rural living. This aligns with the biggest driver of land use conflict being a lack of awareness amongst new residents of the realities of living in an agricultural area and of agricultural industry operation. This suggests that community education and engagement could be important for reducing land use conflict. However, only around 30 per cent of respondents reported delivering community education and engagement around agriculture land use and most of these did not view their current activities as effective. This suggests that local councils could benefit from additional support to raise understanding and awareness about rural living and compliant agricultural practices.

Other common responses for additional support were LEPs with clearer zones and provisions for agricultural (and non-agricultural) land uses, promoting the benefits of agriculture to improve community acceptance of agricultural land uses, strong industry codes of practice to promote industry self-regulation and a stronger regulatory approach to protect agricultural land use. There appears to be little desire for alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

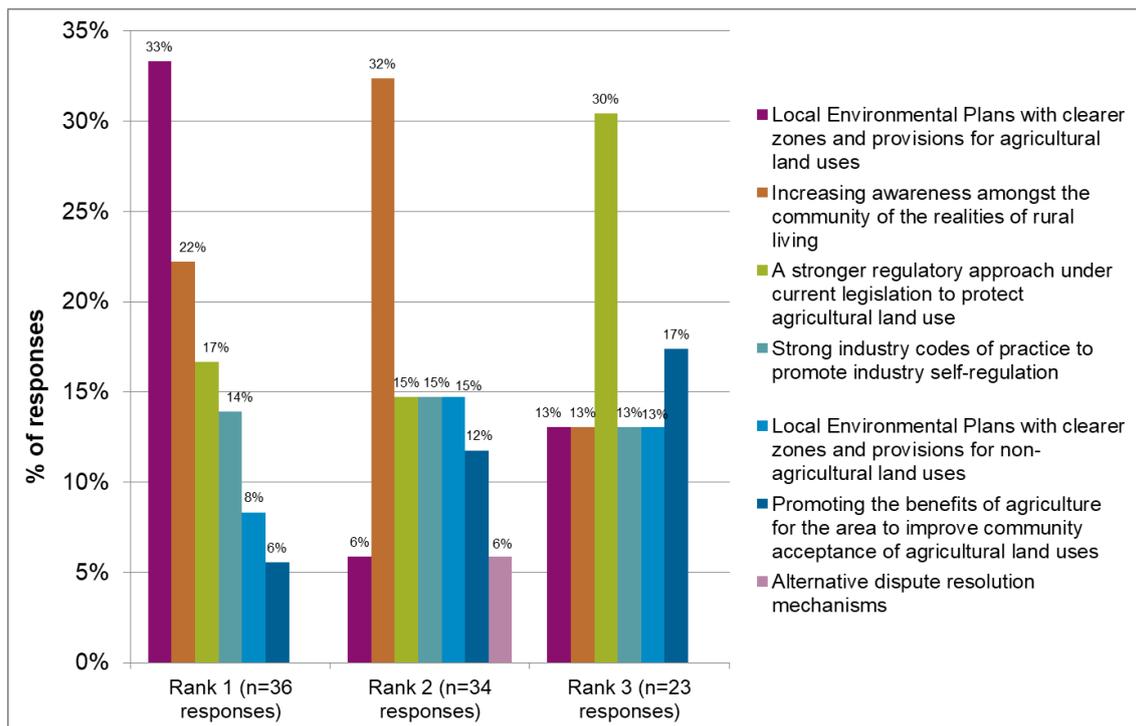
**Figure 19: What would be effective for reducing agricultural land use conflict**



\*Only asked in the Stage 3 survey

In Stage 3, survey respondents were asked to rank what they believe would be most effective of the above additional support they selected. Figure 20 shows that LEPs with clearer zones and provisions for agricultural land uses was most commonly ranked first (33%), followed by increasing community awareness about the realities of rural living (22%), a stronger regulatory approach to protect agriculture (17%) and strong industry codes of practice (14%). Increasing community awareness was most commonly ranked second (32%) and a stronger regulatory approach to protect agriculture was most commonly ranked third (30%).

**Figure 20: Perceived effectiveness of additional supports for reducing agricultural land use conflict**



## 4.6 Confidence managing agricultural land use conflict

Finally, respondents in the Stage 3 survey were asked to rate their confidence to effectively manage agricultural land use conflict on a scale of 1 (not at all confident) to 7 (very confident). Sixty five per cent of respondents reported confidence levels above four, with 29 per cent self-scoring six or seven (average 4.9). However, 34 per cent of respondents scored themselves four or less and 70 percent five or less. This suggests that up to 70 per cent of local councils could benefit from additional support to effectively manage land use conflict.

Thirteen respondents said that additional training and education would make them more confident to manage land use conflict, but did not provide specific details.

## 5 Case studies

In stage 2, depth interviews were undertaken with eight local councils. This section presents three case studies describing the response by select local councils to agricultural land use conflict in their LGA.

### 5.1 Camden Council

#### Background

Camden is an urban fringe LGA is located on the fringes of the Sydney Metropolitan Area and is within the Macarthur region. The area has historically been a highly productive agricultural area with agricultural land use accounting for 50 per cent of the LGA. In 2011, approximately 5,000 ha was being used for productive agriculture with a total value of \$47 million. Livestock for slaughter (including poultry) and cropping (vegetables, nurseries and turf).<sup>8</sup>

The Camden LGA is experiencing significant expansion of urban development and is one of the fastest growing LGAs in Australia. It is part of the South West Priority Growth Area which aims to develop infrastructure and release residential developments to provide Sydneysiders access to affordable housing options. This will reduce the total area of rural land to one-third of the Camden LGA. In addition to this, rural land in the Camden LGA will be affected the South West Rail Link, Badgerys Creek Airport and the M9 corridor projects.

The recently adopted Community Strategic Plan has the key directions around actively managing the LGA's growth and economic prosperity, with specific objectives around managing urban development and adequately administering rural land. Performance indicators within these include increasing the number of new households across the LGA, maintaining and protecting rural lands and retaining heritage sites, vistas and cultural landscapes.<sup>9</sup>

#### The nature of agricultural land use conflict

According to the Stage 2 survey, Camden Council receives approximately five complaints about agricultural activity per month. The majority of these relate to the poultry industry with odour, noise and dead birds the main triggers for complaints. As most of the LGA's poultry farms have fewer than 250,000 birds, complaints are the responsibility of the council to investigate rather than the NSW EPA. The other main sources of complaints relate to stray cattle and manure odour from agglomerations of small, intensively farmed market gardens. The complaints received are generally not recurring from isolated residents or about specific properties. It is estimated that approximately half of the complaints received are about compliant agricultural practices.

#### Impacts of agricultural land use conflict

To date agricultural land use conflict has had minimal impact on agriculture in the LGA. In the last five years the level and nature of complaints have not noticeably changed, which reflects Camden council's ongoing management of urban expansion in the area. However, the accelerated urban development being driven by NSW Government plans is expected to increase agricultural land use conflict without specific strategic management. Already there is a sense that the poultry industry in particular is under pressure from encroaching urbanisation

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<sup>8</sup> Data provided by NSW DPI based on ABS Value of agricultural commodities and areas of holdings tables derived from the 2010-11 census.

