
three million people • complexity • connectivity • resilience
Sydneysiders are proud of their city, and with much justification. Sydney is Australia’s largest city and is recognised internationally for its iconic architecture showcased against a backdrop of spectacular waterways, beaches and bushland.
For residents and visitors alike, the natural attributes of Sydney distinguish it as a unique and aesthetically appealing global city. Sydneysiders have demonstrated they do not take their natural environment for granted. They value the health of the bushland fringing their neighbourhoods and the water quality of their rivers, estuaries and coastal regions. People from all parts of Sydney hold a genuine concern for the ongoing resilience of their natural environment. Over many decades large numbers of people have advocated on behalf of Sydney’s environment. Thousands of people have invested “sweat equity”, working as bushcare volunteers to weed and regenerate localities. Others have engaged the support of their political representatives at the Local, State or Australian Government level to extend resources to protect and preserve particular localities within Sydney. The Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority has the flexibility to work with stakeholders who have a commitment to improving the health and resilience of natural resources across – and even beyond – Greater Metropolitan Sydney.
Meeting community expectations

People across Sydney want to enjoy clean beaches and waterways. They want bushland reserves to survive and thrive; they want Sydney’s natural assets to be protected and preserved. They hold an expectation that all levels of government will work together seamlessly and efficiently with a common vision to deliver policies and fund programs that ensure the resilience of our natural resources.

The Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority (CMA) has a vital role to play in meeting community expectations. We work across all levels of government; we work with community groups, industry, and other agencies to design, develop, deliver and monitor projects that foster vibrant natural resources in an urban landscape.

Meeting government and legislative expectations

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA works to implement its Catchment Action Plan (CAP) which is a strategic planning tool that identifies the key natural resource features the Sydney community wants to protect and improve.

The CAP outlines specific targets to be achieved to 2016.

The CAP reflects the needs of the region and a wide array of partners will help deliver these targets.

This Annual Report from the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority is intended to explain our role in delivering regionally-focussed natural resource management and showcase our highlights and achievements during the 2008-2009 financial year.

This Annual Report has been structured to explain:

• Our Locality and Area of Operation
• Who We Are
• Our Board and Structure
• What We do
• Sources of Funding
• Our Strategic Partnerships
• Case Studies
• Projects and Programs
• Monitoring and Evaluation
• Looking Ahead
• Financial Reports

Table of Contents: Inside back cover

Photograph: David Harasti
Posidonia australis – a sea grass bed at Little Manly Cove
Our vision

Community growth reconciled with nature.
An urban community that thrives within a valued natural landscape.

Our mission

To demonstrate how dynamic urban areas can be consistent with sustainable natural resource management.
To champion a Sydney community which has the knowledge and skills to achieve healthy waterways and bushland that all residents and visitors can enjoy, now and in the future.
Area of operations

The footprint of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA comprises the core of urban Sydney and its coastline.

From a starting point centred on Botany Bay, our catchment takes most of the area falling within a broad 40-kilometre arc, sweeping from landmark locations such as Stanwell Tops and the Royal National Park in Sutherland in the south, through Wollondilly and Campbelltown, Liverpool and Fairfield to Prospect Reservoir and Blacktown in the west, continuing north through the Hills District towards Thornleigh and Pymble, then following Mona Vale Road to Turrimetta Head near Narrabeen Lagoon.

Our area of operation also extends three nautical miles out to sea to the limit of the NSW State Waters. This is an area of 440 square kilometres, or some 15 per cent of the surface area of our region.

Our total area, including the offshore component is 2470 square kilometres. Our land area, excluding the marine component and Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay, is 1890 square kilometres.

Our Neighbouring CMAs:
The Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority almost entirely encircles the Sydney Metropolitan CMA. We share a small southern boundary with the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority. We work cooperatively with both these CMAs to ensure specific natural resource programs are integrated and delivered efficiently.
From a landscape perspective, the Sydney Metropolitan CMA is comprised of 12 sub-catchments. Each of these sub-catchments requires specific management plans and project teams to address the distinct issues impacting on its natural resources. The sub-catchments are:

**North**
- Northern Beaches
- Middle Harbour
- Lane Cove River

**Central**
- Parramatta River
- Duck River
- Cooks River
- Botany Bay
- Eastern Beaches

**South**
- Georges River
- Woronora River
- Hacking River
- Southern Beaches

**Aboriginal Land Councils**
There are six Local Aboriginal Land Councils operating within our region. For more information on how the Sydney Metropolitan CMA works with these stakeholders, see page 23.

**Local Government areas**

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Who we are

Charter
The most important role for the Sydney Metropolitan CMA – and one that is not being filled by any other entity in the region – is to connect diverse stakeholders as they work together towards shared targets for natural resources across the whole region.

Our unique point of difference
The Sydney Metropolitan CMA is the smallest of the 13 NSW catchment management authorities, serving the largest urban population in Australia. Sydney Metropolitan is the only NSW CMA with a specific focus on delivering natural resource management in an urban context.

Our foundation
The Sydney Metropolitan CMA was established under the Catchment Management Authorities Act 2003 to deliver natural resource management in an urban context. At its inception in 2005 the Sydney Metropolitan CMA joined the 12 existing regional-scale catchment management authorities that were established in 2004. The purpose of the NSW CMAs is to prepare strategic natural resource management plans and coordinate initiatives and activities under these plans that will contribute to the sustainable management of the natural resources of NSW. The overall targets for future trends in natural resource condition in NSW are set out in the NSW State Plan.

Native Vegetation Act 2003
Part of the rationale behind the establishment of the NSW CMAs was that they would function at a regional level and hold responsibility for implementation of the Native Vegetation Act 2003. The Act does not apply to the majority of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA region. However, in keeping with the spirit of the legislation, Sydney Metropolitan CMA assumes an important role in coordinating the management of urban remnant native vegetation by identifying priority projects, working with local communities, and promoting consistent outcomes in the protection of such vegetation and control of weeds in the region. The Rapid Fauna Habitat Assessment project completed last year is an example of how we achieve this.

