



Program Report

Hunter Councils Environment Division

June – August 2016

*Proudly delivering the Hunter & Central Coast Regional Environmental
Management Strategy (HCCREMS)*



Our Objectives

1. To facilitate collaborative planning and delivery of cost effective environmental research, protection and management initiatives to enhance the local and regional environment
2. Assist member councils to be environmental leaders in their local communities, the region and NSW.
3. Attract funding and resources to the region to design, deliver and embed innovation and environmental best practice.

Our Member Councils



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1 CURRENT PROGRAM FOCUS

Biodiversity

1. Facilitating collaborative review and update, by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) and Councils, of the Hunter Region Vegetation Mapping to resolve previous issues of scale and accuracy.
2. Engaging partners and resources to strategically target the delivery of on ground restoration and rehabilitation activities in areas of regional conservation priority.

Grey Headed Flying Fox

1. Collaborating with member Councils, OEH and other stakeholder organisations, to facilitate a regional strategic approach to managing Flying Fox issues.
2. Actively pursuing funding and resources to directly support Councils to develop local Camp Management Plans and to facilitate more consistent and effective community education and engagement around Flying Fox issues.

Contaminated Land Capacity Building Program

1. Developing an Implementation Plan for Year 2 (2016/17) to reflect additional funding provided to the program.
2. Integrating Council feedback to the finalisation of key project outputs developed during Year 1 of the program:
 - Regional Contaminated Land Policy and Procedures template
 - Regional register of Development Consent Conditions – Contaminated Land.

Natural Disaster Resilience

1. Actively pursuing funding and resources to directly support Councils build organisational and community resilience to natural disasters.
2. Disseminating the suite of 'Beat the Heat' communications materials developed through the Regional Heatwave Resilience project to a range of project partners and stakeholders in preparation for summer.

Waste Management

1. Commencing the next stage of regional waste modelling to include spatial representation of potential long term service and infrastructure opportunities.
2. Initial implementation of the Hunter Region Litter Implementation Plan project to prevent and minimise litter in recreational parks.
3. Region wide delivery of the Garage Sale Trail on 22nd October, 2016.
4. Identifying and supporting delivery of targeted regional capacity building initiatives.
5. Implementing the Love Food on Campus project in partnership with the University of Newcastle.

2 THE ENVIRONMENT DIVISION TEAM

Team Member	Areas of Responsibility
Bradley Nolan Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divisional Management • Regional Flying Fox Program • Waste Management • Review of Hunter Vegetation Mapping
Steve Wilson Deputy Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divisional Management Support • Regional Contaminated Land Program • Natural Disaster Resilience • Climate Change Adaptation
Michael Neville Regional Waste Program Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of Regional Waste Program • Regional Waste Managers Group • Regional Waste Modelling • Regional Recycled Organics
Chantelle Sage Regional Waste Education Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunter Waste Educators Group (HWEG) • ‘Small Acts Big Change’ • Garage Sale Trail • Regional Charitable Recyclers Working Party • Waste Wrappers troupe
Leanne Sanderson Regional Litter Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Litter Plan implementation
Emma Grezl Regional Waste Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love Food on Campus project
Eva Twarkowski Senior Ecologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Resource Management • Restoration and Rehabilitation projects • Ecological assessment
Ellen Saxon GIS Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial Data Analysis and Mapping • GIS Mapping and Support
Alison Gleeson Professional Development Series Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of HCCREMS Professional Development Series
Brooke Willmott Administration Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration Coordination and Support

3 FUNDING AND GRANTS

3.1 Status of Current Grant Applications

Grant applications / funding proposals submitted by the Environment Division in recent months and their status include:

Funding Organisation	Project	Funding Sought	Status
Hunter Regional Landcare Network	Community Education – Field day for the protection of EECs and Threatened Species	\$2,000	Successful, project completed
Hunter Regional Landcare Network	Pilot project – 9 Valleys Wildlife Trail	\$10,000	Successful, project commenced
NSW Department of Lands	Protection and remediation of a population of Hunter Valley Weeping Myall Woodland	\$6,500	Pending
Environment Protection Authority	Hunter Regional Litter Plan	\$99,730	Funding of \$49,865 awarded, project commenced
NSW Environmental Trust	Restoration of Hunter Dry Rainforest at the Hunter River Reserve, Greta	\$100,000	Successful, project commenced
NSW Environmental Trust	Community Education – Flying Fox Community Engagement	\$100,000	Pending
Environment Protection Authority	Extension of Regional Contaminated Land Capacity Building Program	\$150,000	Successful, contract being finalised
Emergency NSW (State Emergency Management Projects)	Integrating Disaster Preparedness into Local Government Operations through the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework	\$229,548	Pending
LGNSW	Flying Fox Camp Management Plans	\$98,900	Pending

The Division will be working on a number of further applications in the coming months under the following grant programs:

- NSW Environmental Trust the Restoration and Rehabilitation program
- Emergency NSW Community Resilience Innovation Program
- Hunter Local Land Services Natural Resource Management and Community Capacity Building grants.

4 BIODIVERSITY PROGRAM

Introduction

The Regional Biodiversity Program continues to be a key focus of the HCCREMS initiative, delivering:

- The identification and mapping of regional biodiversity values and threatening processes
- The identification of regional conservation priorities
- Technical input to local and regional planning and management strategies
- Capacity building of Councils to access and apply technical data and mapping, and to apply legislative compliance and market based instruments to improve local and regional conservation outcomes
- On ground restoration and rehabilitation works across the region to protect and restore biodiversity values.