<sup>9</sup> Camden Council (2017), Community Strategic Plan. Available at: <https://indd.adobe.com/view/43082240-18ca-4eaa-b23a-ad9e7f162cc2>.

with a few smaller operators ceasing operations due to the increased costs of compliance with best practice farm management to mitigate the risk of conflict with new urban residents.

### **Council response to managing agricultural land use conflict**

To date the main response by council to complaints about agriculture has been at the planning and operational levels. RU1 zoned rural land has a 40 Ha minimum lot size and agricultural and urban development is regulated through council's LEP and DCP. Operationally, council environmental health staff and rangers investigate complaints where they monitor triggers, such as noise and odour, within NSW DPI and NSW EPA guidelines. Education of primary producers and residents to mitigate conflict is the preferred way to resolve complaints with regulatory action rare.

However, it was recognised that balancing the objectives of the Community Strategic Plan and protecting rural agriculture in the context of increasing urban development will require a long-term strategic approach. Therefore, the council recently adopted a Rural Lands Strategy that aligns to the principles of the Community Strategic Plan, the NSW Right to Farm Policy and the Camden Economic Development Strategy.<sup>10</sup> The Strategy was informed by an externally commissioned Rural Lands Study, which amongst other things recommended maintaining the 40 Ha minimum lot size on RU1 zoned land and appropriate land use buffers, and extensive public consultation. The plan articulates the following seven key planning principles to sustain the LGAs agricultural economy:

- Protect Camden's remaining rural lands
- Retain Camden's valued scenic and cultural landscapes
- Provide certainty and avoid rural land fragmentation
- Minimise and manage rural land use conflict
- Enhance Camden's Rural Economy
- Minimise unplanned non-agricultural development
- Maximise opportunities for relocation of rural enterprises

Each principle is accompanied by actions, with the Strategy to inform updates to planning instruments (LEP and DCP) and the Camden Economic Development Strategy.

## **5.2 Coffs Harbour City Council**

### **Background**

Coffs Harbour is an urban regional LGA on the north coast of NSW. The LGA is a significant agriculture area with horticulture (blueberries, bananas and other greenhouse agriculture) and cattle grazing the major agricultural uses. Agriculture is a key contributor to the economy of the entire LGA. In 2011, almost 120,000 Ha was used for productive agriculture at an estimated value of \$96 million. Approximately 80 per cent of this is fruit production, the majority of which is blueberries.<sup>11</sup> This data is likely to be out of date with substantial growth of the LGA's blueberry industry in the last year reported as the local banana industry declines. At present 81 per cent of Australia's blueberries are farmed in the Coffs Harbour LGA.

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<sup>10</sup> Camden Council (2017), Rural Lands Strategy. Available at: [www.camden.nsw.gov.au/assets/pdfs/Council/Plans-and-Strategies/Final-Rural-Lands-Strategy-September-20174.pdf](http://www.camden.nsw.gov.au/assets/pdfs/Council/Plans-and-Strategies/Final-Rural-Lands-Strategy-September-20174.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Data provided by NSW DPI based on ABS Value of agricultural commodities and areas of holdings tables derived from the 2010-11 census.

### **The nature of agricultural land use conflict**

The Stage 2 survey indicated that Coffs Harbour City Council receives a large number of agricultural land use complaints per month and that this number has increased over the last five years. The majority of these complaints are reported to be about non-compliant practices with a proportion of the complaints falling under the jurisdiction of other state government agencies (water use/water storage/chemical use/pesticide application).

Blueberry farms are reported to be the major sources of complaints. Blueberry farms are relatively small, often on steep land and use pesticide spraying and netting to protect the fruit. The main triggers are tree or vegetation removal associated with new farms, erosion, spray drift and visual disruption due to netting. There are also complaints about traffic and parking associated with fruit pickers transiently living in overcrowded residential properties and unauthorised conversion/construction of buildings for fruit picker accommodation.

In addition to this, council are concerned about excessive nutrient loads in natural waterways due to land clearing, erosion and the use of pesticides and fertilisers. There is a growing industry of covered hydroponic cropping in igloos, which is anticipated to be the next emerging land use management challenge for council. These facilities are reportedly high users of water and have been associated with high levels of pollution due to inadequate waste management practices.

### **Impacts of agricultural land use conflict**

To date, agricultural land use conflict in the Coffs Harbour LGA has not impacted agricultural industries. The volume of complaints against available resources constrains council's ability to investigate all complaints. Furthermore, the penalties for non-compliant activity and the evidence required to enforce these penalties are reportedly only a minor deterrent for blueberry farmers. Enforceable penalties for agricultural development without consent are also not seen as an effective deterrent.

The rapid expansion of the blueberry industry is reportedly polarising the LGA's community. It is currently permissible under the Coffs Harbour Council LEP to undertake intensive plant agriculture, including a blueberry farm, without development consent on rural land zoned RU2 (Rural Landscape). While development consent would be required in land zoned R5 (Large Lot Residential), many of the R5 areas have existing use rights as they have been converted from banana production to blueberry growing. While the industry boosts the local economy, the small lot requirements mean that the industry is increasingly encroaching existing residential areas. This is the reverse of what most LGAs in NSW are experiencing.

### **Council response to managing agricultural land use conflict**

As mentioned above, the volume of complaints exhausts the ability of council officers to effectively respond and operationally manage agricultural land use conflict. Current planning and development and regulatory controls are also reportedly inadequate for council to enforce compliance and manage the expansion of the blueberry industry. Council has been challenged by the speed the industry has expanded which has outpaced the ability of other state government agencies to produce guidance on managing current and emerging impacts. Council staff are endeavouring to co-opt the involvement of state government agencies where possible to review and advise on questionable farming practices and undertake joint compliance inspections where complaints crossover between the regulatory authorities.

Council recently motioned against amending the LEP to require additional consent for developing agricultural enterprises on rural lands. However, they have resolved to investigate the issue and amendments to planning instruments through a review of its Local Growth Management Strategy. This includes a resolution to develop a Rural Lands Strategy. Public submissions were invited on a discussion paper for the Rural Lands Strategy in 2016 but to date the Strategy is still under development.

Council also participates in a Blueberry Industry Interagency Working Group which is assisting growers to develop a Draft Industry Code of Practice. This group includes Clarence Valley and Bellingen Shire Councils to support a consistent regional strategy to manage the continued expansion of the industry. The Australian Blueberry Growers Association and NSW DPI are also part of this group.

