



Upper Georges River Sustainability Initiative

A significant number of onground works projects were completed within the 2010/11 period.



▶ One of these projects was the Victoria Road Stormwater and Bunbury Curran Weed Removal Project under taken by Campbelltown City Council. The project represented a two-step approach to addressing water quality issues and weed infestation within the old meanders of the Bunbury Curran creek.

▶ The finalisation of the Strategic Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) was an important milestone to guide decision making in regard to water quality, biodiversity and community engagement/education. The SEMP is designed to assist decision makers, planners, managers, key stake holders and the community in understanding and tackling the issues facing the Upper Georges River and represent a legacy beyond the timeframe of the UGRSI.

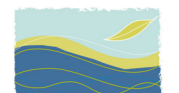
▶ 'The River Project' was held at Campbelltown Arts Centre, bringing together 20 artists from the Asia-Pacific region to exhibit works across a variety of formats addressing the social and environmental impacts of the changing nature of river systems across the Asia-Pacific Region. During the three month exhibition (27 August to 24 October 2010) approximately 18,000 people viewed the exhibition. The symposium featured keynote speaker Dr Ian Wright (from the University of NSW) and a presentation by Dr Ann Young (Univ of Wollongong).



The River Project Exhibition at Campbelltown Arts Centre brought together performance art, publications, education and public programs from various Australian and international artists to explore the issues facing river systems in the Asia and the Pacific, and examined the relationships contemporary cultures have with these river systems.

The Upper Georges River was granted a 12 month extension in July 2011 to enable a number of the actions within the SEMP to be delivered. The project is now due for completion in June 2012.

Improving Prospect Creek Sustainability Initiative



The objectives of the IPCSI are to:

1. Improve the condition and extent of native vegetation communities along the Prospect Creek riparian corridor
2. Increase understanding of the current biological values of the creek's riparian corridor
3. Identify, assess and prioritise Local Government management actions to rehabilitate the ecological functions of Prospect Creek
4. Develop relationships between land managers, indigenous groups and community members to better manage Prospect Creek
5. Increase awareness of the significance of Prospect Creek and encourage greater participation in the rehabilitation of the creek by the local community

In order to meet these objectives, the project has two key stages: the development a Strategic Management Plan (SMP) for the Prospect Creek Riparian Corridor, and the Plan's implementation.

Following a community consultation of the draft SMP, the consultant has forwarded the final SMP to Bankstown, Holroyd and Fairfield City Councils. Weed removal works have been carried out at Mirambeena Regional Park in Bankstown with the assistance of the Riverkeeper Program and bush regeneration contractors. Weed removal and revegetation works are planned for Holroyd and Fairfield.

The SMP provides key recommendations for a number of sections along the Prospect Creek riparian zones requiring weed control, tree planting and bush regeneration. It also provides other recommendations including the need to complete rehabilitation and stabilisation works to bridge abutments, stormwater outlets and creek banks in a number of areas. The key management issues are identified including litter and water quality and the need to install water quality improvement devices to help mitigate these issues.



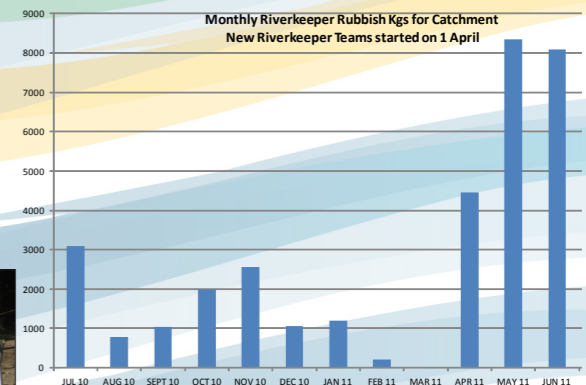
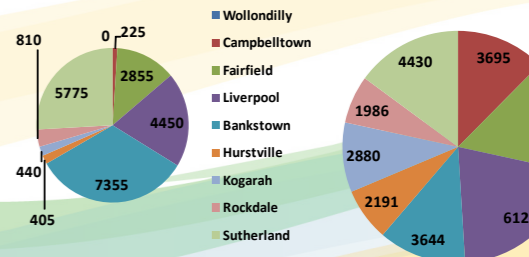
Before (top) and after photos of weed removal and revegetation works along Hassall Street, Wetherill Park. Weeds included privet, blackberry and green cestrum. Indigenous plants were sourced from Fairfield Council's Native Nursery.

