

Hunter

Joint Organisation



Environment Division

OPERATIONAL REPORT

August 2018

Our Member Councils



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1 MISSION STATEMENT

The Environment Division will:

1. 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.

2 DELIVERY FOCUS

The following environmental delivery themes are derived from a synthesis of key member Council and NSW Government Strategic Plans and provide the Environment Division with its program delivery focus.

Natural Systems	Environmental Resilience	Resource Recovery	Liveable Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coasts and Catchment Health • Water Sensitive Urban Design • Roadside Management • Biodiversity and Threatened Species • NSW Biodiversity Reforms • Restoration and Rehabilitation works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contaminated Land • Disaster Resilience • Climate Adaptation • Land, water, air and noise pollution • Biosecurity and Pest Species Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Reduction • Recycling • Diversion from Landfill • Problem Wastes • Litter • Illegal Dumping • Infrastructure and Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecologically Sustainable buildings, facilities and infrastructure • Renewables • Energy Efficiency/Resilience • Resource Extraction • Sustainable Agricultural lands and production • Urban Forests • Cultural Heritage

3 DELIVERY TEAM

Team Member	Areas of Responsibility	Contact
Bradley Nolan Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divisional Management • Regional Flying Fox Program • Regional Waste Program 	P (02) 4978 4024 M 0450 305 704 E bradn@huntercouncils.com.au
Steve Wilson Deputy Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divisional Management Support • Program Management Support (various) 	P (02) 4978 4026 M 0448 401 436 E stevew@huntercouncils.com.au
Carlie McClung Regional Support Officer (Biodiversity Conservation Reforms)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Biodiversity Reforms 	P 4978 4045 M 0436 676 201 E carliem@huntercouncils.com.au
Ian Turnbull Regional Project Manager – Disaster Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaster Ready Councils • “Six Steps to Resilience” for Community Organisations 	P (02) 4978 4042 M 0437 177 958 E iant@huntercouncils.com.au
Ellen Saxon GIS Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial Data Analysis and Mapping • GIS Mapping and Support 	P (02) 4978 4025 E ellens@huntercouncils.com.au
Ashley Bacles NRM Project Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Resource Management • Restoration and Rehabilitation projects • Ecological assessment 	P (02) 4978 4028 ashleyb@huntercouncils.com.au
Barbora Michalidesova Administration Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Assistant to Director and Administration support to Environment Division Team 	P: (02) 4978 4020 E: enviroadmin@huntercouncils.com.au

4 JOINT ORGANISATION ACTIVITIES

Focus Area	Delivery Status
Regional Submissions	<p>Regional submissions developed and submitted by the Environment Division in recent months in response to proposed changes in State and Commonwealth legislation and policy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth <i>Product Stewardship Act 2011</i> (submitted June 2018) • Draft NSW Code of Practice Authorising Flying-fox Camp Management Actions (submitted May 2018) • National approach to product stewardship action on environmental impacts of products (submitted May 2018) <p><i>More Information: Bradley Nolan P 4978 4024 E bradn@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p>
Strategic Planning Directions	<p>Strategic directions to guide the priorities and activities of the Environment Division (refer Attachment 1) over the next four-year period (2018-22) were endorsed by the General Managers Advisory Group (GMAC) at its May 2018 meeting. These confirm those areas in which member Councils are seeking support from the Environment Division to deliver local and regional environmental initiatives and programs over the coming years. Developing these directions has included an emphasis on more closely integrating the goals and directions identified within Council Integrated Planning and Reporting Frameworks, plans and strategies with the activities of the Environment Division.</p> <p><i>More Information: Steve Wilson P (02) 4978 4026 E steve@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p>

5 NATURAL SYSTEMS

Strategic Goal:

Protect, maintain and improve the health, quality and condition of the region's natural systems.

Objectives:

1. Plan and coordinate collaborative, landscape scale approaches to management of the region's rich and diverse natural systems to:
 - Address threats to the natural environment
 - Protect, maintain and improve the health, quality and condition of catchments, rivers, wetlands and coastal environments
 - Protect and improve the condition and connectivity of natural areas
 - Conserve and rehabilitate high value terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity, threatened species and communities
2. Improve professional and community awareness of the benefits of the region's natural systems
3. Improve professional and community knowledge and capacity to protect and manage natural systems across the region.