Our Function
The specific functions of NSW CMAs as described in Section 15 of the Catchment Management Authorities Act 2003, are to:
• Develop Catchment Action Plans (CAPs)
• Provide loans, grants, subsidies or other financial assistance for catchment activities
• Enter contracts or do any work for the purposes of catchment activities
• Assist landholders to achieve the objectives of the CAP
• Provide educational and training courses and materials in connection with natural resource management (NRM)
• Exercise any other function relating to NRM as prescribed by the regulations.

What is a catchment?
Everyone lives in a catchment. Catchments are defined by the way water moves across a landscape. Because water runs downhill, a catchment starts at a high point in the landscape like a mountain, hill or ridge. This is called a divide or watershed.

The high point in a landscape can be the starting point for two or more catchments, with water flowing downhill in different directions.

Water makes its way to a major stream or river, and can pass through dams, lagoons or wetlands before eventually making its way to the ocean. Water may also travel underground to the lowpoint in a catchment.

In recent decades catchments have become a recognised way to manage and understand landscapes.

Human activity has a great impact on the health of a catchment. Humans use more water than other creatures, and people, either as individuals or within society make major changes to catchments.

The water that collects in a catchment often shows the effect of some or all of the activities and land uses that people are undertaking in that catchment.

Human activity upstream will affect those living and working downstream.

Our funding
The Sydney Metropolitan CMA receives funding from the NSW and Australian Governments and works strategically in partnership with Local Government, community groups, other government departments, industry and other entities to deliver programs and projects that improve Sydney’s natural resources.

Our Board
The Sydney Metropolitan CMA is an independent Statutory Authority governed by a Chair and a six-member Board that reports directly to the Minister for Climate Change and the Environment.

Our governance and structure is explained in detail within this report. Sydney Metropolitan CMA project and administrative staff are employed by the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water.

What is natural resource management?
For NSW catchment management authorities, natural resource management is defined in the Natural Resources Commission Act 2003 (Part 1, Section 5).

For the purposes of this Act, natural resource management extends to the following matters relating to the management of natural resources:
(a) water, (b) native vegetation, (c) salinity, (d) soil, (e) biodiversity, (f) coastal protection, (g) marine environment (except a matter arising under the Fisheries Management Act 1994 or the Marine Parks Act 1997), (h) forestry, (i) any other matter concerning natural resources prescribed by the regulations.

Opposite page
Left: Sydney Metropolitan CMA Chair, Philip Sansom with the Federal Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Peter Garrett and the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Tony Burke, at Botany Bay on July 2.
Centre: To mark World Wetlands Day on February 2 Sydney Metropolitan CMA Chair, Philip Sansom was an official guest at the opening of a fish passage project at Sydney Olympic Park.
Right: Sydney Metropolitan CMA Chair, Philip Sansom with Deputy Premier, Carmel Tebbutt, Member for Coogee Paul Pearce and Director General of the Department of Environment and Climate Change, Lisa Corbyn at Clovelly on August 2.
Message from the Chairman

The highlight for the Sydney Metropolitan CMA in 2008-2009 was being advised that our Catchment Action Plan had been approved by the Minister for Climate Change, the Environment and Water, the Deputy Premier the Hon. Carmel Tebbutt MP.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA has been working to deliver the targets identified in our CAP since our inception in 2005, but the formal adoption of the CAP means our work plan has been confirmed as being correct and appropriate for our unique and predominantly urban region.

Our CAP builds on the work of many dedicated people who have contributed to documents for environmental management prepared over the past decade and beyond. Special mention should be made of the Sydney Harbour Catchment Blueprint (2003), the Southern Sydney Catchment Blueprint (2003) and the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy (2005).

For me personally, the adoption of the CAP means both a completion and a new beginning. From 2001 to 2004 I was the Chair of the Southern Sydney Catchment Management Board and work from this group is strongly reflected in the Sydney Metropolitan CAP. It is satisfying to have seen an outcome for this work.

The new beginning comes with a great sense of personal fulfilment on being appointed Chair of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA. That my appointment coincides closely with the adoption of the CAP means I will be able to continue in a role that provides leadership and continuity in driving projects and programs based on sound science and research to deliver positive natural resource management outcomes across urban Sydney.

This “new beginning” also means an opportunity to “get on with the job”. To this end I must congratulate and commend the staff of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA.

In my role as both Deputy Chair and now Chair, I have had the opportunity to get to know staff members and discuss with them in some detail the projects they are delivering. In some cases our connections actually go back over 10 years. I am satisfied that as an organisation the Sydney Metropolitan CMA has been able to recruit and retain a committed band of professionals who have an obvious dedication and passion for their work. They demonstrate a real commitment to working with our partners in delivering their projects effectively.

Part of my role involves regular meetings with the other 12 NSW CMA Chairs. This perspective highlights for me the unique status of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA as the only CMA delivering Natural Resource Management (NRM) in the urban heart of Australia.

Sydney Metropolitan is the “hometown” CMA for 26 Federal and 47 NSW Members of Parliament and 39 Local Government Mayors. I am aware that although we are the smallest NSW CMA in size and budget, we are extremely visible. I am aware there is a broad expectation that we will “punch above our weight” when it comes to delivery of NRM outcomes.

This does not faze me – or the staff of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA. I believe the staff and Board relish the challenge, and opportunity, that such scrutiny provides as we work together to deliver the NRM message to a wide and diverse audience across Sydney.

In my role as Chair I am aware of the strong support the Sydney Metropolitan and the 12 other NSW CMAs receive from our Federal and NSW Ministers. The regional model allows CMAs to work with the local community to deliver the best outcomes for natural resources.