## 5.3 Wollondilly Shire Council

### Background

Wollondilly Shire is an LGA on the south-western edge of Sydney, in the Macarthur region. Wollondilly Shire is predominantly a national park and rural area, with urban areas in fifteen towns and villages. Most of the rural land is used for agricultural purposes, including market gardens, orchards, dairy farms, poultry farms and grazing. In 2011, more than 28,000 Ha of land was being used for productive agriculture with an estimated gross value of agriculture of \$83 million. Poultry farms for meat production accounts for more than half of this value (\$45 million). Currently Wollondilly LGA is ranked number one for turkey meat production in Australia, number two for duck meat production and number eight for chicken meat production. Market gardens and orchards account for almost one-third (\$26 million) of agricultural value with the remainder primarily dairy and egg production (\$11 million).<sup>12</sup> There are currently just over 300 properties rated as farmland within the Shire.<sup>13</sup>

Wollondilly Shire is part of NSW Government's future plans for creating affordable housing for Sydney's growing population with population growth in the LGA predicted to increase by 50 to 60 per cent in the next 20 to 30 years.<sup>14</sup> The current Wollondilly Community Strategic Plan positions rural living as Council's number one principle around managing growth.

### The nature of agricultural land use conflict

Wollondilly Shire Council receives a high number of complaints about the poultry industry due to odour, noise and the night time transportation of birds. The majority of poultry facilities in the area house less than 250,000 birds so it is council's responsibility to investigate complaints.

The number of complaints about the poultry industry have risen dramatically during the last decade. Council records show that in 2008, only eight complaints were received. This rose to 31 complaints in 2015 and 89 to date in 2017. The majority of complaints are concentrated around approximately 10 per cent of all poultry farms in the LGA. Complaints are being received from a mixture of old and new residents, in some cases as part of organised lobby groups.

The council has identified a correlation between the rise in complaints and increased development applications for new or expanded poultry facilities. The view is that farm management processes have improved over time and that complaints are driven out of fear rather than existing conflict.

At this stage the complaints have not had a substantial impact on the local poultry industry, with major producers still establishing poultry farms and related agri-businesses in the LGA. However, there is concern that escalating conflict and any subsequent tightening of development controls could result in major poultry producers expanding interstate rather than in Wollondilly Shire. This would have major economic implications for the LGA.

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<sup>12</sup> Data provided by NSW DPI based on ABS Value of agricultural commodities and areas of holdings tables derived from the 2010-11 census.

<sup>13</sup> Wollondilly Shire Council, Community Strategic Plan 2033. Available at: [www.wollondilly2033.com.au/assets/pdf/operationalplan/WSC\\_CSP2017.pdf](http://www.wollondilly2033.com.au/assets/pdf/operationalplan/WSC_CSP2017.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Wollondilly Shire Council, Community Strategic Plan 2033. Available at: [www.wollondilly2033.com.au/assets/pdf/operationalplan/WSC\\_CSP2017.pdf](http://www.wollondilly2033.com.au/assets/pdf/operationalplan/WSC_CSP2017.pdf).

## **Council response to managing agricultural land use conflict**

Wollondilly Shire Council has focused on strategically addressing conflict between residents and the poultry industry. Rather than issue infringement notices, they are working with the industry, NSW DPI and the NSW Farmers Association to develop strategies to preserve growth in the industry while minimising conflict.

For example, council has partnered with NSW DPI, NSW Farmers' Association, the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation and the poultry industry to deliver Environmental Management Planning workshops for poultry farmers in the Wollondilly region. The aim of the workshops is to identify potential environmental and social risks associated with poultry farming. There is a focus on an environmental risk assessment for each individual farm and then the development of individualised Environmental Management Plans (EMPs). These clarify responsibilities for best practice farm management to reduce potential triggers for conflict between farms and peri-urban communities. EMPs are voluntary but there is growing uptake.

Wollondilly Shire Council also held a poultry farm forum in June 2016 to engage with the poultry industry and residential community to better understand the future opportunities and challenges associated with co-existence. A part of the focus was educating the residential community about the economic importance of poultry to the LGA and that some of the practices triggering complaints, such as night time pickups, are based on animal welfare. This was accompanied by a discussion paper. Approximately 300 people attended the forum. A key outcome was the adoption of a Good Neighbour Charter relating to the Wollondilly Poultry Industry. Relevant stakeholders were invited to sign the charter and commit to principles aimed at mitigating conflict caused by farming operations.

The Strategic Planning Department at Wollondilly Shire Council also manage a Rural Industry Advisory Committee. The Committee is represented by local members of the poultry, dairy and beef cattle, agri-tourism, horticulture and market garden farming communities, as well as NSW DPI and the Cumberland Livestock Health and Pest Authority. The purpose is to bring community members and industry together to discuss issues and promote sustainable agriculture in the LGA. Specifically the Committee contributes to:

- Providing feedback on planning proposals and development applications which are likely to impact (positively or negatively) on agricultural production.
- Communication between industry and various levels of government.
- Creating and supporting opportunities and initiatives that will enhance agricultural production.

The Committee meets quarterly and provides an annual report to Council.

Wollondilly is also part of the Sydney Peri-Urban Network (SPUN) which represents 12 local councils that border metropolitan Sydney. SPUN advocates to other levels of government on issues relevant to peri-urban local councils including ensuring long term viability for peri-urban agricultural and horticultural production.

More broadly, Wollondilly Shire Council's priority focus for the anticipated residential growth is the development of a new town at Wilton. Council's public position is not to support the development of new towns or villages in other areas of the LGA. The vision for Wilton is to create a major new town over the next 20 to 30 years which will incorporate 16,600 homes for a population of approximately 50,000. Council has also publically stated that it will not support development in parts of Wollondilly Shire outside or Wilton that are in the NSW DPE Greater Macarthur Land Release Investigation Area. In doing so these actions will protect the existing rural lands in the LGA.

## 5.4 Cabonne, Greater Hume and Yass Valley Councils

### Background

Cabonne Shire is an LGA in the Central West region of NSW with an economy reliant on the agricultural sector. In 2011 the gross value of agriculture in the LGA was estimated at \$179 million, roughly equally divided between cropping and livestock (sheep and cattle). There is a smaller but significant wine industry.<sup>15</sup> At the 2016 census, more than half of the businesses in the region (858 out of 1,683) were classified as part of the agricultural section.

Yass Valley Council is an LGA in the Southern Tablelands region of NSW. In 2011 the gross value of agriculture was estimated at \$62 million, dominated by livestock (sheep and cattle). Broad acre cropping accounted for \$13m of this, with a small but expanding wine industry.<sup>16</sup>

Greater Hume Shire is located in the Riverina region of southern NSW. The LGA has substantial intensive cattle farming (i.e. feedlots) and broad acre cropping.

All three of these rural and remote local councils surround major regional centres and are increasingly experiencing residential encroachment on rural lands.

### The nature of agricultural land use conflict

In the Stage 2 survey, both Cabonne Shire and Yass Valley Councils reported in excess of five agricultural land use complaints per month during peak summer months. In Cabonne Shire and Yass Valley, the highest number of complaints are received about vineyards and other horticulture. Noise from gas guns and other deterrents is the major trigger from complaints about agricultural land use. Complaints are received from a small number of households adjacent to primary producers.