Activity Report

Focus Area	Delivery Status
NSW Biodiversity Reforms	<p>Regional Support Officer (Biodiversity Conservation Reforms)</p> <p>Since December 2017, the Division has hosted a Regional Support Officer (NSW Biodiversity Reforms), one of eight regional positions around the State being funded by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, to support Councils transition to the requirements of the <i>NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act</i>. In the Hunter, this position is filled by Carlie McClung.</p> <p><i>More Information: Carlie McClung P 4978 4045 E carliem@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p>
	<p>Council Capacity Status</p> <p>The Division has completed Capacity Status Reports for each Council that describes a baseline for each Councils capacity to manage biodiversity and vegetation under the new legislative regime. Outcomes are informing a program of support and capacity building now being finalised that and is expected to commence delivery in September 2018.</p> <p><i>More Information: Carlie McClung P 4978 4045 E carliem@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p>
	<p>Biodiversity Assessment and Approval Pathway Flowcharts</p> <p>User-friendly flow charts to assist Council staff navigate the new biodiversity assessment and approval pathways have been developed by the Division and endorsed by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. In addition to the Hunter and Central Coast Region, these are now being utilised across NSW by the State-wide Local Government Support Network. The flowcharts are also being integrated within</p>

Focus Area	Delivery Status
	<p>the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) Local Government Approvers course being delivered by OEH to Councils across NSW.</p> <p>Website: http://www.hccrems.com.au/implementation-biodiversity-conservation-reforms-hunter-central-coast/</p> <p>More Information: Carlie McClung P 4978 4045 E carliem@huntercouncils.com.au</p> <hr/> <p>Regional Helpdesk</p> <p>A key role of the Regional Support Officer (Biodiversity Conservation Reforms) is to provide a helpdesk support function to Councils. Since January 2018, this support has been accessed by all Councils seeking assistance on a wide range of issues. To date 75 queries for direct support have been received. 65 of these have been successfully resolved. Of the ten current unresolved issues, seven issues have been referred to OEH and other NSW Government agencies to resolve. The three remaining open issues are being resolved with support from OEH.</p> <p>More Information: Carlie McClung P 4978 4045 E carliem@huntercouncils.com.au</p> <hr/> <p>Regional Forum: Local Government Biodiversity Conservation Reforms</p> <p>All member Councils participated in a regional forum delivered 21 June designed to promote a regional community of practice in the Hunter for Council staff to connect, share knowledge and collaborate on biodiversity and vegetation management issues. A range of organisations including the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage, NSW Department of Planning & Environment and Office of Local Government also participated. Presentations and workshops focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates by NSW state government agencies on the status and progress of the NSW Biodiversity Reforms • Council regulation of clearing via Development Control Plans (DCPs) • Identification and establishment of biodiversity triggers and assessment for Part 5 Council activities. <p>More Information: Carlie McClung P 4978 4045 E carliem@huntercouncils.com.au</p> <hr/> <p>Council Staff Training</p> <p>The Division recently coordinated with the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage to deliver an additional Local Government Approvers course in the region on 26-27 June 2018. Seventeen new Council officers from nine Councils participated, which has utilised all of the remaining OEH sponsored training days available for the region.</p> <p>The Division is also actively working with the Office of Environment and Heritage and Office of Local Government to prepare a Council resource toolkit to support the delivery of targeted briefing sessions to Councils. This package is being designed around the flowcharts of biodiversity assessment and approval pathways recently developed by the Environment Division, with delivery to commence on the region from September 2018.</p> <p>More Information: Carlie McClung P 4978 4045 E carliem@huntercouncils.com.au</p>

Focus Area	Delivery Status
Biodiversity and Threatened Species	<p>Regional Vegetation Mapping</p> <p>The Division has been collaborating with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) to facilitate Council and expert technical review and validation of two draft vegetation mapping products developed by OEH for the region. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upper Hunter Plant Community Type Mapping (predominantly covering the Upper Hunter, Muswellbrook, Singleton, Dungog and western Mid Coast Local Government Areas) 2. Coastal Broad Structural Vegetation Mapping (predominantly covering the Central Coast, Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Maitland, Cessnock and eastern Mid Coast Local Government Areas). <p>Following a series of consultation workshops coordinated by the Environment Division, the draft mapping products have recently been disseminated to Council staff for detailed review and input.</p> <p><i>More Information: Ellen Saxon P 4978 40245 E ellens@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p>
	<p>Regional Flying Fox Education Project</p> <p>The focus of this regional project is to design and pilot a regional communications campaign to assist Councils to communicate and engage with their local communities about Flying-foxes, and to provide training and resources to Council staff to improve understanding and access to species ecological information to support Council decision making.</p> <p>A core element of the project has been completed, with the creation of the “Little Aussie Battlers” website. The website provides a wide range of information that can be directly accessed by Council staff and the community. The website will be supported by a suite of other resources including brochures, media releases and Facebook tiles for use in social media that will be provided to Councils as Communication Resource Kit, and which are in the final stages of development.</p> <p>A meeting of Council officers is scheduled for 30 August to launch the campaign, provide materials, and seek commitment to utilising the materials throughout the region.</p> <p>The Division is currently in discussions with the NSW government, Queensland Government, Federal government and other stakeholder organisations about the expansion of the Flying Fox education project. Additional funds are being sought to increase the messages included in the campaign, develop additional communication materials, and increase the area exposed to the campaign. The Division has also partnered with the University of Queensland to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign over the next two years.</p> <p><i>More Information: Bradley Nolan P 4978 4024 E bradn@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p> <p><i>Website: http://littleaussiebat.com.au</i></p>