During 2009 I have had the opportunity to participate in media and community events attended by our Ministers.

Writing this in October 2009, I look forward to working with the Hon John Robertson MLC as our new Minister for Climate Change and the Environment.

Philip Sansom
Chairman

Letter to the Minister

20 October 2009

The Hon. John Robertson
Minister for Climate Change and the Environment
Level 30
Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY, NSW, 2000

Dear Minister

We have pleasure in presenting the 2008-09 Annual Report for the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority, a Statutory body under the Catchment Management Authorities Act 2003.

This report has been prepared for submission to Parliament and is in accordance with Section 17 of the Catchment Management Authorities Act 2003, the Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984 and the Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Regulation 2005.

Yours sincerely

Philip Sansom
Chairman

Allan Ezzy (APM)
Acting Deputy Chair
The Sydney Metropolitan CMA Board is responsible for the strategic direction of natural resource management in the Sydney Metropolitan region. The Board reflects the importance of the 39 Local Government and inter-council organisations in the complex institutional landscape of the Sydney region. Sydney Metropolitan CMA Board Members bring extensive scientific, technical, management and communication expertise to the Sydney Metropolitan CMA’s decision making.

Councillor Philip Sansom
- Mayor, Hurstville City Council (Elected September 2009)
- Former Chair of the Southern Sydney Catchment Management Board

Cr Philip Sansom was appointed Chair of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA on 22 June 2009. He was the inaugural Deputy Chair.
He was the Chair of the Southern Sydney Catchment Management Board 2001 to 2003. Cr Sansom has been involved in natural resource management for 17 years. Since 2000 he has been a member of the National Parks and Wildlife Service Sydney South Region Advisory Committee.
Cr Sansom has been a Councillor for the Peakhurst Ward, Hurstville City Council from September 1991 to the present and has held the position of Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
Cr Sansom was a teacher for 26 years and now works with the NSW Department of Education and Training in Workforce Management.

Councillor Genia McCaffery
- Mayor, North Sydney Council
- President of the NSW Local Government Association

Cr Genia McCaffery holds a Bachelor of Economics degree with Honours in Government from the University of Sydney.
Cr McCaffery began work as a researcher with the National Trust. Her experience spans work in youth issues, unemployment, and public advocacy.
Cr McCaffery was elected as full-time Mayor of North Sydney by popular vote in 1995 and was re-elected in 1999, 2004 and 2008. As Mayor, Cr McCaffery is committed to managing development within North Sydney, responsible financial management of Council, protecting the environment, and maintaining strong community involvement in local government.
In October 2004, Cr McCaffery was elected President of the Local Government Association of NSW for a two-year term. Cr McCaffery was re-elected as President in 2006 and again in 2008. She has identified planning, natural resources management and infrastructure investment as the key issues to address during her term as President.
Cr McCaffery has been a member of the Local Government Executive since 1998. She is on the Board of the NSW Environment Protection Authority and the NSW Environmental Trust.
Cr McCaffery is married and has two children.

Councillor Allan Ezzy (APM) J.P.
- Deputy Chair Sydney Metropolitan CMA
- Holroyd City Councillor and former Mayor
Cr Ezzy has a Graduate Certificate in Management from Wollongong University. He has served extensively with Local Government, having been Mayor of Holroyd City Council for nine terms. He has had extensive experience in engaging with community groups, local business and with educational programs. His 19 years with the Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust has provided him with considerable experience in managing the sometimes conflicting challenges of flood mitigation and riparian biodiversity, predominantly in an urban framework. He is a retired Senior Prosecutor with the NSW Police Service.

Committees
- Chairman of the NSW Floodplain Management Authorities
- Foundation Trustee of Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust
- Vice President, Local Government Association
- Member, Natural Resources Advisory Council
- Director, State Cover Insurance company
- Director, Metropole Insurance Pool

Mr Paul Zammit
- Former Member of NSW Parliament (Burwood/Strathfield 1984-1996) and Australian Parliament (Member for Lowe 1996-1998)
- Extensive business experience
Mr Zammit has more than 30 years experience in the Private and Public sectors, being a State Member of Parliament for some 12 years (NSW Parliament) before being elected to the Australian Parliament for some three years before returning to the private enterprise sector. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Directors of Australia and a Foundation Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors since 1983, an unbroken period of more than 25 years.
During his term in the NSW Parliament Mr Zammit served as Assistant Minister to the then Premier of NSW, The Hon. Nick Greiner MP, and has served on, and chaired, numerous Parliamentary Standing and Select Committees. He has served as Chairman of the NSW Parliamentary Select Committee on Lead Poisoning as well as Chairman of the NSW Parliamentary Select Committee on National Parks and Wildlife (Aboriginal
Ownership) Bill. He has strong corporate governance experience and expertise. He is currently the Managing Director of his family company, Zammit Sales, Marketing and Management Pty Ltd, a position held since its inception in 1998.

Ms Suzanne Little
Ms Little is an environmental scientist. She brings a wide perspective to the Board, ranging from her background in local Bushcare through to corporate management at several of Australia’s major organisations with career experience in environmental management systems and innovative policy.

Ms Little was Environment Director for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games where 20 sustainable developments were constructed and became a showcase to the world. Other public sector environment roles have been with the Electricity Commission of NSW, Sydney Water’s Priority Sewerage Program and two universities. As Australian Vice-President of the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand in 2005-2007 she represented the views of environmental practitioners.

Among her corporate roles, Ms Little has been the environmental manager for three companies: Vodafone Australia, AGL and SAI Global. She was spokesperson for Ku-ring-gai Bushcare Association (800 volunteers) as its honorary Chair in 2004-06.