This pattern of complaints is disproportionate to the value of agricultural industries in both LGAs, where vineyards are only a relatively minor industry by value. Complaints about livestock and other ancillary land uses are received but to a lesser extent. In Yass Valley the most common source of complaints related to agriculture actually comes from graziers about attacks on their livestock by domestic dogs.

Yass Valley Council also receives complaints about dust and traffic from the dumping of landfill from residential developments in Canberra onto peri-urban properties. Cabonne Shire Council is also seeing an emerging trend of complaints from Airbnb premises on rural properties that are currently exempt from development consents. This is triggering complaints about exposure to compliant spray drift from neighbouring orchards. There is also an emergence of greenhouse agriculture as this type of farming moves west from the Sydney Basin. It is anticipated this could trigger additional complaints.

Greater Hume Council on the other hand, only reported receiving a maximum of one agricultural land use complaint per month. These complaints are around odour, dust and noise from cattle feedlots and intensive piggeries.

The challenge for these three councils is confirming whether odour and noise complaints are about non-compliant activity. The changing face of technology and farm practice is at times not covered by current NSW environmental control guidelines (i.e. the recent introduction of audible bird scaring devices into vineyard management practice). Consent conditions for the temporary confinement of livestock are also ambiguous making regulatory action against feedlots challenging.

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<sup>15</sup> Data provided by NSW DPI based on ABS Value of agricultural commodities and areas of holdings tables derived from the 2010-11 census.

<sup>16</sup> Data provided by NSW DPI based on ABS Value of agricultural commodities and areas of holdings tables derived from the 2010-11 census.

## **Impacts of agricultural land use conflict**

All three local councils cited that volume of agricultural land use complaints is not noticeably changing and is having no impact on agriculture in the LGA. All three local councils are openly supportive of agriculture as they recognise its importance to their local economies. The main impact of residential spread appears to be in Yass Valley where the number of domestic dogs and subsequent attacks on livestock are increasing.

## **Councils' responses to managing agricultural land use conflict**

All three local councils have largely managed agricultural land use conflict through existing planning and development control instruments. Land use planning focuses on protecting agriculture but as rural land values rise, large lot subdivisions are becoming increasingly common and bring new residents closer to intensive agricultural activities.

However, each local council is implementing other specific strategies to manage any conflict.

Greater Hume Shire Council has its own Right to Farm Policy which it implemented in 2010.<sup>17</sup> That statement reinforces Council's support of compliant agriculture and explicitly states the types of legitimate agricultural land uses that might cause nuisance to other land owners. The policy explicitly states that intended purchasers and owners of rural land should consider their position if they have difficulty living adjacent to legitimate agricultural practices.

Cabonne Shire and Yass Valley Councils recognise the ambiguity of regulatory frameworks so takes a common sense operational approach to managing complaints and potential conflict. If noise, odour or dust from agricultural activities is detected on a neighbouring property, council officers investigate. This can involve engaging external consultants to undertake noise and odour testing against NSW EPA legislation and guidelines. Rather than enforce regulatory action for minor breeches, council officers attempt to mediate and educate the parties involved. As part of this Cabonne Shire Council officers are using the *NSW Right to Farm Policy* to assist in managing the community engagement process regarding rural land use complaints. Cabonne Shire Council also has its own Right to Farm policy identical to that of Greater Hume Shire.

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.greaterhume.nsw.gov.au/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=-tKgaTP8V\\_M%3D&tabid=114](http://www.greaterhume.nsw.gov.au/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=-tKgaTP8V_M%3D&tabid=114)

## 6 Key findings and recommendations

### 6.1 Summary of key findings

Table 5 summarises the key findings across all stages of the project.

**Table 5: Summary of key findings**

Key findings	
Number of complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The majority of local councils that responded to the survey continue to receive agricultural land use-related complaints, primarily over summer.</li> <li>Across all respondents, the number of reported complaints received on average per month did not significantly differ between 2016 and 2018.</li> <li>More than half reported receiving 1-2 complaints on average per month.</li> <li>The percentage of local councils reporting 3-5 complaints per month declined by 19 percentage points from 2016 to 2018, although the percentage that reported five or more complaints per month increased by seven percentage points over the same period.</li> </ul>
Types and sources of complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Almost all responding local councils in each year reported receiving complaints about legally compliant agricultural activities.</b></li> <li><b>Around 40-50 per cent of respondents reported that at least 50 per cent of their agricultural land use complaints are about legally compliant agricultural activities.</b></li> <li>The majority of complaints are about intensive agriculture. Poultry farms, broad acre cropping, fruit or nut growing, livestock grazing, piggeries and vineyards continue to be the most commonly complained about industries.</li> <li>Noise, odour, dust, spray drift and escaping livestock continue to be the most common triggers for complaints.</li> <li>Interviews suggested that in some LGAs complaints are concentrated to a small number of complainants and farms. In larger urban fringe and urban regional LGAs complaints are reportedly more dispersed. The survey confirmed that almost three-quarters of complaints to local councils are about a single farm. Just over 50 per cent are from a single complainant.</li> <li>Given the high percentage of complaints received about compliant agricultural</li> </ul>

	<p>practices, these findings suggest that nuisance complaints continue to be an issue for some farmers.</p>
<p><b>Drivers of complaints</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The biggest factors reported in all stages of the survey and interviews are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A lack of understanding amongst new residents of the realities of living in an agricultural area and of agricultural industry operation</li> <li>- Lack of communication within the community and between neighbors</li> <li>- Encroachment of non-agricultural uses into existing agricultural areas</li> <li>- Close proximity of agricultural uses to non-agricultural properties</li> <li>- Subdivision of agricultural properties.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The encroachment of non-agricultural land uses into agricultural land, subdivision of existing agricultural properties and lack of skills or awareness about appropriate property management were seen as less of an issue by respondents in 2018 than in 2016. This suggests that some local councils are managing agricultural land use conflict more effectively through local planning controls.</li> <li>• Local councils in growth corridors expect conflict between agriculture and residential development to increase as urban expansion continues.</li> <li>• Coffs Harbour City Council is experiencing rapid expansion of intensive small lot agricultural industry, blueberry farming, which falls outside of existing development controls. This is seeing small lot farms increasingly encroaching existing residential areas, creating substantial conflict. This is the reverse of what most LGAs in NSW are experiencing but the blueberry industry is expanding into other LGAs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Impact of conflict on agriculture activities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-third of respondents in 2016 and 2017 reported that land use conflict is affecting agriculture in their LGA. However 50 per cent of respondents in 2018 reported a negative impact.</li> <li>• Of those who completed the survey in 2016 and 2018, 11 reported in 2018 (61%) that land use conflict is impacting agriculture in their LGA compared to only three in 2016 (17%). This suggests that either the impact is increasing or that local councils are more aware of the existing impact.</li> <li>• Based on interviews, agriculture is most likely to be impacted by conflict in urban fringe LGAs. As residential developments erode buffer zones, farms face pressure to implement additional management processes to minimise potential drivers of complaints. The cost of these can make smaller farms unviable.</li> </ul>