Focus Area	Delivery Status
	<p>Environmental Research– Themeda Grassland on Seacliffs and Coastal Headlands</p> <p>After being shortlisted, the Division has now submitted a full application to the NSW Environmental Trust’s Research Grant Program in which all member coastal councils, the University of New England and University of Western Sydney are project partners. If successful the research will address gaps in knowledge that surround the management of Themeda grassland on seacliffs and coastal headlands, an Endangered Ecological Community in NSW. Research outcomes will directly inform the development of management guidelines to advise land managers on assisting this vegetation community to regenerate and re-establish.</p> <p><i>More Information: Ashley Bacales P 4978 4028 E ashleyb@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p>
<p>Roadside Environmental Management</p>	<p>Roadside Assessment and Mapping of Environmental values</p> <p>This project is working directly with Port Stephens, Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter Councils to embed new systems, tools and processes within the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework of each Council to improve corporate consistency and commitment to the protection and management of roadside environmental values.</p> <p>The Division recently provided training to Port Stephens Council staff on the application of the “Rapid Assessment Methodology” developed by Local Government NSW for Councils across NSW to support them more effectively identify, assess and manage roadside environmental values. This training and the environmental assessments completed are directly supporting Port Stephens Council pilot implementation of the Regional Roadside Environment Marker Scheme, commencing on the Tilligerry Peninsula.</p> <p>Similar training and roadside environmental assessments will also be completed with staff from Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter Shire Councils over the coming months to support them to review, consolidate and expand the Marker Scheme currently in place in these Council areas.</p> <p><i>More Information: Ashley Bacales P 4978 4028 E ashleyb@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p>
<p>Restoration and Rehabilitation Works</p>	<p>Hunter River Rainforest Restoration</p> <p>This NSW Environmental Trust funded project is focusing on the management and restoration of the Hunter River Reserve at Greta. The site 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.</p> <p>Bush regeneration works have recently been completed in the reserve targeting secondary treatment of Madeira Vine, and primary and secondary treatment of moderate and dense Lantana infestations within and surrounding Endangered Ecological Communities.</p> <p>A community “Heritage Talk and Biodiversity Walk” workshop is scheduled for delivery on the site on 8th September 2018. Its purpose is to raise local community awareness of the unique ecological and heritage features of the reserve.</p> <p><i>More Information: Ashley Bacales P 4978 4028 E ashleyb@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p> <p><i>Website: http://www.hccrems.com.au/%20heritage-talk-and-biodiversity-walk/</i></p>

Focus Area	Delivery Status
	<p>Conservation of Hunter Valley Weeping Myall Woodland</p> <p>This NSW Environmental Trust funded project is delivering on ground restoration works in the Jerry's Plains area to consolidate, protect, expand and improve connectivity between fragmented, remnant populations of Federally listed Critically Endangered Hunter Valley Weeping Myall Woodland.</p> <p>Recent project activities have focused on delivering bush regeneration and targeted weed control works on private property targeting an area of regenerating Weeping Myall and adjacent bushland. The project is also continuing to engage with local landholders to investigate and confirm the location of further remnants of Weeping Myall Woodland with the potential to be protected and rehabilitated under the project.</p> <p><i>More Information: Ashley Bacales P 4978 4028 E ashleyb@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p> <hr/> <p>Nine Valleys Wildlife Trail</p> <p>This NSW Environmental Trust funded project represents the first stage of a broader 10-year vision to establish fauna habitat linkages and protect and enhance critical biodiversity values across the Giants Creek to Jerry's Plains Corridor in the Upper Hunter.</p> <p>Recent activities have focused on delivering bush regeneration, targeted weed control and riparian fencing works within and adjacent to Martindale Creek. These works form part of a broader program of activities to engage and support landowners in the Martindale Valley to implement landscape restoration works on their properties in order to reestablish broader ecological connectivity in the area.</p> <p><i>More Information: Ashley Bacales P 4978 4028 E ashleyb@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p>

6 ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE

Strategic Goal:

The region's communities are prepared and resilient to environmental hazards.

Objectives

1. Through a risk based management approach, Councils and their communities are prepared and resilient to the hazards posed by a changing climate
2. Councils and their communities are well prepared for changes in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters
3. The community is well informed of projected hazards arising from a changing climate, and engaged in collaboratively identifying and implementing appropriate adaptation responses
4. Land, water, air and noise pollution and contamination is actively prevented or managed to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the community and natural environment
5. The risks posed by the long term and cumulative impacts of resource extraction are identified and managed to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the region's community and natural environment.

