



L-R: Councillor James Macdonald, Councillor Lesa de Leau, Mayor Bill Saravinovski, Tanya Ha, Councillor Anne Wagstaff, The Hon Frank Sartor, Minister for Climate Change and the Environment and Member for Rockdale, Sharyn Cullis and Simon Annabel at the launch of *getting greener!* program at Rockdale Town Hall.

## Urban Water Management Program

A Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) adoption workshop process has been designed and delivered with Hurstville, Kogarah, Rockdale and Sutherland Councils. Council-specific WSUD Adoption Action Plans are the guiding documents for funding of on-ground works, and combine both capacity building and technical activities.

The WSUD Adoption workshop process has been refined to provide a resource for use by other agencies and Councils, and is now available at [www.wsud.org](http://www.wsud.org)

## Community Partnerships Program

The Community Partnerships Program addresses two sustainability themes through its \$300,000 *getting greener!* program:

1. more sustainable practices of community and business; and
2. improved bushland, biodiversity and riparian health.

The program was launched in mid May 2010 and Expressions of Interest from 14 community groups have been received. A facilitated project development process will result in Project Plans for a range of community-driven sustainability projects being assessed and approved for support in August 2010.

## Organisational Effectiveness Program

Organisational profiling is a method of systems review which highlights barriers and opportunities to more effective environmental management within organisations. Rockdale and Hurstville City Councils are currently engaged in organisational profiling as part of the Cooks River Sustainability Initiative. Sutherland Shire Council and Kogarah City Council will be participating in organisational profiling during July 2010.

## NRM Integration Program

Project officers from a range of externally funded natural resource management (NRM) projects within the Botany bay catchment have formed a coordination group to avoid project overlaps and to coordinate activities. The Georges River Combined Councils' Committee provides a coordination role, and is a central repository for project information: [www.georgesriver.org](http://www.georgesriver.org)

An important function for the initiative is to coordinate with the Sydney Metropolitan CMA in planning for the Botany Bay Water Quality Improvement Plan, so that future activity is as strategic as possible.

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# Lower Georges River Sustainability Initiative

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Photo: Department of Environment and Climate Change, NSW

## The Lower Georges River Sustainability Initiative:

- ▶ Aims to Improve the environmental condition of the Lower Georges River and its catchment.
- ▶ Is a partnership between Kogarah City Council, Hurstville City Council, Rockdale City Council, Sutherland Shire Council, the Georges River Combined Councils' Committee and the Sydney Metropolitan CMA. Is being delivered by a Steering Committee comprising representatives of these organisations and two community groups.

The initiative has been assisted by the NSW Government with funding through the Environmental Trust. The initiative commenced in mid 2009 and will finish in January 2012, with \$2 million being committed to a combination of capacity building and on-ground works programs.



Andre Taylor conducts the WSUD Adoption workshop with Council staff.

# LGRSI: The story so far...

## In the beginning...

We wanted the catchment of the Lower Georges River to be managed more sustainably.

### But...

- Sustainability is not easy to define or achieve.
- Sustainability, and the journey towards it, will involve lots of people (community groups, households, businesses and government agencies) making lots of big and small decisions about how they work and live. So our sustainability project is a largely social project rather than exclusively an environmental or technical project.
- There is existing social capital and capacity within the community and local councils, so we should aim to build on existing social networks within the community, and on existing structures, processes and systems within councils.
- “Communities of interest” is a good engagement approach, as it builds on existing social networks and capacity.
- We can't do it all for everyone, nor should we want to do so. The LGRSI should be catalytic and supportive of initiatives which can be self-supporting beyond the life of the LGRSI.

## So we...

Had a workshop which looked at current barriers to more sustainable outcomes /activities, and agreed it was important to:

- Be “catalytic” and “enabling” by taking critical first steps towards addressing barriers.
- Restrict our desired outcomes in order for them to be realistically achievable within the project.
- Focus on where decisions are made, such as government policy and procedures, business decisions, and household management decisions; and concentrate on addressing those activities where we can make a difference.

## We thought...

People as consumers make many decisions which have in implications for the planet and its resources.

People in business can influence what people buy through decisions to provide more or less sustainable products and services.

People in local government can set policies that affect the behaviour of people in business and households. They can also provide leadership by example and in support of more sustainable practices.

## We decided...

There were some critical themes where we could influence some of the decisions made by people:

1. Ensuring that there were policies and practices within all sections of councils which considered sustainability in council works and activities.
2. Embedding Water Sensitive Urban Design in policies and works within councils.
3. Encouraging the many organisations working toward sustainability to integrate their planning and project implementation.
4. Supporting the community to adopt more sustainable practices in their businesses and households.
5. Partnering community-based initiatives to improve bushland, biodiversity and riparian health.

## Now we have...

### 4 Programs:

Organisational Effectiveness (Councils) Program

Urban Water Management Program

Integrated Planning of NRM Programs (all Organisations) Program

Community Partnerships Program