## Current approaches to manage land use conflict

- Most local councils manage land use conflict at the development approval level, with community education and engagement the least employed strategy.
- The most common approach local councils use to manage land use conflict appears to be the planning system, primarily via the conditions in their LEPs and DCPs around permissible land uses and buffer zones. Local councils then subsequently regulate land use and development against the conditions in these planning instruments.
- Around 60-70 per cent of respondents across the three years indicated that their local council manages land use conflict at a strategic planning level. However, only 30 per cent reported that their local council has a clear strategy of plan for agriculture in their LGA.
- Mid Coast and Camden Councils are exemplars for strategic planning, taking a long-term view to protecting agriculture and rural lands through the drafting of new planning instruments and a Rural Lands Strategy respectively. These are being informed by state and local council economic and growth strategies in consultation with state government agencies.
- Coffs Harbour City Council is working with a Blueberry Interagency Working Group to assist growers develop an Industry Code of Practice that addresses current environmental concerns.
- Wollondilly Shire Council has also initiated a number of initiatives with the poultry industry to manage conflict in the context of urban expansion into their LGA. They are also planning to confine expansion to an isolated area of their LGA to protect rural lands and agri-businesses.
- Managing land use conflict at the development approval level is seen as the most effective way to manage land use conflict. Strategic planning and operational strategies are also viewed as effective by around half of respondents. Community education and engagement is seen as the least effective strategy by relatively small number of local councils using this approach to reduce land use conflict.

## Support to manage land use conflict

- Just over half of responding local councils (56%) refer land use complaints onto the NSW EPA. This is not surprising given the NSW EPA is the lead statewide regulatory agency over environmental pollution and scheduled agricultural operations. Local councils also commonly refer complaints to Local Land Services, NSW DPI and NSW OEH. Thirty one per cent of respondents in 2018 indicated that they resolve all complaints in house.
- The vast majority of the responding local councils seek guidance or support to manage land use conflict from the NSW DPI, either via the NSW DPI website or Agricultural Land Use Planning Teams. This is mainly advisory around

industry-specific considerations for planning considerations and assessing development applications. Local councils developing long-term strategies for agricultural land use management are also extensively consulting with NSW DPI during development. Camden and Mid Coast Councils are notable examples.

- Most local councils find the guidance and support provided by NSW DPI useful. The percentage that finds the support very useful has increased from 22 per cent in 2016 to 42 per cent in 2018.
- The NSW EPA and NSW DPE are also commonly sought by local councils for support to manage land use conflict.
- Most respondents are aware of the *Right to Farm Policy* (approximately 85%) but only half are aware of any of the actions within. Only nine per cent appear intimately familiar with the policy.
- Of those that have heard of the *Right to Farm Policy*, 29 per cent said that their local council has used it to inform decision making around agriculture in their LGA including for:
  - Internal agricultural land use strategy or policy development
  - Rural lands planning strategies
  - Internal advice around development decisions
  - Community, councilor and developer education.
- However, most local councils interviewed in 2017 do not think that the *Right to Farm Policy* has helped them to manage agricultural land use conflict, seeing it as a positioning statement rather than an operational support. They commented more supportive legislation and planning regulations would be more useful.
- Very few local councils appear to have adopted their own Right to Farm Policy (three of 44 respondents from 2018).
- Survey respondents indicated that the following would be effective to reduce land use conflict in their LGA:
  - Increasing community awareness of the realities of rural living, in particular new residents.
  - LEPs with clearer zones and provisions for agricultural land uses.
  - A stronger regulator approach to protect agricultural land use.
  - Strong industry codes of practice to promote industry self-regulation.

## 6.2 Recommendations

### **Recommendation 1: That the review of the *Right to Farm Policy* considers options for effective community education and engagement about the realities of rural living.**

Almost three quarters of responding local councils reported that increasing awareness amongst the community about the realities of rural living would be effective for reducing agricultural land use conflict. However, only thirty per cent of local councils reported delivering community education and engagement to help reduce land use conflict and of those only around a quarter believe that they have been effective. This suggests that local councils need support raising awareness in the community about the realities of rural living and what constitutes compliant agricultural practices.

Given the nature of complaints, community engagement and educational materials could be tailored for specific regions or LGAs so that they are relevant to local intensive agricultural industries. Priority targets for education and engagement would be both 'tree changers' before or at the point of purchase; and existing residents in priority LGAs as summer approaches which is the peak period for complaints.

### **Recommendation 2: That the review of the *Right to Farm Policy* considers additional guidance and support for local councils to strategically manage land use complaints and issues.**

Respondents across all stages of the survey indicated that the main way local councils are managing land use conflict is via local planning controls and the development application process. A relative minority of local councils have a clear strategy or policy for agriculture in their LGA, including adopting their own Right to Farm Policy. Even fewer local councils appear to provide training for staff around agricultural industry-specific considerations for assessing development applications or investigating and resolving land use complaints.

Based on these current approaches, additional guidance and support to consider providing local councils could include the following:

1. Guidance or training for local council planning staff about industry-specific considerations when assessing development applications for new or expanded farms, and encroaching residential developments.
2. Education or training for local council staff in effectively responding to complaints about agriculture including understanding compliant and non-compliant activities for relevant agricultural industries; and mediation approaches.
3. Support or model frameworks for local councils to develop their own Right to Farm Policy or Rural Lands Strategy. The latter have been effectively used by many local councils to inform their strategic direction for agriculture in their LGA. While only a handful of local councils have adopted their own Right to Farm policies, they have been used to signal to their communities support for compliant agriculture in their LGA and that they will manage development and complaints according to that position. Based on this there is merit exploring how more local councils can be supported to adopt their own Right to Farm Policy in alignment with the statewide policy.
4. Providing access to mediation and alternative dispute resolution to resolve appropriate issues between neighbours without the need for court action.

**Recommendation 3: That the review of the *Right to Farm Policy* considers ways to expand the adoption of industry codes of practice for agricultural industries attracting the most complaints, and to monitor their impact.**

Survey respondents suggested that strong industry codes of practice to promote industry self-regulation would be effective for reducing agricultural land use conflict. Respondents indicated that local councils are already referring to a wide range of industry codes for guidance. However, in some industries codes of practice are dated, not supported by a national peak body, not endorsed nationally or are not accompanied by incentives for voluntary uptake. Therefore, the relevance and/or uptake of some existing codes are unclear.

Given the above, considerations for a review of ways to expand the adoption of industry codes of practice could include the following:

- The industries and regions attracting the most complaints. Possibilities could include poultry farming in peri-urban LGAs and blueberry farming along the North Coast.
- Whether existing industry codes of practice exist, the currency and utility of those codes, or whether a new code needs to be developed.
- The alignment of any existing or new codes of practice with either a national code, or codes and regulations in other states to ensure NSW maintains a competitive advantage for attracting agricultural investment.
- Current and possible incentives for farmers to voluntarily adopt an industry code of practice.
- The key national and NSW stakeholders that would need to be involved in developing or trialling the wider adoption of relevant industry codes.