Activity Report

Focus Area	Delivery Status
Contaminated Land	<p>Contaminated Land Regional Capacity Building Program</p> <p>The Environment Division has submitted a funding application totalling \$420,000 over three years to the NSW Government's "Council Contaminated Land Regional Capacity Building Program". If successful this will be used to employ a regional officer, to provide advice and training on contaminated land issues, to develop contaminated land policies and procedures and assist Councils transition to their new regulatory responsibilities under the Underground Petroleum Storage Systems Regulation (commencing 1 September 2019). All Hunter JO member Councils and Central Coast Council are included in the proposal, and collectively have committed a further \$118,200 in direct funding (in addition to the maximum grant funds requested) to deliver the program over a three-year period.</p> <p><i>More Information: Steve Wilson P (02) 4978 4026 E steve@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p>
	<p>Managing Contamination on Council Land</p> <p>Supporting Councils to manage contamination across their own property portfolios is a core element of the existing Regional Contaminated Land Program being delivered by the Division, which includes and is directly funded by MidCoast, Port Stephens, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Cessnock, Dungog, Singleton, Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter Councils. The consultancy firm Nation Partners has recently been engaged to provide direct support to Councils in this area over the coming months, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of a Model Contaminated Land Management Plan outlining the procedures, priorities and scope of works needed to investigate and remediate contamination across Councils property portfolio.

Focus Area	Delivery Status
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. A brief review of property transaction procedures held by each Council and providing an advisory note as to how the potential for land contamination could be considered within these. 3. Developing a risk assessment tool for piloting and application by Councils (supported by coaching) to determine potential contamination risks for land parcels within their property portfolio 4. Training workshops for staff on applying project outputs and to provide face to face access to the consultant to discuss specific queries or particular Council properties affected by contamination. <p>The first step in this initiative was recently completed, with the delivery of three sub regional workshops (30 July – 1st August) in the Upper Hunter, Lower Hunter and MidCoast areas. The focus of the workshops included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rationale for developing a contaminated land management plan for Council land underpinned by a risk framework • Identifying key issues and needs of Councils to be addressed through the regional program • Providing an overview of the program design, activities and outputs, including activities and inputs required of participating Councils. <p><i>More Information: Steve Wilson P (02) 4978 4026 E steve@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p>
Disaster Resilience	<p>Proposal for Regional Council Support Role (Disaster Resilience)</p> <p>In recent years the NSW Government has invested in regional positions to support Councils across NSW to develop and implement systems and practices to ensure alignment with NSW Government legislation, and effective local scale implementation of, State policies and priorities.</p> <p>The Environment Division has prepared a proposal for submission to the NSW Government requesting it to resource the establishment of a regional support role in the Hunter focused on building the disaster readiness of Councils and their local communities. The proposal recommends that the NSW Government invest \$150,000 per annum over a three-year period to establish this role, which would contribute directly to delivery of the Hunter Joint Organisation Strategic Plan 2018-21, which identifies as a key objective the need to “<i>continue to work together to deliver the program to increase community resilience and preparedness for natural disasters</i>”</p> <p><i>More Information: Steve Wilson P (02) 4978 4026 E steve@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p>
	<p>Regional Communications</p> <p>The Environment Division was recently awarded \$162,200 in grant funds under the NSW Government’s Community Resilience Innovation Program (CRIP), to design and deliver a coordinated (region wide), all hazards approach to community engagement on disaster preparedness, response and recovery. The project will include developing a regionally consistent communications framework and protocol to support Councils deliver accurate and timely messages to the</p>

Focus Area	Delivery Status
	<p>community, including a range of communication resources to directly support engagement activities.</p> <p><i>More Information: Ian Turnbull P (02) 4978 4042 E iant@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p> <hr/> <p>Disaster Ready Councils Project</p> <p>This NSW wide project is focused on supporting Councils improve corporate planning and readiness for natural disasters across the range of functions and services they provide. This aims to assist them to more confidently and effectively “weather the storm” when disaster hits, and improve the success and efficiency of recovery efforts so that both Council and the community can get back to normal as soon as possible.</p> <p>The current focus of the project is the completion of 5 Guideline resources to directly support Councils understand and prepare for their role in the following priority areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrating Disaster Preparedness into Council Integrated Planning and Reporting Frameworks 2. Managing Disaster Waste 3. Organisational (Corporate) Resilience 4. Community Recovery 5. Communicating Natural Disaster Information <p><i>More Information: Ian Turnbull P (02) 4978 4042 E iant@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p> <hr/> <p>State-wide Forum - The Role of Councils in Communicating Natural Disaster Information</p> <p>Delivered under the Disaster Ready Councils project, this state-wide forum delivered in June attracted 65 participants representing all of the region’s Councils, along with organisations including Tweed, Bega, Gunnedah, Sutherland, Byron, Fairfield, Bathurst, Kur-in-gai and Goulburn-Mulwaree Councils, NSW Office of Emergency Management, NSW State Emergency Service, NSW Rural Fire Service, NSW Police, Hunter Water Corporation, ABC Newcastle (as the Emergency Broadcaster), NSW Office of Environment & Heritage, Hunter Local Land Services and the University of Newcastle.</p> <p>Presentations focused on the substantial and ongoing physical, emotional and resource implications that are directly experienced by Councils and their local communities arising from natural disaster events, and the important role that Councils have in communicating information (over an extended period of time) to help alleviate these impacts. Outcomes from the forum are now directly informing the guideline on Communicating Disaster Information being developed under the Disaster Ready Councils project.</p> <p><i>More Information: Ian Turnbull P (02) 4978 4042 E iant@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p> <p><i>Website: http://www.hccrems.com.au/hccrems-events/</i></p>