This year Ms Little prepared a submission on behalf of the Board, to the NSW Public Accounts Committee Inquiry into Sustainable Procurement and is due to give evidence at the Hearing in August 2009. She will also give presentations on behalf of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA at conferences in July and October on the topic of sustainable economics.

Councillor Nick Katris
• Kogarah City Councillor and former Mayor
Cr Katris has held a life-long interest in the management of our natural resources and heritage in the face of the inevitable pressures that stem from increased urbanisation and the urban renewal process.

Cr Katris’s professional background, as an architect with post-graduate qualifications in Urban and Regional Planning, have made him acutely aware of the dynamics of the interactive forces that arise between the natural and built environments, and the importance of arriving at sustainable social and economic solutions and outcomes.

Cr Katris is a former Mayor of Kogarah City Council and is currently serving his fourth term as a Councillor. As a Local Government Association Representative he has had experience serving on various committees (including the Building Regulations Advisory Council of the Department of Planning and Sydney Water’s Corporate Customer Council). He is the Chair of the Kogarah City Council Urban Planning and Design Working Party and Council’s Estuary and Flood Plain Management Committee.

The Urban Planning Working Party, along with Kogarah Council’s Steering Committee, has been responsible for the coordination of the development of Kogarah’s Town Centre, which has won more than 15 design excellence and ecologically sustainable development awards. The Estuary and Flood Plain Management Committee (which Cr Katris has chaired for more than seven years) has been responsible for procuring more than $5 million in government grants to satisfy Council’s goal of “Putting Total Water Cycle Management into Practice in Kogarah”.

Cr Katris has also represented Council on the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils and has served as Chair of Kogarah Community Services and as a committee member for the Australian Standards Association.

Inaugural Chair
Mr Bob Junor did not seek reappointment at the end of his term and retired in September 2008.

Board Activities – Stakeholder Strategic Liaison Program
The Sydney Metropolitan CMA has introduced a Strategic Liaison Program to improve its approach to strategic collaboration with partners in natural resource management. Regular meetings are conducted with NRM agencies as part of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA’s vision for connectivity across all levels of government to assist in delivery of its Catchment Action Plan.

Board Bulletin
An electronic “Board-Bulletin-Board” one-page newsletter is sent to 500 key stakeholders within a week of each Sydney Metropolitan CMA Board meeting. The purpose is to inform Ministers, Mayors, Councillors and senior decision makers at all levels of government of the business of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA Board.
Year in review

As I review the 2008-2009 year, I interpret this as a period of both consolidation and change for the Sydney Metropolitan CMA. The advent of new contestable funding arrangements under the Australian Government’s Caring for our Country Program brought its own opportunities and challenges.

The inaugural Chairman of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA, Mr Bob Junor, retired in August 2008 after 50 years in natural resource management. Bob played a pivotal role in both the establishment of Sydney Metropolitan CMA and helping set up the local establishment teams which preceded all NSW CMAs. On behalf of both the Board and staff I’d like to wish Bob all the best for a long and happy retirement.

The Deputy Chairman, Cr Philip Sansom was appointed as Acting Chair and subsequently was appointed as Chairman. He has continued the strong leadership role, while maintaining a consensus approach at Board meetings. Philip’s long standing ties with natural resource management extend back past his election as a local councillor in 1991.

The approval of the CAP in May 2009 will strengthen the position of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA and provide a valuable opportunity to promote natural resource management to all land managers in the region.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA joined with the 12 other NSW CMAs in celebrating five years of achievement in 2009, but in fact, we did not really commence operations for 12 to 18 months after the establishment of the other NSW CMAs.

There are particular challenges in being the only NSW CMA delivering natural resource management purely in an urban context. The role of CMAs in regional areas is perhaps better understood. During 2008 the Sydney Metropolitan CMA was able to demonstrate the particular issues that make it critical that a regional body should exist for the metropolitan area.

On 30 September, the Federal Minister for the Environment, Peter Garrett, launched the Caring for our Country Outcome Statement which identified the Australian Government’s six priority areas for action. To implement works in the first year of the program regional bodies were proxy and interim funding for 2008-2010. The subsequent Caring for our Country Business Plan spelt out the targets to be achieved and all regional bodies and other parties interested in natural resource management proceeded to develop suitable projects and programs. I’m pleased to say that Sydney Metropolitan CMA was successful in maintaining its baseline funding for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 and will also receive $1.8 million in competitive funding for 2009-2010.

Another highlight occurred on 3 October 2008 when Australian Government funding of $2 million for the Cooks River catchment was announced at Gough Whitlam Park by Minister Anthony Albanese, Minister Tony Burke and John Murphy MP. The funding will improve water quality through the installation of gross pollutant traps and associated measures as well as wetland remediation works.

This event was attended by Sydney Metropolitan CMA Chair, Philip Sansom, the Mayor of Canterbury City Council, community members and Sydney Metropolitan CMA staff.

This year saw the establishment of the Sydney Metropolitan CMAs Aboriginal Advisory Committee when the first meeting was held in August 2008. This Committee will assist staff and the Board in engaging the Aboriginal community and help increase their involvement in natural resource management. Working together to protect and rehabilitate the natural environment can benefit us all provided we appreciate each others skills and knowledge.

The National Water Commission is part-funding a five-year Australia-wide research program proposed by Melbourne’s Monash University to consider the opportunity of using stormwater to help overcome potable water shortages, reduce urban temperatures, improve urban landscapes and the liveability of cities.

Although the water-based research is only one aspect of creating sustainable cities, an improvement in the capacity and willingness of government, industry and the community to address the water cycle holistically is a key component of delivering the Sydney Metropolitan CMAs CAP. Monash and the National Water Commission are seeking $15 million over five years from state agencies and Local Government to conduct the research. While the Sydney Metropolitan CMA has limited capacity to contribute funds, through our Water Sensitive Urban Design In Sydney Program we were able to host two meetings in Sydney to showcase the work undertaken so far and introduce potential partners.