**Recommendation 4: That the review of the *Right to Farm Policy* explore the feasibility of a study into the suitability of current planning controls for non-scheduled agricultural operations.**

The survey findings clearly indicated that local councils are primarily managing land use conflict via the planning and development application system, and see this as their most effective strategy. Respondents also clearly indicated the view that LEPs with clearer zones and provisions for agricultural land uses would be effective for reducing land use conflict. A study into the suitability of current planning controls for non-scheduled agricultural operations could include the following:

- A review of zones in the Standard Instrument LEP and permitted land uses.
- Buffering guidelines for various agricultural industries, the current use of buffers and ways to increase the incorporation of buffers between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses.
- The feasibility of establishing precincts for specific agricultural industries in different parts of NSW.

**Recommendation 5: That the *Right to Farm Agricultural Land Use Survey* is continued to monitor the impacts of any enhancements to the *Right to Farm Policy* as a result of the review, and of any other initiatives implemented to support the right to farm in NSW.**

To support ongoing monitoring of the impact of the *Right to Farm Policy* and other initiatives to reduce agricultural land use conflict, local councils could continue to be periodically surveyed. Based on the data collected as part of this study, every two to three years would suffice to allow a reasonable time for new initiatives to be implemented and their impacts to be observed.

# Appendix A The survey

## Introduction

The University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and NSW Department of Primary Industries are conducting important research into agricultural land use conflict across NSW. The research is investigating the type and extent of agricultural land use conflict, how councils are managing this conflict, and how councils can best be supported in conflict management.

**Agricultural land use conflict refers to a disagreement or dispute over the use of agricultural land. Conflict may result when the activities of one land owner are perceived to, or actually, impact upon the rights, values or amenity of another person.**

This survey is the third wave of the survey administered in both 2016 and 2017. Your support in completing the survey in those years is greatly appreciated. The purpose of repeating the survey is to assess whether there have been any changes in agricultural land use conflict in the last 12 months.

We ask that one survey be completed per council. We encourage you to consult with other council staff members to complete the survey. You may save your answers and return to the survey to complete it at a later date.

**The responses you provide may be reported publicly. These responses will be reported in a way that ensures you are not in any way identified.**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research please contact: Dr Andy Goodall, Associate Director, UTS at [andrew.goodall@uts.edu.au](mailto:andrew.goodall@uts.edu.au)

## Complaints

**This section asks about your council's experience with complaints about agricultural land use**

Q1. Has your council ever received complaints regarding agricultural land use? This can include agriculture impacting on other land uses, and other land uses impacting on agricultural uses

- A. Yes
- B. No (Go to Q10)

Q2. Does your council have a policy for handling complaints?

- A. Yes (answer Q2A)
- B. No (Go to Q2B)
- C. Unsure (Go to Q2B)

Q2A: Does your council's complaint handling policy include specific processes or procedures for managing land use complaints?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Unsure

Q2B: Please indicate the criteria for whether council decides to deal with a land use complaint or not. (OPEN)

Q3. In the last 5 years, do you think agricultural land use complaints have:

- A. Increased
- B. Decreased
- C. Stayed about the same
- D. Not sure

Q4. Approximately how many complaints regarding agricultural land use does council receive?

- A. On average per month? (*Provide box to specify*)
- B. At maximum per month? (*Provide box to specify*)
- C. At minimum per month? (*Provide box to specify*)

Q5. What months of the year does council receive the most complaints? (MR)

- A. January- February
- B. March-April
- C. May-June
- D. July-August
- E. September-October
- F. November-December

Q6. Overall, what proportion of agricultural land use complaints made to council are about the following types of issues:

	0%	1-25%	25-50%	50-75%	75%+
Legally compliant agricultural industries impacting on amenity (e.g. odour, noise, dust etc.)		Ask Q7a-d	Ask Q7a-d	Ask Q7a-d	Ask Q7a-d
Non-compliant agricultural industries impacting on amenity (e.g. odour, noise, dust etc.)		Ask Q7a-d	Ask Q7a-d	Ask Q7a-d	Ask Q7a-d

Q7A. What types of agricultural industries attract the most complaints in your area? Please select all that are relevant and order them from most (1) to least common.

- A. Sheep grazing
- B. Cattle grazing – meat production
- C. Cattle grazing – dairy
- D. Poultry
- E. Piggeries
- F. Broad acre cropping
- G. Small scale market gardens
- H. Greenhouse horticulture
- I. Fruit or nut growers
- J. Vegetable growers
- K. Flower growers
- L. Nurseries

- M. Sugarcane
- N. Horse studs
- O. Vineyards
- P. Other (please specify)

Q7B. Specifically, what are the complaints regarding agricultural industries about? Please select all that are relevant and order them from most (1) to least common.

- A. Odour
- B. Noise
- C. Dust
- D. Spray drift
- E. Lights
- F. Firearms
- G. Fire
- H. Flies
- I. Litter
- J. Smoke
- K. Reflective structures such as igloos, greenhouses or hail netting
- L. Gas guns or cannons used as pest deterrents
- M. Wind break plantings affecting visual amenity
- N. Timing of deliveries to and from the farm (i.e. night or early morning)
- O. Impacts on downstream water users including illegal water take or infrastructure (e.g. dams/earthworks)
- P. Tree or vegetation removal on agricultural land
- Q. Escape of livestock onto public land or residential property
- R. Other (please specify)

Q7C. Which of the following best describes the majority of complaints regarding agricultural land use your council receives?

- A. Single farm from a single complainant (ASK Q7D)
- B. Single farm from multiple complainants (SKIP to Q8)
- C. Multiple farms in one industry from multiple complainants (SKIP to Q8)
- D. Multiple farms in different industries from multiple complainants (SKIP to Q8)

Q7D. How does council manage issues raised by serial complainants?  
[OPEN].

Q8. Which (if any) of the following agencies does your council refer complaints on to? (MR)

- A. NSW Department of Planning and Environment
- B. Local Land Services
- C. NSW Environment Protection Authority
- D. Regional Organisation of Councils (ROCs)
- E. NSW Department of Primary Industries
- F. NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
- G. Other (please specify)
- H. None, we resolve all complaints in house

Q9. Overall, how much would you say each of the following factors drive agricultural land use conflict in your area?

	Not at all	A little	A fair amount	A lot
Non-compliance in the agricultural industry with relevant legislation and consent conditions and/or best Industry				
Encroachment of non-agricultural uses into existing agricultural areas				
Sub-division of agricultural properties				
Lack of communication within the community and between neighbours				
Lack of understanding amongst new residents of the realities of living in an agricultural area and agricultural industries				
Lack of skills or awareness of appropriate property management in agricultural areas amongst residents (e.g. weed control)				
Use of agricultural properties for holiday lets or ecotourism				
Encroachment of agriculture into or near existing residential areas				
Close proximity of agricultural uses to non-agricultural properties				
Other (please specify)				

## Current approaches to managing land use conflict

Q10. Has council undertaken any strategic planning regarding rural land use or completed a rural land use study?