Current Focus

1. Facilitating collaborative review and update, by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) and Councils, of the Hunter Region Vegetation Mapping to resolve previous issues of scale and accuracy.
2. Engaging partners and resources to strategically target the delivery of on ground restoration and rehabilitation activities in areas of regional conservation priority.

Activity during reporting period

4.1 Hunter Regional Vegetation Map

As member Councils will be aware, the Regional Vegetation Map produced by the OEH in 2011 did not provide the scale or accuracy required by Councils to effectively manage local landscape issues and biodiversity. The Environment Division has recently been able to reengage with OEH to secure their agreement to re-work the Hunter / Central Coast / Mid-Coast areas of the State vegetation mapping layer to resolve these issues. The process through which this will occur includes:

Upper Hunter and Manning Region Mapping:

- OEH have provided draft Structural (formation level) mapping outputs for the Upper Hunter and Manning region for Councils and other key stakeholders to review.
- Four Council and agency workshops are being delivered 9th – 15th August to identify and collate initial feedback on the mapping product.
- Feedback from these sessions will be used to complete Plant Community Type (PCT) modelling which should be completed in September / October for exhibition until early 2017.

Coastal Mapping

Mapping of the region's coastal areas will also be updated during the later stage of 2016 and early 2017. This work will occur as part of OEH's process to produce a finer scale product for all coastal areas of the State. An area of the Hunter's coast will be used as a pilot for this broader work, enabling the region to identify how existing Lower Hunter fine scale mapping can be seamlessly uplifted into the State Vegetation template whilst preserving the original detail intact. Liaison with Council officers will occur during August to commence this work.

MORE INFORMATION:

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4.2 Regional Submission – NSW Biodiversity Reforms

On 3rd May 2016 the NSW Government released the Biodiversity Legislation Reforms Information Package which includes a draft *Biodiversity Conservation Bill* and draft *Local Land Services Amendment Bill 2016*. The two Bills are designed to replace the *Native Vegetation Act*, *Threatened Species Conservation Act*, the *Nature Conservation Trust Act* and parts of the *National Parks & Wildlife Act*.

A regional submission to the reform process was collated by the Environment Division in collaboration with officers and senior managers from all HCCREMS member Councils. The submission outlined that, while the region supports the NSW Government's desire to streamline and consolidate biodiversity protection legislation, it does not believe the proposed legislation will achieve its overall stated aims of "*maintaining a healthy, productive and resilient environment for the greatest well-being of the community, now and into the future, consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development*". Key areas addressed by the regional submission included:

- *Inadequate consultation processes and timing to provide submissions*, especially relative to other reform processes underway including the NSW Coastal Reforms, review of Environmental Planning & Assessment Act, Regional Growth Plans and Local Government Reforms.
- *Removal of explicit environmental standards* including "improve or maintain" from the legislation, and the reduction and dilution of standards associated with offsetting as the basis for the Biodiversity Assessment Methodology.
- *Complex administrative systems are still included*, and have not addressed issues where the new legislation interacts with the Mining Act, Environmental Planning & Assessment Act, State Environmental Planning Policies, Local Environmental Planning Policies or Development Control Policies.
- *Conflicting legislative instruments*: In particular the Local Land Services Amendment Bill is largely deregulating land clearing which directly reduces the effectiveness and intent of the Biodiversity Conservation Bill.
- *Increased resourcing needs and responsibilities on local government*: In the absence of the detail to be provided in Regulations, SEPPs and Guidelines, it is impossible to quantify the quantum of increased responsibilities and impacts on current council planning and compliance systems.
- *Too much flexibility*: the introduction of the Biodiversity Conservation Fund enabling developers to offset their obligations through a payment, and commence works without any authority (or the Biodiversity Conservation Trust) knowing if the required offsets are available, is in direct contradiction to the ESD precautionary principle.
- *Too much discretion*: the Biodiversity Assessment Methodology will provide details of the offsets required for any given development or activity, yet the planning authority has the ability and discretion to discount the offsets. This has the ability to undermine the system as local priorities or politics may influence outcomes, not science and biodiversity conservation requirements.
- *Limited to no ability to gauge, manage or modify processes to respond to cumulative impacts of clearing and developments*. The allowable activity, clearing to codes and clearing in urban areas, coupled with 10/50 regulations, State Significant Infrastructure, State Significant Development, and continued Part 4 developments (EP&A Act) mean that an unprecedented amount of land clearing will be able to occur without approval, or mapping, and therefore direct and timely consideration of the cumulative impact of clearing cannot be provided.

A full copy of the regional submission can be found on our [website](#)

MORE INFORMATION:

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4.3 Biodiversity Conservation Datasets

In 2015 the Environment Division released a significant amount of GIS based biodiversity datasets generated through the now completed Biodiversity Investment Prospectus (BIP) project. This provided councils with an extensive repository of spatial information that previously did not exist, and which are of considerable value to land use and biodiversity assessment and planning processes.

Invitations were extended to all Councils to participate in technical 'use and application' workshops delivered during May 2016. These were designed to raise the capacity of staff to access and correctly interpret the datasets. For those Councils who did not participate, the opportunity still exists, by contacting the Environment Division, to deliver a workshop in your area.

