



Proposed Transfer of Soil Conservation Service

Frequently asked questions

What is proposed?

The NSW Government has approved consultation on a possible transfer of the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) to Local Land Services. If the proposal proceeds, this would see the SCS maintain its independent status, but align its operations and administration with Local Land Services.

If the transfer proceeds, all SCS staff who are currently employed by NSW Department of Industry (DoI) – Lands would transfer to Local Land Services.

Will there be any impact on service levels?

A key element of the proposed transfer is the continuity of service delivery. Business would carry on as usual and operational arrangements would be unaffected.

Will the transfer definitely happen and when?

The Minister for Primary Industries, Niall Blair has appointed a transition steering committee to consider the proposed transfer, including engagement with key stakeholders.

The final decision on whether the transfer goes ahead rests with Minister Blair, who will consider recommendations from the committee. If he approves the transfer, it will be effective from 1 July 2017.

Who is on the transition steering committee?

The Minister has appointed the Chair of the Local Land Services Board of Chairs, Tim de Mestre to chair the transition steering committee.

Other members appointed to the committee include the General Manager, Soil Conservation Service, Tim Ferraro; Director Industrial Relations, Department of Industry, Simon Kempson; and a representative from the NSW Soil Knowledge Network.

Local Land Services representatives will include a senior executive responsible for each of the areas of: Finance; Corporate Affairs and People and Culture.

What is the role of the steering committee?

The Committee has been established as the primary body responsible for making recommendations to the

Minister about the possible transfer of the operations and administration of the SCS. The Committee is also responsible for developing a transition plan and overseeing any transition to Local Land Services.

What are the benefits for customers if this transfer goes ahead?

The transfer is part of a move by the NSW Government to align related services to improve on-ground results for customers. Customers in areas that are under-served by private industry will continue to have access to the services of SCS.

There is strong potential to co-locate staff into one office in towns where they both currently operate, given customers easier access to services and information.

Will there be any impact on fees and charges?

SCS operates on a fee-for-service basis and this will not change. This is simply a matter of changing administrative and reporting arrangements.

Is Local Land Services equipped for this?

Local Land Services has been in operation for more than three years and already employs around 800 staff across 11 regions. It has central support functions in finance, strategy, governance, major programs and corporate affairs which will be available to support SCS.

Senior staff are familiar with both organisations, meaning there is a good mutual understanding of each organisation's business needs and operations.

While the nature of the work that is carried out by SCS is different to the services currently offered by Local Land Services, there are good existing systems in place to manage this transition.

Are there any opportunities for efficiencies as part of this transfer?

All possibilities will be considered. There may be opportunities for co-location of staff and for SCS to deliver some Local Land Services programs in a more efficient manner under its current procurement arrangements.