- A. Yes (Ask Q10a)
- B. No (Skip to Q11)

Q10a Please provide examples where council has undertaken strategic planning regarding rural land use? [OPEN]

Q11. Does council currently employ strategies to manage land use conflict at the development approval level?

- A. Yes (Ask Q11a)
- B. No (Skip to Q12)

Q11a Please provide examples of strategies council currently employs to manage land use conflict at the development approval level? [OPEN]

Q12. Does council currently employ any operational strategies to manage land use conflict in their communities?

- A. Yes (Ask Q12a)
- B. No (Skip to Q13)

Q12a Please provide examples of operational strategies council currently employs to manage land use conflict in their communities? [OPEN]

Q13. Does council use any community education or engagement strategies to help prevent land use conflict?

- A. Yes (Ask Q13a)
- B. No (Skip to Q14)

Q13a. Please provide examples of any community education or engagement strategies or initiatives council has used to help prevent land use conflict? [OPEN]

Q14 Overall, how effective do you think the strategies used by council are at managing land use conflict? *(Only options shown are those selected yes from Q10 to Q13 – if no to all then this question will be skipped)*

	Not at all	A small amount	Quite a lot	A great deal
Strategic planning regarding rural land use				
Development approval processes				
On ground or operational responses				

Community education and engagement				
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Q15. What would be effective for reducing land use conflict in your council area? (MR)

- A. Local Environmental Plans with clearer zones and provisions for agricultural land uses
- B. Local Environmental Plans with clearer zones and provisions for non-agricultural land uses
- C. Other legislative controls to protect agricultural land uses
- D. A stronger regulatory approach under current legislation to protect agricultural land use
- E. Increasing awareness amongst the community of the realities of rural living
- F. Promoting the benefits of agriculture for the area to improve community acceptance of agricultural land uses
- G. Strong industry codes or practice to promote industry self-regulation
- H. Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms
- I. Other (please specify)

Q15A Of those that you selected above, please rank in order what you believe would be most effective for reducing land use conflict in your council area. *(Items piped from those selected in Q15. If make no selections at Q15 then skip to Q16)*

Q16: Which of the following does your council have in place to help reduce or manage land use conflict? (YES or NO for each)

- A. Online or face-to-face training for planning staff around managing agricultural land use conflict at the development approval stage
- B. Online or face-to-face training for staff investigating land use complaints
- C. Online or face-to-face training for relevant staff around conflict resolution related to land use disputes
- D. Policies and procedures for how land use complaints are managed/responded to
- E. Guidelines for staff around conflict resolution related to land use disputes
- F. A clear strategy or plan for agriculture in your LGA
- G. Provisions in your LEP or DCP for buffer zones between agriculture and residential land
- H. Mechanisms to engage your communities in decision making about agricultural and residential developments following the submission of a development application
- I. Mechanisms to engage your communities in decision making about agricultural and residential developments prior to the submission of a development application
- J. A formal land use dispute resolution process
- K. Other <please specify>

Q17. To what extent do you think land use conflict is reducing agriculture in your council area?

- A. Not at all/negligible
- B. Only a small amount
- C. A fair amount
- D. Quite a lot

Q17A. Are there any other factors reducing agriculture in your LGA?

- A. A. No
- B. B. Yes <please describe>

## NSW Department of Primary Industries

Q18. Which of the following agencies has your council contacted or used support or guidance information from to manage agricultural land use conflict? (Yes, No, or unsure for each)

- A. NSW Department of Planning and Environment
- B. Local Land Services
- C. NSW Environment Protection Agency
- D. Regional Organisation of Councils (ROCs)
- E. NSW Department of Primary Industries
- F. Other (please specify)

Q19. Please rate your awareness of the NSW Right to Farm Policy

- A. I have never heard of the Right to Farm Policy (SKIP to Q19C)
- B. I am aware of the Policy but not the actions within (ASK Q19A)
- C. I am aware of the Policy and some of the actions (ASK Q19A)
- D. I am aware of the Policy and all of the actions within (ASK Q19A)

Q19A: Has your council ever used the NSW Right to Farm Policy to inform decision making around agricultural land use in your area?

- A. Yes
- B. No (SKIP to Q19C)
- C. Unsure (SKIP to 19C)

Q19B: Please indicate how your council has used the NSW Right to Farm Policy [OPEN]

Q19C: Has council adopted its own Right to Farm Policy?

- A. A. Yes
- B. B. No
- C. C. Unsure

Q20. Has your council ever used any of the following other initiatives or support to help manage agricultural land use conflict? (SELECT YES, NO OR UNSURE TO EACH OPTION]

- A. Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment
- B. The Living and Working in Rural Areas Handbook
- C. Industry Best Practice Guides/Manuals
- D. Mediation or other Alternative Dispute Resolution
- E. Other <please specify>

Q21. Has your council worked with or sought advice from the NSW Department of Primary Industries Agricultural Land Use Planning team?

- A. Yes (Ask Q21A)
- B. No

Q21A. How has your council worked with and/or sought advice from the NSW DPI Agricultural Land Use Planning team? [OPEN]

Q22. Does your Council currently use any of the support provided by NSW Department of Primary Industries on their website?

- A. Yes (Ask Q22a)
- B. No (Skip to Q23)

*(If select no to both Q21 and Q22, SKIP to Q26)*

Q22A. Please list the support your council currently uses [OPEN]

Q23 Overall, how useful did Council find the support and advice provided by NSW Department of Primary Industries?

Very useful	Somewhat Useful	Slightly useful	Not at all useful
Ask Q24 and SKIP Q25	Ask Q24 and SKIP Q25	SKIP Q24 and Ask Q25	SKIP Q24 and Ask Q25

Q24. Please specify why you found these useful [OPEN]

Q25. Please specify why you found these only slightly useful or not at all useful [OPEN]

Q26. Please provide any suggestion for additional initiatives or support NSW DPI could provide to help councils manage agricultural land use conflict [OPEN]

Q27: Please rate your own confidence to manage land use conflict within the scope of your role. <0-7 with 1=not confident at all; 7=very confident> (ASK Q27a if answer 5 or less)

Q27A: Please indicate what additional support would help you become more confident managing land use conflict [OPEN].