MORE INFORMATION:

All datasets are available on the HCCREMS website: <http://www.hccrems.com.au/biodiversity/>

Ellen Saxon | GIS Project Officer | P (02) 4978 4025 | E ellens@huntercouncils.com.au

4.4 Hunter Valley Dry Rainforest Project

We have recently received a grant (\$99,618 over 3 years) to deliver restoration and rehabilitation activities in the Hunter River Reserve, located at Greta. Cessnock, Singleton and Maitland Councils are all involved in this 3 year project. The Reserve contains Hunter Valley Dry Rainforest, which is listed as an Endangered Ecological Community, and is one of the few examples of intact native vegetation along the Hunter River in the Lower Hunter.

The project will significantly reduce the main environmental weed infestations posing a threat to the Hunter Valley Dry Rainforest community. Landholder engagement and raising community awareness will also occur to reduce weed infestations and other degradation of the site.

MORE INFORMATION:

Eva Twarkowski | Senior Ecologist | P (02) 4978 4029 | E evat@huntercouncils.com.au



Hunter River Reserve contains one of the few examples of intact native vegetation remaining along the Hunter River in the Lower Hunter

4.5 Stage 1 – Nine Valleys Wildlife Trail Initiative

We have recently commenced delivery of Stage 1 of the 9 Valleys Wildlife Trail initiative with the assistance of funding of seed funding provided by the Hunter Region Landcare Network. This project seeks to improve the extent and connectivity of native vegetation and fauna habitat unique to the Central and Upper Hunter regions, including the establishment of key stepping stones (through native regeneration, weed control, restoration planting and fencing for habitat protection).

The first activity will be a Community Drop In Session for those in the Jerry's Plains to Giants Creek area scheduled for Saturday 20th August 2016. This will provide landowners and land managers with the opportunity to:

1. Sign up for free property inspections available through the project focusing on:
 - Weed and pest issues and control priorities
 - Biodiversity values and management options, including fencing, shelter belts and wildlife corridors
 - Stabilising and restoring creek lines
 - Opportunities for increasing native grass diversity.
2. Meet and ask questions of staff from:
 - Upper Hunter Weeds Authority
 - National Parks and Wildlife Service
 - Hunter Local Land Services
 - Martindale Landcare
 - Birdlife Australia
 - Hunter Councils.

3. Find out about funding opportunities available to support land management and conservation works on their properties.

MORE INFORMATION:

Event Details - <http://www.hccrems.com.au/hccrems-events/>

Eva Twarkowski | Senior Ecologist | P (02) 4978 4029 | E evat@huntercouncils.com.au

4.6 EEC's in Roadsides – Community Information Day

A successful Endangered Fauna Workshop for communities living at the junction of the Maitland, Dungog and Port Stephens Council areas was delivered on 18th June 2016. The workshop focused on weed management, fauna habitat and protection activities, and was supported by funding from the Hunter Regional Landcare Network.

The workshop was delivered as part of the broader EEC's on Roadsides project, which is delivering rehabilitation and restoration works at 15 roadside reserves containing remnant Lower Hunter Spotted Gum Ironbark Forest Community and Hunter Lowland Woodland.

As second community workshop, focusing on weed identification and control, will also be held at Total on 3rd September 2016.

MORE INFORMATION:

Event Details - <http://www.hccrems.com.au/hccrems-events/>

Eva Twarkowski | Senior Ecologist | P (02) 4978 4029 | E evat@huntercouncils.com.au

5 GREY HEADED FLYING FOX

Introduction

In recent times Flying Foxes, have generated significant concerns within local communities across the region in which they are located. All HCCREMS member Councils have Flying Fox camps within their boundaries, and most have camps that are in some way creating conflict with human settlements.

As a result many of our member councils have had to deal with:

- Being at the front line of strong community reactions, fears and concerns
- General public misunderstanding of issues associated with the grey-headed flying fox
- Confusion with regard to who has responsibility for managing the issue
- Challenges in preparing, resourcing and effectively implementing Camp Management Plans and/or deterrence strategies
- Lack of data and analysis of known/observed behaviours or information around appropriate short, medium and long term management strategies.

Current Focus

1. Collaborating with member Councils, OEH and other stakeholder organisations, to facilitate a regional strategic approach to managing Flying Fox issues.
2. Actively pursuing funding and resources to directly support Councils to develop local Camp Management Plans and to facilitate more consistent and effective community education and engagement around Flying Fox issues.

5.1 Regional Flying Fox Working Group and Management Strategy

We are continuing to participate in the Regional Flying Fox Management Strategy Working Group being convened by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH). The Working Group is overseeing development of a Hunter Central Coast Regional Flying Fox Management Strategy (RFFMS) which will aim to protect flying foxes, conserve and create their habitat and foster community coexistence by managing impacts and increasing understanding and knowledge within the broader community.

MORE INFORMATION:

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5.2 Funding Application - Camp Management Plans

A regional funding application has been submitted to the NSW Flying Fox Management Grants program. If successful, this project will provide direct support to eight of our member Councils (Mid Coast, Port Stephens, Cessnock, Maitland, Singleton, Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter and Central Coast), to develop new Camp Management Plans, or to map and update their existing camp management plans. The remaining three Councils are either submitting individual applications, are not able to contribute resources to the project at this time, or already have adequate camp management plans in place.