Georges Riverkeeper Program



- ▶ Fulltime Riverkeeper employed, enabling teams to operate 5 days per week (up from 3);
- ▶ Number of Riverkeeper work teams increase from 3 to 10 teams per week (new MOU with CSNSW);
- ▶ Significant increases in team productivity and rubbish collection outcomes for all member councils;
- ▶ Expansion of Riverkeeper bush regeneration service to support council bushcare programs;
- ▶ OceanWatch Australia grant project completed to restore riparian and wetland areas in Bankstown and Hurstville LGAs involving 126 participants;
- ▶ Diversification of GRCCC teams to include National Green Job Corp & National Park Association teams.

2009/10 Program Rubbish (22,315 kg)



* Since April 2011, the Riverkeeper Program is removing on average 7 tonnes of rubbish each month from foreshores and riparian zones.



Riverkeeper Program Results: Micro-rubbish cleanup at Cutler Road, Liverpool

GRCCC Communications & Engagement Program

- ▶ Update of Georges River Website underway;
- ▶ GRCCC Media Policy and draft Communications & Engagement Strategy developed;
- ▶ Participation in several community engagement events across the catchment;
- ▶ Co-ordinated Georges River Cruise conference for council & agency executives to promote stormwater solutions, including water sensitive urban design (at right);
- ▶ Co-ordinated and supported the public release of River Health Monitoring Program Report cards;
- ▶ Riverkeeper Program Report card under development for release in Nov 2011;
- ▶ Significant increase in media profile of the GRCCC and member council activities in local media and radio;
- ▶ GRCCC successfully lobbies on behalf of councils on issues such as BHP Bulli Seam Operation 30 year plan.



The Stormwater Conference/Cruise invited agency and council leaders on the River in February.

Estuary Management Plan



A public consultation forum was held in May 2011 to review the recommended actions for the Estuary Management Plan.

- ▶ Grant funding received from Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) to continue development of the Georges River Estuary Management Plan (EMP);
- ▶ GRCCC worked closely with our consultants BMT WBN, OEH, member councils and agencies at 2 consultation workshops and 1 public forum (right) to identify aims, objectives and management options (eligible for NSW Government funding) for inclusion in EMP;
- ▶ The EMP will provide a first class strategic framework for member councils and partner agencies such as NPWS, SMCMA, DPI, NSW Maritime & OEH to collectively protect and manage the estuary;
- ▶ GRCCC investigating ways to integrate EMP with upper catchment councils to identify and address pollution sources before they enter the estuary.



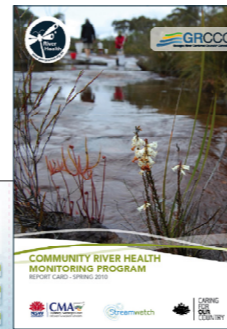
Georges River Community River Health Monitoring Program



- ▶ Four sampling events were conducted in Spring and Autumn from 2009 - 2011;
- ▶ Four catchment wide River Health Report Cards issued on sampling results;
- ▶ 1700 hours of community participation in program and 168 sampling events conducted at 42 freshwater and estuarine sites;
- ▶ Sampling methodology is scientifically rigorous and modeled on long running Queensland programs. A conference paper written by GRCCC was accepted for the 6th Australian Streams Management Conference 2012, a peer reviewed conference with article to be printed in conference proceedings;
- ▶ Five councils - Bankstown, Hurstville, Kogarah, Rockdale and Sutherland have used the data to identify on ground works needed to improve water quality and riverbank vegetation. These councils have allocated grant funding provided by the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority and the Lower Georges River Urban Sustainability Initiative to implement the works. In addition, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Liverpool and Wollondilly Shire councils have also used the data for environmental reporting and planning purposes;
- ▶ New grant project developed and submitted to the Australian Government which, if approved, will see each member council receive \$30,000 for works to improve water quality and riparian condition in response to River Health Program data;
- ▶ Program nominated as finalist in two categories in NSW Green Globe Sustainability Awards and as a finalist in the Urban Landcare category of the NSW Landcare Awards on 6 September;
- ▶ Office of Environment and Heritage recommends the River Health Monitoring Program be included in the Georges River Estuary Management Plan as the method for monitoring estuarine health.



Volunteers identify and sort macroinvertebrates in the Upper Georges River.