In closing I’d like to congratulate the Board and staff on the achievements we have made this year which are set out in this Annual Report. The Board has taken its responsibilities very seriously and worked constructively at the strategic level to provide a direction for the organisation as well as support for staff. The staff have continued to work effectively in a changing environment rising to meet any challenges that we’ve faced. Their dedication and hard work has been a major factor in the successes of 2008-2009.

John Carse
General Manager
Internal Structure

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA is structured so that staff work to deliver projects that actively implement the Catchment Action Plan. These projects can be place-based or theme-based or both.

Place Managers have been allocated to the catchments of Sydney Harbour, Port Hacking and Botany Bay. Project staff working on themes within these catchments report to one of these place managers. Community support officers deliver projects across these places and themes to engage specific target groups and the wider community to support Sydney Metropolitan CMA NRM projects.

With the guidance of the Regional Facilitator, community support officers work on projects with Local Government, environmental groups, ethnic communities, Indigenous communities and community grants programs.

Project officers were assigned to projects based on stormwater, the Botany Bay Coastal Catchment Initiative, Biodiversity, Water Sensitive Urban Design, Kurnell 2020 and the Cooks River Water Initiative.

Our Management team

General Manager: John Carse
Operations Manager: Stephen Lynch
Business Manager: Greg Otter
Place Manager Sydney Harbour and Catchment: Lesley Diver
Place Manager Port Hacking and Coastal Catchments: Karen Kennedy
Place Manager Botany Bay and Catchment: Owen Graham
Regional Facilitator: Judy Christie
The Sydney Metropolitan CMA acts as an advocate, champion or “voice” for Sydney’s natural resources. When policies and decisions are being implemented by other government agencies and private entities, the Sydney Metropolitan CMA can provide guidance, advice and recommendations on how to consider and accommodate natural resources as an integral component of Sydney’s growth and development.

Put simply, the Sydney Metropolitan CMA facilitates integrated natural resource management in an urban landscape.

For specific, strategic projects, the Sydney Metropolitan CMA can play an important role in planning, funding and implementing on-ground works in partnership with other stakeholders.

The NSW State Plan – How we contribute

The NSW Government developed a State Plan in 2006. As a NSW Government Statutory Authority the Sydney Metropolitan CMA is required to contribute to the NSW State Plan. The Sydney Metropolitan CMA’s CAP shows how its 10-year Catchment Targets help contribute to the NRM Targets in the State Plan. The State Plan sets out the goals in five areas of activity that the NSW community wants its Government to work towards. All Government entities and departments are required to report their progress twice a year against five key activity areas: Rights, Respect and Responsibility; Delivering Better Services; Fairness and Opportunity; Growing Prosperity Across NSW; and Environment for Living.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA reports data for inclusion in the key activity area of Environment for Living. Specifically, data is compiled against the priority “Better environmental outcomes for native vegetation, biodiversity, land, rivers and coastal waterways”.

Our additional contribution to NSW State Plan Targets

Outcomes from Sydney Metropolitan CMA activities and investment also contribute indirectly to other NSW State Plan goals in addition to our key area of “Environment for Living”. For example:

- We contribute to “Building Harmonious Communities” by creating opportunities for “increased participation and integration in community activities”, especially in the field of community capacity building.
- The Sydney Metropolitan CMA is committed to providing “customer friendly service”. We evaluate our performance after delivering events, projects and programs and work towards continuous improvement.
- Under the goal of “Strengthening Aboriginal Communities” our Indigenous Cultural Heritage program indirectly contributes to “improved health and education for Aboriginal people” by providing learning and development opportunities focussed on natural resource management.
- Implementation of our community program aligns with the objective “more people participating in education and training throughout their life” under the key objective “NSW Open for Business”.

The NSW State Plan Targets appear as an appendix on Page 54.

Our Catchment Action Plan

Along with all NSW CMAs the Sydney Metropolitan CMA has developed a Catchment Action Plan (CAP) as a tool to manage our natural resources sustainably.

The CAP sets out a 10 year plan for how natural resource management will be addressed in the region. It contains both Catchment Targets which identify how the catchment should be managed, and Management Targets which identify specific short term actions which will help deliver the longer term targets.

Because the CAP is a regional document, it specifies some targets which are delivered by other agencies or stakeholders. For example, Local government undertakes far more natural resources work than the Sydney Metropolitan CMA can fund. A key role of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA is to assist Local Government to achieve regional benefits from these activities.

Although the CAP was not formally approved by the Minister until May 2009, the Sydney Metropolitan CMA was able to use the targets in the draft document to prepare its Investment Program.

Environmental management for sustainability

Sydney Metropolitan CMA Catchment Action Plan, 2009
Context
Our CAP builds on the issues and governmental/community responses identified in the Sydney Harbour Catchment Blueprint (2003), the Southern Sydney Catchment Blueprint (2003) and the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy (2005). It recognises the success achieved during 10 years of targeted investment in important natural resource issues, such as stormwater and urban habitats, by the NSW Environmental Trust and the Local Government sector. It builds on the lessons learnt by government and the community over that period.

Think of the CAP as a Compass
The CAP’s operational timeframe is from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2016. The CAP guides the Sydney Metropolitan CMA in its investment in natural resource management through 18 Catchment Targets and 47 Management Targets. The Catchment Targets describe the greatest improvement to the condition of our biodiversity, water and coasts and soil. These categories, along with ‘Community’ represent the four Themes contained in the CAP. Nested within the Themes, the Management Targets provide multiple benefits to the condition of our natural resources: For example, regeneration of native riparian vegetation will also have a positive effect on aquatic health, biodiversity, soils and estuaries.