In addition to directly assisting with the development of local camp management plans, additional regional scale outputs will include:

- Establishment of a Regional Flying Fox Management Committee to initially guide delivery of the project, but in the longer term, to provide an active management network to facilitate delivery of the Regional Flying Fox Strategy (see 5.1 above).
- A Flying Fox Community Engagement Framework – this would provide immediate and ongoing assistance to Councils when designing and delivering community engagement around Flying Fox camp management issues.
- A regional training session to build the capacity and skills of staff undertaking community engagement on Flying Fox issues. This will focus on strategies to avoid community outrage developing, and for effectively managing community outrage where it exists.
- Local & Regional Mapping – in addition to updated mapping of the 11 Flying Fox camps included in the application, the project will map “spill over” sites in proximity to these camps, and provide modelled outputs of regional roosting and foraging habitat (subject to appropriate vegetation maps being available for use). The regional map will provide significant value and information for broader Council planning activities.

MORE INFORMATION:

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5.3 Environmental Trust Education Grant – Flying Fox Community Engagement

Following an initial Expression of Interest process, we were recently invited to submit a full funding application to the NSW Environmental Trust’s Environmental Education Program. If successful, this project will encourage positive change in community attitudes to flying-foxes via more consistent community education and engagement messages across Councils and other key agencies . The project will include development of a community awareness and engagement resource kit, which will provide accurate and consistent information, in a variety of formats, for dissemination by project partners across the region. A communication protocol will also be developed to facilitate a more coordinated approach to the nature and timing of information dissemination region wide.

MORE INFORMATION:

Eva Twarkowski | Senior Ecologist | P (02) 4978 4029 | E evat@huntercouncils.com.au

5.4 Australian Research Council Linkage Grant

The Environment Division, along with a majority of member councils are partners to a successful ARC research linkage grant proposal with the University of Melbourne. This project will develop and implement a framework that integrates the best available ecological and social information to support decision making for highly mobile and controversial species, focusing on Australian flying foxes (*Pteropus* spp.) as a case study. The University has recently commenced preliminary administrative works for this project. Key project activities will include:

1. Quantifying the cost-effectiveness of management techniques currently used (and proposed for use) to mitigate human-flying fox conflicts in urban and peri-urban areas
2. Creating biophysical and correlative models to understand how climate change will impact on the range of flying-fox species' and the fruit and floral resources upon which they depend
3. Developing an understanding of the mechanisms underpinning human-flying fox conflict across the distribution of the species
4. Measuring the social acceptability of management alternatives and variables that explain this for different sections of the community (e.g. local residents vs the general public)
5. Predicting the population-level implications of management alternatives using spatially-explicit population models.

Specific outputs from this work will include:

1. Maps of priorities for habitat restoration and protection, based on predicted future distributions of flying-fox roosts, fruit and floral resources under climate change scenarios
2. A published framework for minimising recurring human-flying fox conflict at multiple decision scales.

MORE INFORMATION:

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6 REGIONAL CONTAMINATED LAND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

Introduction

Funded through the NSW EPA and NSW Environmental Trust, this regional program aims to build the capacity of councils to manage non regulated contaminated sites. The Hunter program is one of four being delivered in rural and regional areas across NSW. Councils directly involved in the Hunter program (based on eligibility established by the EPA) include:

- Cessnock
- Dungog
- Mid Coast
- Lake Macquarie
- Maitland
- Muswellbrook
- Port Stephens
- Singleton
- Upper Hunter

The NSW EPA has recently confirmed that an additional \$150,000 will be provided by the NSW Environmental Trust to extend the program until 30th June 2017. It is intended that a project officer will be employed full time to work directly with Councils to assist them review and update their systems and procedures for identifying, assessing and managing contaminated land and contaminated land information, in line with the regional policy and procedures developed during the first year of the program.

Current Focus

1. Developing an Implementation Plan for Year 2 (2016/17) to reflect additional funding provided to the program.
2. Integrating Council feedback to the finalisation of key project outputs developed during Year 1 of the program:
 - Regional Contaminated Land Policy and Procedures template
 - Regional register of Development Consent Conditions – Contaminated Land

Activity during reporting period

6.1 Council Briefing Sessions

The focus of the program in recent months has been providing detailed briefing / training sessions to each Council participating in the program. These sessions have focused on:

- Legal obligations associated with identifying, managing and disclosing contaminated land information (based on advice provided by Local Government Legal).
- The nature and benefits of contaminated land policies in facilitating compliance with legal obligations
- The procedures to be implemented by Councils to ensure the identification, assessment and management of contaminated land are consistent with relevant legislation and NSW Government Guidelines.
- Providing an overview of, and facilitating input to, the draft resources (i.e. policy template and register of conditions of consent) developed to support Council's management of contaminated land.

Briefings have recently been provided to Upper Hunter, Muswellbrook, Mid Coast, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens, Dungog, Cessnock and Maitland Councils.

MORE INFORMATION:

Steve Wilson | Deputy Director Environment Division | P (02) 4978 4026 |

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7 NATURAL DISASTER RESILIENCE

Introduction

There is significant opportunity for local government to build the resilience of local communities to natural disasters. Councils provide a range of core functions and services including land use planning, community development and support, infrastructure management, community education, communications, environmental management and local emergency management. Both individually and collectively, these functions can contribute substantially to the creation of inherently more prepared and resilient communities, as well as support more effective and rapid disaster response and recovery efforts.