Focus Area	Delivery Status
	<p>Six Steps to Resilience - Business Continuity Planning for Community Service Organisations</p> <p>This project aims to build the awareness, skills and capacity of Community Service Organisations across the Hunter and Central Coast region, to better prepare their organisation (and in turn clients and communities) for disasters. This includes piloting the “Six Steps to Resilience Framework” developed by the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) for developing Business Continuity Plans.</p> <p>In recent months the Environment Division has facilitated workshop sessions to pilot the framework with organisations including nine Meals on Wheels providers, the Bucketts Way Neighbourhood Group and Transcare (Scone). The next round of sessions will target Community Neighbourhood Centres located at Kurri Kurri, Muswellbrook, Dungog and the Central Coast.</p> <p><i>More Information: Ian Turnbull P (02) 4978 4042 E iant@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p>

7 RESOURCE RECOVERY

Strategic Goal:

To implement an evolving, adaptive and sustainable waste management system for the Hunter / Central Coast Region that uses resources more efficiently to benefit the whole community.

Objectives

1. Improve waste avoidance and waste reduction
2. Increase recycling
3. Divert waste from landfill
4. Manage problem household wastes
5. Reduce litter
6. Minimise the impacts of illegal dumping
7. Improve governance and lead by example.
8. Best practice management of new and existing services and facilities to optimise long term efficiency and capacity of waste management services and infrastructure
9. Land Use Planning integrates best practice resource recovery principles

Activity Report

Focus Area	Description
Regional Waste Strategy	<p>Review of 2018/19 Program Activities</p> <p>During July the Waste Managers of all Councils participating in the Regional Waste Program met to confirm the focus of program activities for the 2018/19 period. These were determined to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of baseline community engagement and understanding of waste minimisation messages • The development (and focus grouping) of a regional waste education brand • The design and implementation of a 3-year strategy to implement the regional waste education project • Design and delivery of community education and engagement resources to support the RID Squad and other Illegal Dumping management efforts • Funding support for a circular economy research project • Funding to enable continued development of regional waste management governance and infrastructure requirements to ensure appropriate waste services are provided in the region. <p>These projects have been submitted to the NSW EPA for approval.</p> <p><i>More Information: Bradley Nolan P (02) 4978 4024 E bradn@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p>

Focus Area	Delivery Status
Infrastructure and Planning; Recycling	<p>Recycling Industry Issues</p> <p>The activities of the Division in recent months have continued to focus on working with Councils to address issues in the recycling industry. This includes ongoing active liaison with Councils and the NSW EPA, which has been successful in negotiating some regulatory relief from the compliance section of the EPA, providing the ability for Councils to vary landfill licence conditions to allow the acceptance and storage of recycle on site without incurring a levy charge, but a levy liability.</p> <p><i>More Information: Bradley Nolan P 4978 4024 E bradn@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p>
	<p>Regional Recycling Options Study</p> <p>Following a resolution of the Hunter Joint Organisation Board, consultants pitt&sherry were engaged by the Environment Division to complete a regional recycling options study and report. The report describes a number of scenario options, and outlines high level options / opportunities for Councils to progress waste infrastructure and service planning to ensure the region is insulated from issues like the China Green Sword Policy in the future.</p> <p><i>More Information: Bradley Nolan P 4978 4024 E bradn@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p>
	<p>Local Council Reference Group – Responding to China’s National Sword Policy</p> <p>The Hunter Joint Organisation, as the facilitator of the Regional Waste Avoidance & Resource Recovery Strategy, has joined a Local Government reference group established by the NSW EPA to engage local government input to the development of responses by the NSW Government to China’s National Sword Policy. The group includes representative from the following groups/sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government NSW • Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (NSW) • RENEW NSW (Councils from non-levy paying areas of NSW) • NEWaste (Councils from the North East Voluntary Waste Group) • RAMROC Riverina • NETWaste (Councils from Western NSW) • SSROC • WSROC • Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils. <p>Three meetings of the reference group have been held to date, with feedback sought on issues around facility licences, circular economy, and procurement. The Manager Regional Procurement has also been engaged in a series of meetings with Local Government NSW regarding potential changes to procurement standards to support the circular economy.</p> <p><i>More Information: Bradley Nolan P 4978 4024 E bradn@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p>
	<p>Regional Education Campaign – “It All Comes Back to You”</p> <p>A new regional education campaign “It All Comes Back to You” has been designed to transition from the “Small Acts Big Change” platform and provide a regional presence that all Councils can use and leverage as they continue to deliver localised waste messages on the use of their individual Council collection systems.</p>

