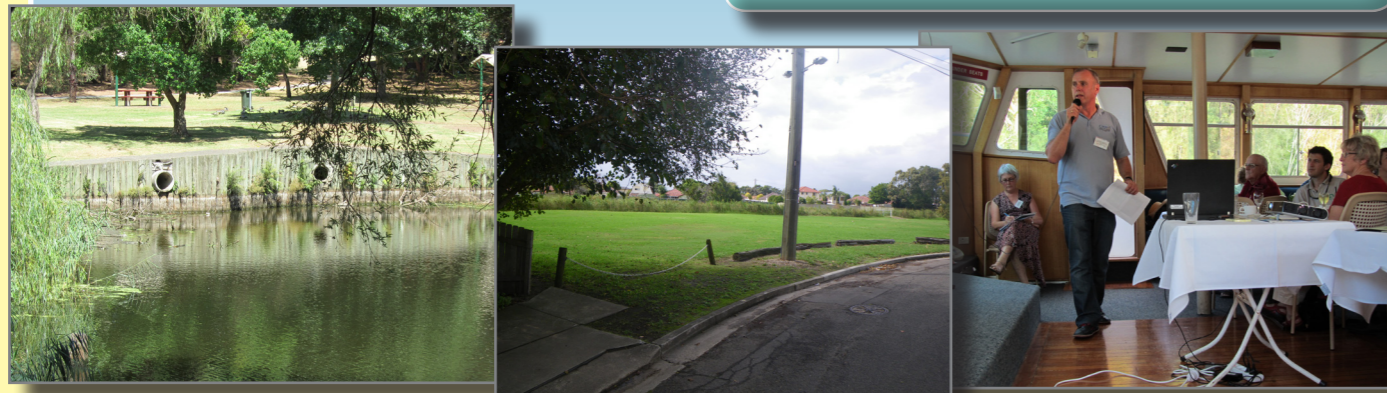


Sustainable Urban Water Management

Using an existing resource from the Paramatta Catchment group, a **Decision Support tool** has been developed for council stormwater managers to calculate a cost-benefit analysis for **Water Sensitive Urban Design** works by councils. Benefits are broken down by water quality & quantity, biodiversity, social and institutional, and measured against lifecycle, establishment costs and actual costs. The tool allows council staff to continually assess and improve WSUD outcomes, and to consider the larger implications of WSUD works in the community. It also provides opportunities for other sectors of council, such as accounting, strategic planning and engineering, to contribute to WSUD development.

WSUD's been happening!

- ✓ **WSUD Action Plans** being adopted within councils.
- ✓ **A Decision Support Tool** lets planners measure cost-benefit ratios and triple-bottom-line assessment before approving works
- ✓ **MUSIC software and Leadership trainings** held to support technicians and planners
- ✓ **Cruise / conference** held on Georges River to promote leading edge approaches to WSUD among executives and organisational leaders
- ✓ **LGRSI committed \$900,000 for 6 on-ground works**



At left, the existing Webb's Dam at Evatt Park in Hurstville will be replaced by a constructed wetland, which will treat storm flows from the adjoining catchment. Centre, before construction begins this winter on a raingarden to treat a residential section of Bona Park in Sans Souci, Rockdale Council. At right, John Dahlenberg (Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority) addresses the crowd at the Georges River Conference Cruise on 17 February.

Natural Resource Management Integration

The LGRSI has identified sites with potential for regrowth, improving water quality, and slowing nutrient loads during stormwater runoff. Ecological assessments taken through the Georges River Community River Health program, undertaken by the Georges River Combined Councils' Committee (GRCCC), at each site provide a baseline of conditions including water quality, macro-invertebrate and vegetation communities.

Councils will achieve revegetation with native plantings, a reduction in exotic weeds, an improvement in fauna habitat, and an engaged and informed community at the sites. So far, all four councils have identified project sites, budgets for project costs, and developed communication plans which will include tours and signage.



The 4.4 ha Scott Park salt marsh in Rockdale City Council will be revegetated to increase the buffer between salt marsh and parkland. Restoration will secure the ecologically sensitive habitat for migratory birds.

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Lower Georges River Sustainability Initiative

UPDATE AUTUMN 2011



The Lower Georges River Sustainability Initiative...

brings together innovative projects with an emphasis on programs that exhibit a combination of best practices, the right technical support, leadership and community action.