Management Targets
The Management Targets outline a systematic approach to enhancing the connectivity of ecosystem processes. The Management Targets focus regional attention on improving the connectivity of priority ecological communities. Achieving this will require a consistent and coordinated focus across multiple government and community organisations.

The role of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA is to encourage, influence, coordinate and facilitate activities which will be carried out by partner organisations, by initiating and reinforcing important institutional linkages. For some specific projects the Sydney Metropolitan CMA provides direct investment.

NSW State Plan Natural Resource Management (E4) Targets
See Appendix p.54.

Where we fit as a regional delivery agency for natural resource management: (30 June 2009)

Diagram: Owen Graham 2009
Sources of funding

Sydney Metropolitan CMA projects are funded by the Australian and NSW Governments through the following programs:

**AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT**

**Caring for our Country**

Caring for Our Country is an Australian Government initiative introduced on 1 July 2008. It integrates delivery of the Australian Government's previous natural resource management programs, including the Natural Heritage Trust, the National Landcare Program and the Working on Country Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program.

It also incorporates the delivery of a range of other natural resource management funding elements including Community Catchcare, World Heritage, regional investments and relevant 2007 Federal election commitments. The Sydney Metropolitan CMA received $750,000 under this program in 2008-2009.

**Caring for our Country Goal:**
An environment that is healthy, better protected, well-managed, resilient and provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate.

National Priority Areas:
- National Reserve System
- Biodiversity and natural icons
- Coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats
- Sustainable farm practices
- Community skills, knowledge and engagement
- Natural resource management in northern and remote Australia

Outcomes: Multiple five-year outcomes for each national priority area.

Targets: Short-term targets that combine to deliver outcomes.

Integrated Projects: Projects that deliver against individual or multiple targets.

**Natural Heritage Trust**

Funding for the development of new projects through the Natural Heritage Trust concluded in 2007. Delivery of on-going programs continued through 2007, 2008 to June 2009, with some isolated programs attaining extensions for completion by December 2009.

Between 2005 and 2009 the Sydney Metropolitan CMA managed projects with a total value of $8.928 million.

**National Landcare Program**

The National Landcare Program was designed to support the landcare movement and sustainable use and management of natural resources by landholders. As an urban-focussed CMA, limited funding has been provided to the Sydney Metropolitan CMA under this program.

**NSW FUNDING**

**Catchment Action NSW**

Catchment Action NSW (CA NSW) was introduced by the NSW Government to provide funding to deliver the 13 NRM targets identified in the NSW State Plan priority E4. The Sydney Metropolitan CMA received $528,000 under this program in 2008-2009.

**NSW Salinity Strategy – Local Government Salinity Initiative**

This program assists Local Government to manage urban salinity. It provides information, training and technical support for the development and implementation of salinity management strategies and land use planning instruments. The Sydney Metropolitan CMA received $119,000 under this program in 2008-2009.

GRANTS

- **$2 million**: Cooks River Urban Water Initiative from the Australian Government Department of Environment Heritage and the Arts “Water for the Future Program”.
- **$250,700**: Coastal NRM project
- **$106,000**: Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust data collection with the Bureau of Meteorology
- **$250,000**: Biodiversity Restoration
- **$70,000**: Aboriginal Landcare and Schools
- **$45,000**: Towra Point Community Shorebirds
- **$32,535**: Bilingual River Guides

**Investment Program**

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA prepares a strategic four-year rolling Investment Program which identifies all activities to which it will contribute funds.

The Investment Program shows how the CAP’s catchment and management targets will contribute towards the environmental priorities of the NSW State Plan by detailing proposed expenditure against each of the 13 state-wide targets.

It is recognised that Management Targets in the CAP may contribute to more than one Catchment Target and that Catchment and Management Targets in the CAP may contribute to more than one state-wide target.

The Investment Program also identifies what funds will be spent in delivering other investor preferences. In 2008–09, with the launch of the Australian Government’s Caring for our Country program, there was a move away from coordinated, joint State-Federal Government investment. All NSW CMAs were advised that the new program would also involve competitive bids against a broad range of other parties. The Caring for our Country program set new objectives and targets which did not automatically align with the regional CAP nor the NSW State Targets.

Although each Government provided its funding separately, most Federal funds in 2008–09 were still delivered through the NSW Government.

The Investment Program outlines the key performance milestones and indicators the Sydney Metropolitan CMA will deliver towards meeting both NSW Targets and national outcomes. The Investment Program also identifies how the Sydney Metropolitan CMAs’ activities are complying with the NSW Standard for Quality Natural Resource Management (Natural Resources Commission, 2005) and managing risks.
Annual Implementation Plan

The Investment Program includes the Sydney Metropolitan CMA’s Annual Implementation Plan for the coming year which sets out the specific activities to be undertaken each financial year with full costing of the activities, funding sources and financial contributions from other project partners. The Catchment Management Authorities Act 2003 requires that the Annual Implementation Plan must be approved by the Minister before it can be implemented. Although the Minister’s approval is given for the current year for State funded projects, some projects can be delivered over a two or more year period provided that a guaranteed source of funds is available over the longer period. In 2008–09 the delay in the implementation of the competitive component of the Caring for our Country program meant that many projects under that program will be delivered over an extended period and not just the current financial year. While this is a change from past practice, it reflects a response to calls from NRM practitioners for longer term programs which provide more certainty of funding.

The list of projects being delivered with funding in 2008-09 is provided on Page 55 and highlighted in the selected case studies. The list shows what State Targets, Catchment Targets and Management Targets are addressed by the projects and whether the projects have been completed. The table below sets out the allocation of funds across each State target.

As with earlier years, many of the 2008–09 projects are still focused on collecting baseline information so that it will be possible in future to assess progress in delivering the CAP. Until there is good information about the existing state of a resource, it is very difficult to quantify whether its condition is improving. Much of this baseline data will take the form of maps, because being able to identify the spatial distribution of a resource at the regional scale can allow the Sydney Metropolitan CMA to assess its extent and identify opportunities to improve its condition or better protect it from threats.