Focus Area	Delivery Status
	<p>Councils have recommended that the new campaign be tested against the current one at a series of focus groups, prior to being finalised. As such focus groups are being held throughout the region during September, with the rollout of the successful campaign expected to follow in October after a report back to the Regional Waste Managers Group on the outcomes of these sessions.</p> <p><i>More Information: Bradley Nolan P 4978 4024 E bradn@huntercouncils.com.au</i></p>

8 LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

Strategic Goal:

Sustainable, healthy and engaged communities.

Objectives

1. Maximise economic, environmental and community health and wellbeing of the region's communities through:
 - Environmentally sustainable and climate resilient buildings, assets and facilities
 - Public places that provide for recreation, social connection, health, happiness and wellbeing
 - Protected and enhanced environmental and rural amenity
 - Well-connected and convenient transport options where walking, cycling and public transport are viable options for the majority of trips
 - The efficient use of water, energy and other resources
2. Protect and enhance the region's agricultural productivity by identifying and protecting highly productive agricultural land and encouraging sustainable agricultural practices
3. Support the region to transition to renewable energy and reduce carbon emissions
4. Support the region's Councils achieve maximum energy and water efficiency and reduced carbon emissions across their operations
5. A community that is actively engaged in environmental stewardship activities.

Activity Report

Activity	Description
Water Sensitive Urban Design	Construction and Establishment of Vegetated Stormwater Assets Training Thirty-one participants from across five member Councils, the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and a private environmental consultancy participated in the one-day training course "Construction and Establishment of Vegetated Stormwater Assets" provided through the Environment Division's Professional Development Series on 27 th June. Delivered by the specialist training company Design Flow, the course focused on step-by-step guidance on the construction and establishment of bioretention systems and stormwater wetlands in order to address the key issues faced during on-ground construction. <i>More Information: Steve Wilson P (02) 4978 4026 E steve@huntercouncils.com.au</i>

ATTACHMENT 1. STRATEGIC PLANNING DIRECTIONS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

DIVISION

Theme: Natural Systems	
Focus Area: Coasts and Catchment Health	Resourcing Status
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and synthesise existing water quality monitoring being undertaken in the region and its purpose and application 2. Design and implement an integrated (cross council/agency) water quality monitoring program that directly evaluates and informs catchment planning and management 	<p>Not resourced – limited opportunity to attract grant funding</p>
Focus Area: Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)	Resourcing Status
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Develop regional capacity building programs to enhance ability of Councils and industry to design and implement WSUD across functional areas 4. Undertake research to identify water quality and hydrological needs of receiving waters to inform WSUD design approaches 5. Undertake research to identify Hunter specific modelling parameters for rainfall and intensity data 	<p>Not resourced</p> <p>Potential to deliver training on a cost recovery basis (i.e. charging Councils to participate)</p> <p>Potential to re-establish a Community of Practice to progress the issue</p>
Focus Area: Roadside Management	Resourcing Status
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Support councils to integrate roadside environmental assessment and management within their IP&R frameworks 7. Review and update tools and resources on roadside management to reflect current legislative environment 	<p>Funded. Targeted project involving Upper Hunter, Muswellbrook and Port Stephens Council grant funded until March 2019</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Deliver regular training on roadside environmental assessment and management 9. Continue to support councils to expand, deliver and monitor effectiveness of regional roadside marker scheme 10. Support councils to identify and deliver on ground works to restore and protect roadside environmental values 11. Identify regional conservation priorities located in or adjacent to roadside reserves 	<p>Not resourced & limited opportunity to attract grant funding. Potential to be resourced by Councils through collaborative funding model.</p>
Focus Area: Biodiversity and Threatened Species	Resourcing Status
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Establish a Regional Biodiversity Geographic Information System framework 	<p>Not resourced & limited opportunity to attract grant funding. Potential to be resourced by Councils through collaborative funding model.</p>