Behaviour change is our goal, so we focus on:

- ✓ keeping things practical
- ✓ communicating positive messages
- ✓ adapting to changing conditions
- ✓ continual self-improvement
- ✓ taking steps on initiatives which are self-supporting beyond the life of the LGRSI.

Action is underway...

- 6 Water Sensitive Urban Design projects
- 4 *getting greener!* projects
- 4 riparian regeneration projects
- A conference cruise
- A 'Sustainability Health Check' at Kogarah City Council
- Sustainable procurement and events policies within council



Beth Noel and Mario Sherrie of Sutherland Shire Council settle in for a cruise up the Georges River during the recent event to promote Water Sensitive Urban Design.

The initiative is assisted by the NSW Government with funding by the Environmental Trust through its Urban Sustainability Program. Beginning in 2009, the program will finish in January 2012, with \$2 million being committed to a combination of capacity building and on-ground works for Hurstville, Kogarah, Rockdale and Sutherland Shire Councils.

LGRSI: The story so far...

Community Partnerships Program *getting greener!*

Carss Park Community Garden

Community members in the Carss Park area have developed a community garden and fully-functional, sustainable facility to host events and activities. Underway for 2011 are a new water line, a communications strategy, a series of community engagement events, and raised garden beds which are wheelchair-accessible.



Visitors walk the grounds at Carss Park Community Garden in March.

Oyster Growers & Ocean Watch

OceanWatch Australia's SeaNet program is assisting the Botany Bay oyster industry to implement environmental best practice through the development of an Environmental Management System to improve best farming practice and manage environmental risks. Farmers have attended meetings to identify and discuss threats to the industry, and develop a common vision for responsible management.



Rita, a Food Connect farmer, shows off her seasonal okra just before delivery. Rita's food delivers to Hurstville area City Cousins.

Food Connect Sydney

This social enterprise connects city residents who are interested in chemical-free produce with local area farmers. Sydney Food Connect has expanded its reach into the St George / Illawara region through 3 new City Cousin distribution centres, including Hurstville Council library and Carss Park Community Garden. Residents are encouraged to become participants, support local farmers, and lessen the impact on the environment.

Oatley Flora & Fauna

Oatley Flora & Fauna are running Birds in Backyards Workshops - an initiative of Birds Australia - to help Sydney-area residents improve the habitat value of their backyards, reduce the negative impacts from stormwater, erosion and degradation. The first workshop was held in March, and a second will be held in April at Carss Park Community Garden. More workshops will be held in spring 2011.

Linking Communities Through Permaculture

This community-driven project aims to combine sustainable living, permaculture and info-sharing among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community housing groups in the St George and Sutherland Shire area. The project features workshops, study tours and garden-based ventures working with community leaders. Partners in the project are St George Migrant Resource Centre, the Inner South West Community Development, the St George Community Housing, Asian Women at Work (AWW), the Pakistani Australian Women's Association (PAWA), Resourceful Australian Indian Network (RAIN), and the Thai Welfare Association (TWA).



Pakistani women from PAWA participated in a beauty products workshop in March as part of the Linking Communities Through Permaculture project.

Organisational Effectiveness

The LGRSI initially proposed to councils an organisational profiling exercise for council to establish a better understanding of their capacity for integrating sustainability into its current policies and functions. The profile also provides insights into gaps in knowledge and organisational impediments to sustainability. To increase councils' awareness of sustainability issues, barriers, opportunities and achievements, the LGRSI profiling initially focused on Sustainable Urban Water Management.

Kogarah City Council took it one step further. With executive support, KCC sustainability officer Elisa Idris merged an organisational profile survey and workshop into a staff-wide evaluation of council's ability to integrate environmental sustainability



Staff at Kogarah City Council get down to business during workshops for the Sustainability Health Check.

in its works. Elisa led staff through the creation of an organisational capacity baseline, and produced a **Sustainability Health Check** tool and final report. Outcomes from the report will be incorporated into the KCC Community Strategic Plan and the Environmental Sustainability Delivery Plan, so they occur as part of normal council operations.

Green Steps Interns from Macquarie University worked at Rockdale City Council in December and drafted sustainable procurement and events policies for the four councils. Policies will be 'reality checked' and used to create Action Plans for implementation. The policies will go into play next quarter.