Executive Committee

- ▶ The Executive Committee carried out operational, financial, business administration and strategic planning objectives for the year 2010-11. Following recommendations from the Strategic Review in May 2011, the duties of the Finance & Administration Program was absorbed into the Executive Committee. Highlights include the broad-scale expansion of 4 GRCCC programs, including recruitment of staff, development of budgets and auditing of accounts; securing additional resources from NSW Dept. of Corrective Services for the Riverkeeper Program; and engaging consultants for the Georges River Estuary Management Plan, the Riverkeeper Program and work associated with the Botany Bay Water Quality Improvement Plan; and review of the GRCCC Management & Implementation Plan.

Partnerships

- ▶ In the 2010-2011 period, the GRCCC has partnered with its nine member councils and several state and federal government agencies to achieve our shared goals of quality catchment management. These partners include National Parks and Wildlife Service, Office of Environment and Heritage, Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority, Department of Primary Industries, Corrective Services NSW, NSW Education & Communities (Georges River Environmental Education Centre), NSW Maritime, OceanWatch Australia, Sydney Water and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Population and Communities (formerly DEWHA).



Lower Georges River Sustainability Initiative



The Intermediate Outcomes of the LGRSI, which identify the impact that will be observable from meeting the LGRSI project objectives in terms of changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, awareness, and practices are detailed within 4 Action Plans, and are:

1. More effective institutional arrangements within partner councils (to enable and enhance sustainable practices).
2. More effective urban water management
3. More integrated planning and implementation of NRM programs within the LGR catchment
4. More sustainable practices of community and business.
5. Improved bushland, biodiversity and riparian health.

More Effective Urban Water Management

- ▶ 4 Council Action Planning workshops completed;
- ▶ 4 staff WSUD awareness events completed;
- ▶ Stormwater Conference-Cruise held in February 2011;
- ▶ 4 WSUD demonstration projects underway.

More Integrated Planning and Implementation of NRM Programs within LGR Catchments

- ▶ Participation in Botany Bay coordination group;
- ▶ 4 River Health Monitoring Program site restoration projects started;
- ▶ Support and participate in Estuary Management group.

More Effective Institutional Arrangements Within Partner Councils

- ▶ 3 Council Organisational Profiles completed, 1 underway;
- ▶ 1 Council Action Plan based on Organisational Profile completed;
- ▶ 4 Sustainable Procurement policies completed;
- ▶ 4 Sustainable Events policies completed.

More Sustainable Practices of Community and Business

- ▶ 6 project partnerships completed in Community Partnerships Program.



LGRSI Steering Committee visited Carrs Park Community Garden in February. The garden group is a member of the getting greener! Community Partnerships program.

Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative



The Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative (MGRSI) was a partnership between Bankstown and Sutherland councils, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and the GRCCC. The ultimate objective of the project was to move towards a healthy, balanced ecosystem by engaging all stakeholders in long-term sustainable management of the mid Georges River.

Masterplans were developed to guide activities within the two sub-catchments, identifying priority on-ground works, planning controls, and educational activities to achieve sustainability objectives. Many of the actions funded through the MGRSI will continue to be implemented by partner agencies beyond the grant project.



YERAMBA LAGOON

- ▶ Yeramblers Bushcare has been integrated with Bankstown's Bushcare program.
- ▶ 7 'Dob in a Dumper' signs, and other signage for responsible disposal of fishing lines, hooks and tackle were produced.
- ▶ 250 tonnes of aquatic weed was removed from the lagoon. Monitoring is ongoing.
- ▶ A 39m grassed swale and two sandstone sculptures were installed at Amberdale Reserve.
- ▶ Concept designs for removal of the weir were finalised and provided to NPWS for management of the site.
- ▶ Riverkeeper Program performed bush regeneration at 2 Yeramba Lagoon sites and undertakes ongoing maintenance.



MILL CREEK

Mill Creek, Sutherland LGA

- ▶ 11 signs warning people about illegal use of bushland were installed in Menai and Alford's Point.
- ▶ 18 bushland sites received weed control and revegetation works, with the assistance of the Riverkeeper Program.
- ▶ 6 new sites in the Mill Creek catchment have been included in Sutherland's water quality monitoring program.
- ▶ Boom gates are being installed at 3 sites to restrict illegal off-road vehicles in sensitive areas.
- ▶ Funds were allocated to SMCMA to maintain an Indigenous land management team on Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council lands.
- ▶ Menai Wildflower Group was engaged to map a new walking route and identify track improvements.