13. Assist councils develop local scale Plans of Management for newly acquired crown lands	Not resourced & limited opportunity to attract grant funding. Potential to be delivered on a fee for service basis		
14. Development of a Regional Biodiversity Investment and Conservation Strategy	Not resourced. Potential to seek funding from NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust		
15. Advocate for accurate waterways mapping for use within the biodiversity conservation GIS framework	Resourced		
16. Engage with stakeholders to establish a regional data hub within the Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils Environment Division	Not resourced & limited opportunity to attract grant funding. Potential to be resourced by Councils through collaborative funding model		
17. Develop a natural assets valuation framework that enables integration into existing asset management planning systems	Not resourced & limited opportunity to attract grant funding. Potential to be resourced by Councils through collaborative funding model		
18. Facilitate a regional approach to the conservation and management of Flying Foxes	Resourced to deliver initial community and Council staff education initiative. Potential to attract grant funding / government / Council contributions to expand further		
19. Development of a Regional Biodiversity Offsets Policy	Resourced to deliver through Regional Biodiversity Support Program		
20. Establish a Community of Practice for Environmental Assessment processes applicable to council owned lands and operations	Not resourced & limited opportunity to attract grant funding. Potential to be resourced by Councils through collaborative funding model.		
<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">Focus Area: Biodiversity Reforms</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Resourcing Status</td> </tr> </table>		Focus Area: Biodiversity Reforms	Resourcing Status
Focus Area: Biodiversity Reforms	Resourcing Status		
21. Continue delivery of biodiversity support officer role until July 2019	Resourced until July 2019		
22. Develop support materials that will facilitate regional consistency in management of land clearing below the NSW offsets scheme thresholds.			
<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">Focus Area: Restoration and Rehabilitation works</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Resourcing Status</td> </tr> </table>		Focus Area: Restoration and Rehabilitation works	Resourcing Status
Focus Area: Restoration and Rehabilitation works	Resourcing Status		
23. Proactively engage stakeholders to deliver targeted conservation and rehabilitation works that protect and enhance regional priority areas	A limited number of projects currently resourced through grant funding. Potential may exist to secure funding through NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust.		

Theme: Environmental Resilience

Focus Area: Contaminated Land	Resourcing Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24. Provide ongoing technical and project specific support to Councils through a Regional Contaminated Land Program 25. Support Councils to develop and maintain a local Contaminated Land Information System 26. Assist Councils embed tools and resources into corporate systems that supports their role as the Regulatory Authority 27. Support Councils to identify, assess and prioritise management of Contamination on Council owned Land 28. Support councils transition to their new role as regulator of the Underground Petroleum Storage System (UPSS) Regulation (commencing August 2019) 29. Support Councils to remain aware of and develop capacity for the management of emerging contaminants 	<p>Regional Contaminated Land Program and Technical Specialist currently funded by Councils through collaborative funding model.</p> <p>Recommended to extend existing collaborative funding model until June 2020.</p>
Focus Area: Disaster Resilience	Resourcing Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30. Support Councils to strengthen local emergency management planning 31. Support councils to develop organisational resilience (through embedding business continuity planning) to disaster events 32. Support councils to plan and build the resilience and capacity of local and regional waste management services and facilities to disaster events 33. Develop regional communication tools and resources to support Councils deliver consistent and coordinated information around disaster events 34. Support Councils build corporate and community resilience to natural disasters by improving data and risk modelling that identifies vulnerable communities and infrastructure 35. Support Councils to build local community capacity and capability to withstand and recover from disaster events 36. Support Councils to identify and implement recovery mechanisms to effectively support local communities recover from disaster events 	<p>Limited activities (development of some guideline resources and training) currently resourced through grant funding. Potential for further program work to be funded through additional grants and/or direct investment by NSW Government.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 37. Develop regional guidance resources to assist Councils understand the roles and responsibilities of agencies and other stakeholder organisations in relation to natural disaster events 	<p>Currently resourced (grant funding)</p>
Focus Area: Climate Adaptation	Resourcing Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 38. Review and update Regional Coastal and Rural Councils Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plans to identify regional adaptation priorities for Councils 	<p>Not resourced & limited opportunity to attract grant</p>

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| <p>39. Build capability of councils to apply the “Decision Support Tool for Coastal Adaptation: The Handbook” to identify management options (including long term adaptation pathways), in vulnerable coastal/estuarine areas</p> | <p>funding. Potential to be resourced by Councils through collaborative funding model.</p> |
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Focus Area: Biosecurity and Pest Species Management	Resourcing Status
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| <p>40. Develop appropriate resources to assist councils better undertake their responsibilities in relation to biosecurity</p> | <p>Not resourced. Program responsibilities primarily lie with other regional organisations including Hunter Local Land Services.</p> |
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Focus Area: Land, water, air and noise pollution	Resourcing Status
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| <p>41. Support Councils in the delivery of pollution programs as required</p> | <p>Not resourced & limited opportunity to attract grant funding.</p> |
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Theme: Liveable Communities