In the Sydney Metropolitan area the costs associated with NRM differ significantly to those of rural areas and the opportunity for investment on private lands in comparison is much reduced. In addition because local government undertakes much of the on-ground activity within the catchment, greater on-ground outcomes can be gained from investing in regional coordination of this work. For this reason a number of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA’s projects specifically address coordination and support and staff have worked with regional groupings such as the Georges River Combined Councils Committee, the Parramatta River Catchment Group, the Sydney Coastal Councils Group and the Cooks River Foreshore Working Group. Staff have also worked with Aboriginal groups and Local Aboriginal Land Councils.

Allocation of funds across State Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Target</th>
<th>Allocation 2008-09 ($000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Target 1</td>
<td>557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Target 2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Target 3</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Target 4</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Target 5</td>
<td>832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Target 6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Target 7</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Target 8</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Target 9</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Target 10</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Target 11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Target 12</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Target 13</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,417</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This highlights the importance of waterways and the community in the Sydney region.

The State Targets are listed in Appendix P.54. One of the ways of ensuring progress on the delivery of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA’s CAP is through regular audits by the Natural Resources Commission (NRC). An NRC audit of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA was originally scheduled for November 2008, but this was rescheduled until July 2009.
The primary role of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA is to better connect the work of all natural resource management stakeholders within our region. The Sydney Metropolitan CMA sets targets that provide a unifying direction for all natural resource managers and contribute to the State-wide NRM targets.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA has worked with its partners to determine the most important natural resource issues in the region and the processes or threats that are driving trends in natural resource condition. The Sydney Metropolitan CMA has reviewed existing efforts to address the fragmentation and degradation of natural resources and identified knowledge gaps.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA operates within a complex mix of high profile strategic interests that intersect across government, industry and the community.

In the government arena the Sydney Metropolitan CMA works with policy makers, regulators and land managers within the the three tiers of government: Australian, NSW, and Local. At the community level the Sydney Metropolitan CMA interacts with an extensive network of organisations and businesses. This “institutional landscape” presents important challenges and opportunities for the Sydney Metropolitan CMA in its efforts to implement its role of coordination and integration of natural resource management across the Sydney Metropolitan region.

Progress in natural resource condition in this intensively settled and managed region will be achieved by the development of continued support of strategic partnerships:

- Across natural system boundaries (eg freshwater creeks to estuaries)
- Between land managers across both private and public lands
- Between different government institutions
- Between community and government, harnessing the energy of more than three million residents and more than 20,000 volunteers