Current Focus

1. Actively pursuing funding and resources to directly support Councils build organisational and community resilience to natural disasters.
2. Disseminating the suite of 'Beat the Heat' communications materials developed through the Regional Heatwave Resilience project to a range of project partners and stakeholders in preparation for summer

Activity during reporting period

7.1 State Emergency Management Projects Funding Application

We recently submitted a funding application under the State-wide Emergency Management Projects (SEMP) program. This application reflects the significant opportunity Councils have to build the natural disaster resilience of their local communities through the range of functions they provide. If successful, the project will seek to improve the consideration and integration of disaster preparedness across all Council functional areas utilising the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. Project objectives include:

1. To substantially raise awareness in Councils of the opportunities for building organisational and community resilience to natural disasters across their key functional areas
2. Directly build the capacity and resources available to councils to effectively integrate and co-ordinate emergency preparedness across council functional areas through the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

MORE INFORMATION:

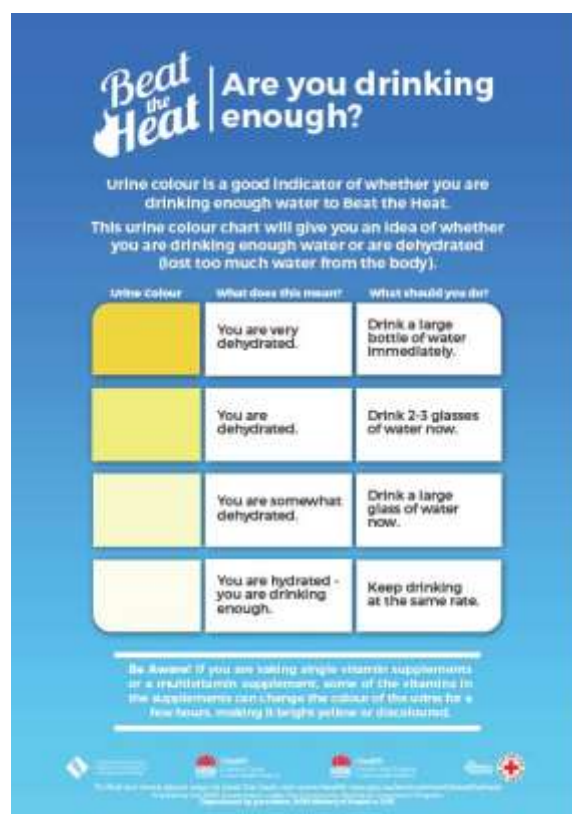
Steve Wilson | Deputy Director Environment Division | P (02) 4978 4026 |

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7.2 Regional Heatwave Resilience Project

This project was officially completed at the end of June, with final project outputs continuing to be distributed to member councils, partner organisations and other stakeholder organisations across the region. Funded through the NSW Government's Community Resilience Innovation Program, key project outcomes included:

1. Raising awareness of heatwave risks and opportunities for building staff / client / customer / community preparedness within Councils and across a wide range of stakeholder organisations in the region. Over 50 separate organisations have participated in project activities (from health, emergency, insurance and government sectors).
2. Development of a suite of communication resources to support organisations raise awareness of heatwave risk and preparedness actions. These adapt the extensive information provided on the NSW "Beat the Heat" website into a range of formats that can now be used to more effectively engage communities. The resources available and their location on the HCCREMS website where they can be freely downloaded is provided below.



A range of communication resources are now available for promoting heatwave awareness and resilience

Target Audience / Issue	Website location	Resources Available
General Community	http://www.hccrems.com.au/product/all-of-community-heatwave-communications-resources-kit/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beat the Heat Poster • Beat the Heat Information Flyer • Webpage content • Social Media content • Newsletter Articles • Scripts for Community Service Announcements • E-mail alerts • Text Alerts
The Elderly and those with a Disability	http://www.hccrems.com.au/product/all-of-community-heatwave-communications-resource-kit-copy/	
Families with young children	http://www.hccrems.com.au/product/the-elderly-and-people-with-a-disability-heatwave-communications-resource-kit-copy-copy/	
Rural and isolated communities	http://www.hccrems.com.au/product/impacts-on-medications-heatwave-communications-resource-kit-copy/	

Target Audience / Issue	Website location	Resources Available
Medication Impacts	http://www.hccrems.com.au/product/families-with-young-children-heatwave-communications-resource-kit-copy/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poster • Information Flyer • Webpage content • Social Media content • Newsletter Articles • Scripts for Community Service Announcements • E-mail alerts • Text Alerts
Avoiding Dehydration	http://www.hccrems.com.au/product/urine-colour-chart-are-you-drinking-enough/	Are you Drinking Enough? (Urine Colour Chart Poster)
Promotion of public facilities as community 'Cool Spots'	http://www.hccrems.com.au/product/community-cool-spots-poster/	Community Cool Spots Poster

FREE copies of printed posters and flyers are also currently available.

MORE INFORMATION:

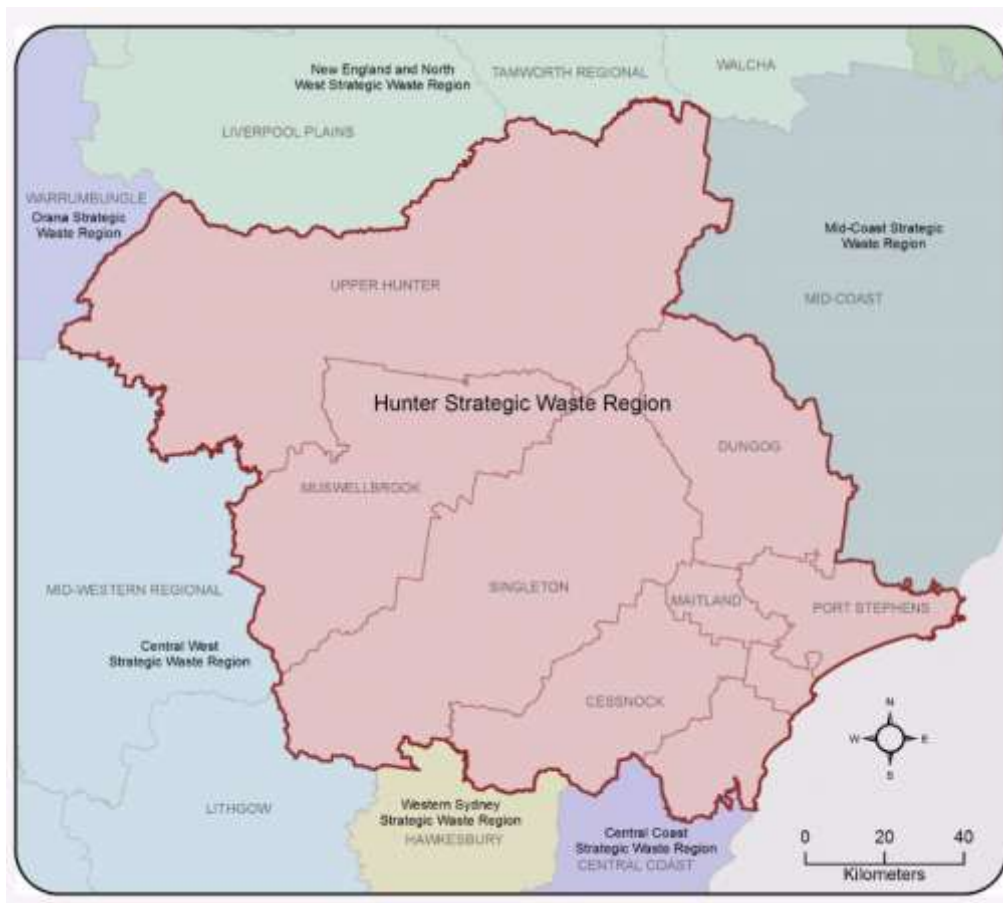
Steve Wilson | Deputy Director Environment Division | P (02) 4978 4026 |

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8 REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Introduction

The Environment Division is contracted by the NSW EPA to work directly with the Councils of the Hunter Waste Region to develop and implement a Regional Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery (WARR) Strategy. The Strategy was adopted in 2014 and since that time the Regional Waste Coordinator and project staff have focused on the delivery of a wide range of initiatives included in the Strategy. Councils in the Hunter Waste Region include:



Central Coast Council is currently not included in any waste region and is individually addressing waste management issues. Mid Coast Council is a member of the MidWaste Waste Region for which a separate waste strategy has been developed. While these Councils are not formally part of the Hunter Strategy, efforts are made to keep them informed of program activities to leverage any possible advantages for all HCCREMS member councils.

Funding to the region through the Waste Less Recycle More Initiative finishes in July 2017. The NSW EPA is currently considering the future of state-wide waste funding. The Waste Team have engaged with the Regional Waste Strategy Network and the EPA to advocate for ongoing (if not increased) funding to be provided to Councils to continue to develop / implement / improve waste management systems and services in the region.

Current Focus

1. Commencing the next stage of regional waste modelling to include spatial representation of potential long term service and infrastructure opportunities.
2. Initial implementation of the Hunter Region Litter Implementation Plan project to prevent and minimise litter in recreational parks.
3. Region wide delivery of the Garage Sale Trail on 22nd October, 2016.
4. Identifying and supporting delivery of targeted regional capacity building initiatives.
5. Implementing the Love Food on Campus project in partnership with the University of Newcastle.

Activity during reporting period

8.1 Regional Litter Implementation Plan Funding

All Councils formally endorsed a Hunter Region Litter Plan (RLP) and Hunter Region Litter Implementation Plan (L-RIP) that were submitted to the NSW EPA in April. A total of \$99,730 was sought from the EPA to assist with the implementation of these plans during 2016/17.

The Waste Team has recently commenced work on two core projects included in the Hunter Region Litter Plan. These focus on reducing litter in recreational parks and improving governance around the management of litter by Councils. Site visits and on ground planning for target locations has recently been completed.

MORE INFORMATION:

Leanne Sanderson | Regional Litter Project Officer | P (02) 4978 4042 |
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8.2 Regional Waste Modelling

The waste team have continued to work on the regional waste modelling project. Project partner Jacobs, have completed development of naus models for the following waste management scenarios:

1. Baseline - 2014/15 waste generation data and projections to 2031
2. Planned service changes – garden organics and food organics
3. Reduced residual (waste) bin sizes (240-140L)
4. Energy from Waste – Potential Site 1
5. Energy from Waste – Potential Site 2
6. Bulky waste recovery from kerbside clean-up materials (assumption 40% recovery)
7. Soft plastics recycling
8. Current landfill life assessment
9. Enhanced regional education

The scenario outputs were presented to councils through individual site meetings during the reporting period. The project team is now commencing development of spatial models to understand the logistics associated with each scenario over the next 15 years. It is hoped the data and spatial modelling outputs will provide valuable information to assist decisions on waste management systems, collection activities and location of any new waste management facilities required by the region. The waste modelling project is expected to be completed by the end of 2016.