Focus Area: Ecologically Sustainable buildings, facilities and infrastructure	Resourcing Status
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| <p>42. Develop regionally consistent approaches to land use planning that improves building sustainability</p> <p>43. Regional collaboration on electric vehicle charging to ensure strategic spend of Council funds</p> | <p>Not resourced. Opportunity may arise to attract grant funding through the NSW Climate Change Fund scheduled to commence July 2018.</p> |
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Focus Area: Renewables	Resourcing Status
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| <p>44. Support Councils to attract innovative businesses to the region with a focus on energy technology</p> <p>45. Support Councils to identify, evaluate and deliver large scale renewable energy initiatives</p> | <p>Not resourced. Opportunity may arise to attract grant funding through the NSW Climate Change Fund scheduled to commence July 2018.</p> |
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Focus Area: Energy Efficiency and Energy Resilience	Resourcing Status
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| <p>46. Support Councils to establish consistent and accurate emissions baseline data</p> <p>47. Monitoring and analysis of energy measures and their effectiveness</p> <p>48. Support Councils to develop the business case for energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives</p> <p>49. Develop a regional community engagement plan for emissions reduction and increase the uptake of renewable energy technology</p> <p>50. Support Councils to embed emissions/energy efficiency into capital works/asset projects</p> | <p>Not resourced. Opportunity may arise to attract grant funding through the NSW Climate Change Fund scheduled to commence July 2018.</p> |
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Focus Area: Resource Extraction	Resourcing Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 51. Undertake advocacy to ensure lands dedicated to council at end of mining leases are accompanied by adequate resourcing 52. Develop support resources for councils to implement conditions and undertake compliance activities for revegetation on mine sites under their regulatory approval 53. Provide support to Councils involved in the synoptic plan process 54. Provide JO board with advocacy position on minimum level of consultation required with Councils for mining proposals 	Not resourced & limited opportunity to attract grant funding. Potential to be resourced by Councils through collaborative funding model.
Focus Area: Sustainable Agricultural lands and production	Resourcing Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 55. Undertake research and develop information resources on transferrable land activities arising from Climate Change impacts 56. Research regional infrastructure needs to support ongoing and future agricultural activities in the region 57. Engage with Muswellbrook, Singleton and Upper Hunter Councils on use of biophysical agricultural lands map 58. Develop resources for private land holders promoting sustainable agriculture that maintains appropriate access to conservation values 59. Advocate for better consistent mapping and future export opportunities 	Not resourced & limited opportunity to attract grant funding. Potential to be resourced by Councils through collaborative funding model.
Focus Area: Urban Forests	Resourcing Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60. Regional capacity building to support councils develop urban forest programs 	Not resourced & limited opportunity to attract grant funding. Potential to be resourced by Councils through collaborative funding model.
Focus Area: Cultural Heritage	Resourcing Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 61. Provide support to Councils to transition to new requirements and systems arising from introduction of Cultural Heritage Act 	Not resourced and no grant programs currently available.
Theme: Resource Recovery	
Focus Area: Waste Reduction	Resourcing Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 62. Reduce the Generation of waste by supporting and enabling waste avoidance and reuse behaviours through community education, engagement and involvement 	Resourced through Regional Waste Program (NSW Government grant funding) until June 2021
Focus Area: Recycling	Resourcing Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 63. Support ongoing advocacy for regulatory reform that will enable a recycling industry in NSW 	

<p>64. Develop a business case for funding the construction of a recycling facility/system in the Hunter Region</p> <p>65. Support development of a circular economy for waste generated in the region</p>	<p>Resourced through Regional Waste Program (NSW Government grant funding) until June 2021</p>
Focus Area: Diversion from Landfill	Resourcing Status
<p>66. Expand the diversion of all types of waste from landfill through education, alternative technology, efficiency gains and innovation</p> <p>67. Advocate for a functional Container Deposit Scheme for NSW</p>	<p>Resourced through Regional Waste Program (NSW Government grant funding) until June 2021</p>
Focus Area: Problem Wastes	Resourcing Status
<p>68. Ensure adequate community access to the regional network of facilities that accept and manage problem wastes</p>	<p>Resourced through Regional Waste Program (NSW Government grant funding) until June 2021</p>
Focus Area: Litter	Resourcing Status
<p>69. Minimise environmental social and economic impacts of littering through community education, enforcement, deterrents and installation of appropriate infrastructure</p>	<p>Resourced through Regional Waste Program (NSW Government grant funding) until June 2021</p>
Focus Area: Illegal Dumping (ID)	Resourcing Status
<p>70. Continued support for RID activities as per the Regional Waste Management Strategy</p>	<p>Resourced through Regional Waste Program (NSW Government grant funding) until June 2021</p>
Focus Area: Infrastructure and Planning	Resourcing Status
<p>71. Encourage best practice management by Councils of new and existing services and facilities</p> <p>72. Optimise the long-term efficiency and capacity of waste management infrastructure and services across the Hunter/Central Coast Councils</p> <p>73. Land use planning integrates best practice resource recovery principles</p> <p>74. Review and develop model policy/DCPs that promote best practice resource recovery in new development</p> <p>75. Advocate for a clearer planning approval process for new facilities</p>	<p>Resourced through Regional Waste Program (NSW Government grant funding) until June 2021</p>