Q28. Please describe your position/role within your local council [OPEN]

Thank you for completing the survey

CLOSE

## Appendix B Survey respondents

**Table A6: Local councils that responded to the Stage 1 survey**

Urban Fringe	Urban Regional	Rural and Remote
Fairfield	Bathurst	Berrigan
Camden	Bega Valley	Bland
Hawkesbury	Cessnock	Blayney
Hills Shire	Clarence Valley	Cabonne
Liverpool	Coffs Harbour	Cobar
Wollondilly	Deniliquin	Cowra
Wyong	Eurobodalla	Dungog
	Great Lakes	Gloucester
	Greater Taree	Greater Hume
	Griffith	Gunnedah
	Kempsey	Harden
	Maitland	Kyogle
	Mid-Western Regional	Leeton
	Orange	Lockhart
	Port Macquarie-Hastings	Nambucca
	Singleton	Narromine
	Tamworth Regional	Palerang
	Tweed	Snowy River
		Temora
		Tenterfield
		Upper Hunter
		Upper Lachlan
		Walgett
		Young

**Table A7: Local councils that responded to Stage 2 survey**

Urban Fringe	Urban Regional	Rural and Remote
Camden	Albury	Balranald
Hills Shire	Armidale	Bellingen
	Ballina	Berrigan
	Bathurst	Bland
	Bega Valley	Blayney
	Broken Hill	Bourke
	Coffs Harbour	Cabonne
	Dubbo	Carrathool
	Edward River	Coolamon
	Eurobodalla	Cowra
	Goulburn-Mulwaree	Federation
	Kempsey	Forbes
	Kiama	Glen Innes Severn
	Lake Macquarie	Greater Hume
	Lismore	Gunnedah
	Lithgow	Gwydir
	Port Macquarie-Hastings	Hilltops
	Port Stephens	Inverell
	Richmond Valley	Kyogle
	Tamworth Regional	Leeton
	Tweed	Liverpool Plains
	Wagga Wagga	Lockhart
	Wingecarribee	Murray River
		Murrumbidgee
		Nambucca
		Narrabri
		Parkes
		Snowy Valleys
		Temora
		Tenterfield
		Upper Lachlan
		Wentworth
		Yass Valley

**Table A8: Local councils that responded to Stage 3 survey**

Urban Fringe	Urban Regional	Rural and Remote
Camden	Albury	Balranald
Campbelltown	Ballina	Bellingen
Hills Shire	Bathurst	Berrigan
Hornsby	Bega Valley	Bland
Liverpool	Cessnock	Brewarrina
Queanbeyan	Coffs Harbour	Cabonne
	Edward River	Cobar
	Goulburn-Mulwaree	Coolamon
	Kiama	Cowra
	Lake Macquarie	Federation
	Lismore	Forbes
	Orange	Gunnedah
	Shoalhaven	Inverell
	Wingecarribee	Kyogle
		Lockhart
		Murrumbidgee
		Musswellbrook
		Nambucca
		Narrabri
		Narrandera
		Snowy Monaro
		Tenterfield
		Wentworth
		Yass Valley

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**Table A9: Local councils that responded to the survey in all stages**

Urban Fringe	Urban Regional	Rural and Remote
Camden	Bathurst Bega Valley Coffs Harbour Edward River	Berrigan Bland Cabonne Cowra Gunnedah Kyogle Lockhart Nambucca Tenterfield

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**Table A10: Local councils that responded to the Stage 1 and Stage 3 surveys**

Urban Fringe	Urban Regional	Rural and Remote
Camden Hills Shire Liverpool	Bathurst Bega Valley Cessnock Coffs Harbour Orange	Berrigan Bland Cabonne Cobar Cowra Gunnedah Kyogle Lockhart Nambucca Tenterfield

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# Appendix C Stage 2 Interview guide

## Stage 1 interview guide

### *Mechanism for recording complaints*

1. To start off with, when (or if) you get complaints regarding agricultural practices or land use, which section of council receives these?
2. How are the complaints currently recorded? (prompt for the way data is stored, the information that is collected and what happens to this information)
3. Are there any improvements you would like to see in the complaints recording process? (i.e. data that isn't being collected, but they think should be?)

### *Type, extent and origin of complaints*

4. Is land-use conflict a concern for your council area? Why?
5. How frequently do you receive complaints?
6. What are the complaints about?
7. Who are the complaints generally from?

### *Managing land-use conflict*

8. What strategies does council currently use to address or manage land-use conflict?
9. Are council aware of the support or guidelines provided by NSW DPI such as ... (Note: we will need a list of these from NSW DPI)
10. Do you have any ideas or suggestions for other strategies or methods that would help prevent and manage land-use conflict?
11. How might council use the support provided by NSW DPI to inform their future practices regarding land-use conflict management?

## Stage 2 interview guide

### *Background*

1. Could you please describe your role at your council and how long you have been in this role?
2. What is your role around managing agricultural land use complaints and conflict?

### *The nature of agricultural land use conflict*

3. What are the main sources of agricultural land use conflict in your LGA?
  - a. Which industries are the subjects of the most conflict?
  - b. For these industries, what is the conflict about?
4. What are the main types of agricultural land use complaints made to your council?
5. Who makes the majority of the complaints about agricultural land use in your LGA?
6. How has the number and nature of complaints changed in the last 5 to 10 years?
  - a. If there has been a change, what do you think have been the causes?

### *Impacts of agricultural land use conflict*

7. What role does agriculture provide to your LGA? (e.g. economic, scenic)
8. What support does your council provide to agriculture?
9. What have been the impacts of the abovementioned agricultural land use conflict on agriculture industries in your LGA?
  - a. Do you think that conflict has led to a reduction of agriculture in your area?
10. What future impacts do you anticipate that agricultural land use conflict might have in your LGA?

### *Council responses to agricultural land use conflict*

11. How does your council respond to agricultural land use complaints?
  - a. How are complaints received, 'triaged' and recorded?
  - b. How are complaints responded to?
  - c. How do you decide whether what is being complained about is compliant or non-compliant?

- d. How do you decide whether to refer a complaint to another agency (e.g. the EPA) or whether council should take regulatory action?
12. What steps does your council take to minimise and manage agricultural land use conflict in your LGA?
- a. What strategies are employed at the development approval level?
  - b. What strategies are employed at the operational level?
  - c. What community awareness or education strategies are employed, in particular for new purchasers of residential property?
  - d. Are there any other strategies employed?
  - e. How effective do you think these strategies are and why or why not?
  - f. Do you have suggestions for preventing or mitigating land use conflict that requires further resourcing or support?
13. Does your council work with any agricultural industry or community groups around managing and responding to agricultural land use conflict?
14. Do you ever receive referrals about agricultural land use conflict from other agencies (e.g. the EPA or DPI or industry groups)?
- a. If so what are the referrals about?

*The NSW Right to Farm Policy*

15. What is your understanding of the *NSW Right to Farm Policy*?
16. How have you used the *Right to Farm Policy* to manage agricultural land use conflict in your LGA?
- a. How has the NSW Department of Primary Industries supported your council to implement the Policy?
  - b. What other ways are the NSW Department of Primary Industries helping your council manage agricultural land use conflict?
17. What have been the impacts of the *Right to Farm Policy* to date?
- a. What do you think the future impacts of the Policy will be?
  - b. What needs to happen for the Policy to have more impact?
18. What suggestions do you have for strengthening the *Right to Farm Policy* and the management of agricultural land use conflict?

*Role of DPI and other agencies*

19. What information from DPI or other agency do you use or value and why?
20. Is there any information/guidelines that you would like to see developed?
21. How to you prefer to access information from DPI and other agencies? – downloadable pdf, web-based content, hard copy fact sheet?
22. What assistance or support can DPI or other agencies offer to assist councils address land use conflict?



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