MORE INFORMATION:

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8.3 Regional Charitable Recyclers Working Party

To build upon the successful outcomes of the Charitable Recycling Illegal Dumping Project and Toolkit, selected as a 'best practice' resource by the NSW EPA, we are continuing collaborate with the region's most prominent charity organisations on waste issues through convening the Regional Charity Recyclers Working Party. Recent meetings of the Working Party have focused on:

- Identifying the nature of waste problems being experienced, and identifying priorities and strategies on which to continue to work collaboratively to address these
- Sharing the success or otherwise, of strategies implemented to reduce illegal dumping at specific facilities through the use of measures including improved signage, fencing, CCTV cameras and staff education
- Clarifying and communicating the quality of donated materials that charities require, so as to minimise waste arising from unsuitable donations. This has contributed to the development and promotion of positive messaging focused on *'only donate materials you would be happy donating to a friend'*.
- Encouraging participation by key charity organisations in the Lake Macquarie City Council's Living Smart Festival, to promote awareness about responsible donation and reducing illegal dumping at charity drop off facilities.

MORE INFORMATION:

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8.4 Garage Sale Trail

This year we will again be coordinating delivery of the Garage Sale Trail across the region, which will be held on 22nd October, 2016. The Regional Waste Program is contributing \$15,000 to purchase a full regional delivery package, meaning there are no direct financial costs for Councils to be involved in this year's event. Purchase of the package provides us with a suite of communication and promotional resources that can be adapted by member Councils to suit their particular local characteristics and communities. Councils have confirmed that they will be implementing a range of activities to promote this year's events including:

- Decals on garbage trucks and fleet vehicles
- Print and online promotion and advertising
- Subsidising a community service announcement with some paid scheduling
- Printing of pull up banners for display in libraries and council offices
- Promotion at community events.



In recent months we have directly contacted around 160 schools to ensure appropriate staff receive information on the program, and to encourage their involvement in this year's event. In particular we have been promoting the opportunity to host community based events as a fundraising opportunity for the school. Around 20 community groups have also been contacted to promote their involvement in hosting community based events of this nature.

This year's Garage Sale Trail will be launched to Council Mayors and General Managers at their 11th August Hunter Councils Joint Organisation Meeting.

MORE INFORMATION:

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8.5 The Waste Wrappers

The 'Waste Wrappers' are a highly engaging performance troupe who have been contracted to deliver performances at a range of high profile festivals and events across the region, to raise awareness of improved recycling practices.

Facilities, events and festivals at which the troupe have performed this year, or are scheduled to perform are provided below.

Waste Wrappers Bookings 16/17	Date	Estimated Audience Reach
Singleton Harmony Day	21 st March 2016	250
Cessnock Stomp	17 th April 2016	1000
Ocean Pod, Mereweather	24 th April 2016	50
Festival of the Fleece	11 th June 2016	600
Maitland Taste	13 th June 2016	800
Children's Discovery Day Hunter Botanical Gardens	5 th July 2016	80
Newcastle Museum Science Fair	21 st August 2016	
Vacy Country Festival	18 th September 2016	
Living Smart Festival	24 th September 2016	
Raymond Terrace Library	27 th September 2016	

Waste Wrappers Bookings 16/17	Date	Estimated Audience Reach
Tomaree Library	27 th September 2016	
Kurri Kurri Library	29 th September 2016	
Cessnock Library	29 th September 2016	

MORE INFORMATION:

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8.6 Love Food Hate Waste – Love Food on Campus Project

Funded through the EPA’s Love Food Hate Waste Program, this project aims to positively modify behaviours to reduce food waste, by students living in residence on the University of Newcastle’s Callaghan Campus. Recent project activities have included:

- Launching the project with a student film night screening the movie ‘Just Eat It: A Food Waste Story’. This event also featured a talk by Tim Silverwood, co founder of the Take 3 Initiative, who in addition to discussing food waste issues, encouraged students to continue to be involved in the project.
- Delivery of three student focus group sessions in early August. These sessions explored the nature of food waste in campus residences, food management behaviours, and barriers to, and opportunities for reducing food waste. The outcomes from these sessions will directly inform the nature of project activities and products to be developed.
- Working with a diversity of campus staff to plan the implementation of waste audits to identify the nature and volumes of food being generated in the campus residences. The first audit is scheduled to occur later in August.
- Planning the delivery of cooking demonstrations by local chefs to be delivered during September. These will focus on how to prepare healthy, budget wise, low waste meals.

MORE INFORMATION:

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8.7 Recycled Organics Project

Meetings have been held in recent months with key stakeholders including the Australian Organics Recycling Association (AORA), and the Centre for Organics Research and Education (CORE), to identify how the Regional Waste Program can contribute to resolving long term structural issues that have inhibited organics market development, and have been problematic for many years.

We have recently confirmed a two-day regional tour (1st and 2nd September, 2016) of organics processing facilities for senior EPA staff and Council representatives. The tour will enhance understanding between the EPA and Councils about the range of issues affecting organics recovery, including collection and processing infrastructure requirements. The tour will facilitate collaboration between the EPA, Hunter Local Land Services, Councils of the Hunter and Hunter Councils to promote and develop recycled organics market opportunities. The tour will visit the Awaba Waste Management Facility (WMF), Summerhill WMF, Muswellbrook WMF and the Bedminster Alternative Waste Treatment Facility at Raymond Terrace.

MORE INFORMATION:**Michael Neville | Regional Waste Program Manager | P (02) 4978 4034 |****E michaeln@huntercouncils.com.au****8.8 Waste Management Capacity Building**

The Regional Waste Strategy Project will again provide direct funding to Councils to undertake staff capacity building to assist and enhance Council waste management activities. Councils included in the Hunter Waste Region will be able to claim \$2,700 in the 2016-17 financial year for eligible capacity building expenses.

The Environment Division have collaborated with the Waste Management Association of Australia (WMAA) to deliver the innovative “Transforming Council Waste and Recycling” workshop in the region on 12th October 2016. The workshop addresses techniques for maximising resource recovery and the uptake of new technologies, including the steps for transforming waste services for the 21st Century. It will address strategy, KPIs, recruitment, partners, priorities and contract opportunities. It will take participants away from ‘business as usual’ toward more innovative thinking and emerging technologies.

MORE INFORMATION:**Event Details: <http://www.hccrems.com.au/transforming-council-waste-recycling/>****Michael Neville | Regional Waste Program Manager | P (02) 4978 4034 |****E michaeln@huntercouncils.com.au****8.9 Local Waste Grants**

Councils and other organisations across the region continue to be successful in accessing funding through the EPA’s Waste Less Recycle More Program. These grants provide direct assistance to Councils to assist them deliver local waste initiatives that are consistent with Hunter WARR Strategy. Recent grants received in the region include:

Grant Stream	Organisation(s)	Amount
Regional Litter Implementation Plan (L-RIP)	Hunter Councils	\$20,000
	Hunter Councils	\$49,865
Round 3 - Litter Prevention	Port Stephens Council	\$80,000
Round 4 - Illegal Dumping Clean Up and Prevention	Cessnock City Council	\$133,000
	Lake Macquarie City Council	\$75,952
	Maitland City Council	\$68,000
	Port Stephens Council	\$45,000
	Port Stephens Council	\$110,000
Round 3 -Love Food Hate Waste	Hunter Councils Inc.	\$60,516
	Lake Macquarie City Council	\$21,953
Round 3 - Organics Processing Infrastructure	Weston Aluminum Pty Limited	\$490,000
	Australian Native Landscapes	\$1,300,000

In addition, a Central Coast based consultancy, Wild Blue Global, were funded by the EPA through their recent “Review of Recycled Organics Use and Market Capacity in the Hunter and Central Coast Region, NSW (2016)”. The research will contribute to informing the development of the Hunter Recycled Organics Action Plan.

MORE INFORMATION:

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9 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

Introduction

The Environment Division continues to deliver niche professional training, through the HCCREMS Professional Development Series, to member Councils and other partner organisations. This seeks to continue the important training and capacity building services that the Division has provided to member Councils over many years, but which has previously been provided either free (or heavily subsidised) through the grant funded initiatives of the HCCREMS program.

Course delivered are either:

1. *Regional Events* - courses scheduled and marketed to member Councils and other organisations across the region. Courses are only run if a minimum number of registrations are received to make delivery financially viable.
2. *In house delivery* - courses are also delivered directly 'in house' to individual (or groups of) organisations where demand exists.

Courses delivered during the reporting period

1. Landfill Management Training (x2)
2. Facilitate with Confidence (Les Robinson)
3. Investigative Interviewing & Statement Taking
4. Time Management Training

NB. Limited regional courses are scheduled during July – August because of historically low uptake during these months

Scheduled Courses (August – October 2016)

Course	Delivery Date
Expert Witness	17 th August 2016
Finance for Non Finance Managers	24 th August 2016
Writing an Effective Business Case	31 st August 2016
Introduction to Erosion and Sediment Control	6 th September 2016
Writing Quality Conditions of Consent (IN HOUSE)	5 & 6 September 2016
Writing Quality Conditions of Consent (IN HOUSE)	14 th September 2016
Contract Administration and Contract Law	13 th & 14 th September 2016
The Supervisor Series	19 th & 20 th September 2016
Make Your Research Count (IN HOUSE)	21 st & 22 nd September 2016
Transforming Council Waste and Recycling	12 th October 2016
Cultural Respect Training	26 th October 2016
Place Transition Training	18 th & 19 th October 2016

MORE INFORMATION:

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10 FEE FOR SERVICE PROJECTS

Introduction

The Environment Division offers on a limited basis, the opportunity for member councils and other agency partners to engage its services on a “Fee for Service” basis. Utilising staff not currently fully engaged on HCCREMS grant projects, as well as specialist consulting partners, this work aims to:

- Directly assist member Councils and other organisations research, design, manage, deliver and evaluate environmental programs and services across a range of areas
- Generate income to support the retention of skilled team members whilst the availability of Commonwealth and State Government grants to implement the broader objectives and activities of the HCCREMS program remains limited.

Our [Capability Statement](#) outlines the services the Environment Division and specialist consulting partners can provide. These include:

Strategic Services	Ecological Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and regional waste planning • Climate change adaptation • Natural disaster preparedness • Urban and corporate sustainability • Environmental compliance • Community consultation, engagement, education and awareness programs • Professional facilitation services • Professional training and capacity building • Policy and strategy development • Decision making frameworks and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation community surveys, mapping and monitoring • Weed density assessment and mapping • Fauna surveys, mapping and monitoring • Spatial data analysis, modelling and mapping • Independent review of Ecological Assessments • Independent development of REFs (Part 5 assessments) • Development of vegetation management plans • Development of restoration and rehabilitation plans • Strategic advice on integrated landscape management and protection • High quality map production

Activities during reporting period

10.1 National Park Vegetation & Community Mapping

Completed in June, this project for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service involved undertaking survey and mapping work for the Carrai, Mummel and Nowendoc Gulf National Parks and the Carrai and Mummel Gulf State Conservation Areas.

10.2 Connectivity Mapping

The Environment Division recently completed an update of connectivity modelling for the Central Coast Council that covered the former Wyong Shire Council area.

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