**Table - Partners in the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Action Plan as at 30 June 2009**

This table outlines the statutory and policy responsibilities of diverse partners in NRM across the Sydney Metropolitan CMA (SMCMA) region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Statutory and Policy Responsibilities</th>
<th>Important Contribution to State and CAP Targets in the Sydney Metropolitan Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW Treasury and Premiers Office.</td>
<td>NSW State Plan NSW State Budget.</td>
<td>Essential Partner Overall responsibility for all State targets and for policy priority and consequent funding for NRM in NSW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Statutory and Policy Responsibilities</td>
<td>Important Contribution to State and CAP Targets in the Sydney Metropolitan Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Department of Planning (DoP). | Sydney Regional Environment Plan SEPP 1987, 1989  
Sydney Harbour Catchment SEPP 2005  
Drinking Water Catchments SEPP 2006  
Georges River Catchment SEPP 1999  
Extractive Industry SEPP 1995  
Sydney Metropolitan Strategy 2005  
State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) 71 (Coastal Protection) and others such as SEPP 14 (Coastal Wetlands)  
NSW Coastal Policy  
Coastal Design Guidelines  
NSW Planning Reforms  
NSW Coastal Reform package  
Comprehensive Coastal Assessment. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 | **Essential Partner**  
Significant role in achieving all State NRM targets, particularly through coordinated implementation of the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy (2005) and the CAP.  
Responsible for much of the statutory framework which is used by Local Government, the SMCMA and NSW agencies in delivering NRM targets. |
| Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC). | *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* and other environmental legislation  
State of the Environment (SoE) reports  
‘Who Cares about the Environment’ surveys and reports.  
‘Learning for Sustainability’ – NSW Environmental Education Plan 2007-10  
Environmental Trust – linked to SoE priorities, funded through waste levies  
Stormwater Trust (prior to 2006)  
Fifteen or more Plans of Management for National Parks (including Sydney Harbour, Lane Cove, Botany Bay etc.), Nature Reserves and State Conservation Areas  
Sydney Botanic Gardens  
Environment Improvement Plans attached to Environment Protection Licences.  
Clean Up Orders (contaminated land).  
NSW Coast and Estuary Program, guidelines for coast and estuary management plans  
Biobanking Native Vegetation Act 2003 planning and implementation  
Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995  
National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974  
Aboriginal Cultural Heritage  
Aquatic reserves and marine parks. | **Essential Partner**  
Significant role in achieving all NSW NRM targets.  
Already active in major NRM programs (as an operator and providing investment through the Environmental Trust).  
Main driver of State policy for contaminated sites, water quality objectives, flow objectives, biodiversity management (e.g. biobanking) and cultural landscape management, and native vegetation.  
Provides main technical support for Local Government in the coastal zone – major issue for the SMCMA region.  
Employs CMA staff and provides administrative support in areas of finance, human resources, payroll and legal services through service level agreements. |
| Department of Lands | *NSW Crown Lands Act 1989*  
*Soil Conservation Act 1939*  
Plans of Management for Crown land, including waterways  
Now includes technical advice on soil assessment and management and land capability. | **Essential Partner**  
Important land manager (particularly across the Cumberland Plain), and owns beds of waterways on behalf of the Crown. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Statutory and Policy Responsibilities</th>
<th>Important Contribution to State and CAP Targets in the Sydney Metropolitan Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Water Corporation.</td>
<td>Manages distribution of drinking water, dominates the wastewater sector; provides significant trunk stormwater services. Has three corporate objectives: • to protect public health; • to protect the environment; and • to be a successful business.</td>
<td><strong>Essential Partner</strong> Most important partner for actions that require changes to wastewater management. Major influence on water reuse and recycling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other CMAs – particularly HNCMA.</td>
<td>Catchment Management Authorities Act 2003.</td>
<td><strong>Essential Partners</strong> The HNCMA operates under the same legislation as the SMCMA, and shares a number of issues on a regional and State scale with the SMCMA (although it is not covered by the same specific NSW government assigned responsibilities). The two organisations also share multiple essential partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirty-nine Local Government Areas (LGAs)</td>
<td>Local Government Act 1993 and Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 39 Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) (due to be fully reviewed using the NSW Template by 2009 or 2011) Environmental Management Plans State of the Environment Reports Annual Reports Plans of Management for Community Land Coastline, Estuary, Floodplain/flood risk and Stormwater Management Plans Recreation Plans Social Plans Settlement Strategies Sustainability Strategies Heritage Strategies Bushcare.</td>
<td><strong>Essential Partners</strong> The critical importance of partnerships with and between local councils is highlighted in the Catchment Management Authorities Act 2003 and in the 2006 Cabinet Direction. Local Government acts as a planner, manager and regulator across multiple aspects of NRM. In the SMCMA region, high population densities have lead to Local Government fragmentation, with multiple local councils within any subcatchment area (such as Middle Harbour estuary and its catchment). Major opportunities for coordinated and cooperative management with benefits at all scales. Local Government investment in Bushcare in the Sydney region was $3.5 million in 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Statutory and Policy Responsibilities</td>
<td>Important Contribution to State and CAP Targets in the Sydney Metropolitan Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community environment organisations at State, regional and local level, including service groups, Greening Australia, National Parks Association.</td>
<td>These organisations do not operate under specific pieces of legislation or policy, but may be instrumental in achieving enforcement or new interpretation of legislation and policy.</td>
<td>Essential Partners Some of these groups are also Bushcare groups; others focus on specific environmental or natural resource issues and can be catalysts for changes in attitude to natural resource issues across the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximately three million Sydney residents and 2.7 million visitors.</td>
<td>Investment in NRM programs through rates and taxes.</td>
<td>Essential Partners As a NRM area, the SMCMA region is distinguished by the fragmentation of land ownership (small urban blocks rather than rural lands dominate the catchment). Small changes in behaviour by the Sydney population have major implications for the regional catchment targets and indirectly for the State-wide NRM targets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCs).</td>
<td>Conduct research, prepare submissions on government policy, lobby and foster cooperation between councils within a geographic region. Achieve sustainable lifestyle for residents – social infrastructure, environment protection and economic activity.</td>
<td>Essential Partners The importance of these groups will vary with their major interest. However, Sydney Coastal Councils Group and Sydney Weeds Committees are addressing issues identified as of great regional significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Local Government subregional functional groups (weeds, coast and estuaries).</td>
<td>Coordinate the Local Government response on various specific issues – at a subregional scale. For instance, Sydney Coastal Councils Group includes 15 member councils which have coastline or estuarine environments.</td>
<td>Essential Partners Important both for their knowledge of cultural values of the landscape and representation of Indigenous views, but also as land managers in their own right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Aboriginal Land Council and six Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) and Aboriginal Corporations from the SMCMA region. LALCs: Metropolitan, Deerubbin, Gandangara, Tharawal, Illawarra and La Perouse.</td>
<td>NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 Maintain and protect cultural heritage, make claims for appropriate Crown land, manage land obtained under the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act, coordinate and support Aboriginal community access to programs such as housing, education, health and legal advice.</td>
<td>Essential Partners Currently there are 8,500 volunteers working on bushland regeneration projects across the SMCMA region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landcare, Bushcare, Streamwatch, Ocean Watch Australia, Eco-divers and Coastcare groups.</td>
<td>Community-based bushland and water management groups, supported by Local and NSW Government.</td>
<td>Essential Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Statutory and Policy Responsibilities</td>
<td>Important Contribution to State and CAP Targets in the Sydney Metropolitan Region</td>
</tr>
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<td>--------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Department of Primary Industries ( DPI). | Plans for agriculture in the Sydney region  
State Forests  
Fisheries Management Act 1994 includes provisions for aquatic threatened species and Fishery Management Strategies (commercial sectors)  
Intertidal Protected Areas  
Policies and guidelines (e.g. for barriers to fish passage)  
Recovery and Threat Abatement Plans for aquatic species (e.g. Grey Nurse Shark)  
Sustainable Oyster Industry Strategy 2006  
NSW Invasive Species Plan. | **Supporting Partner**  
Integration of water quality management programs in the Georges River and Hacking River catchments – directly relevant to sustainable oyster industry.  
Provide funding for Regional Weeds Committees.  
Fishery Management Strategies set the framework for commercial activity in estuaries and marine environments, addressing biodiversity protection and cultural fishing. |
| **Now Department of Industry and Investment NSW** | Recreational Boating Plans of Management.  
Mooring Management Plans. | **Supporting Partner**  
Manages the interface between aquatic recreation and aquatic habitat protection – a major issue in Sydney’s estuarine waterways, given the popularity of recreational boating. |
| Sydney Catchment Authority (SCA). | Manages the bulk drinking water supply (including supply catchments) for the greater Sydney area:  
‘Healthy catchments, quality water – always.’ | **Supporting Partner**  
Important partner for issues extending beyond regional catchment scale, but also for regional-scale issues associated with efficient water management. |
| Local Government and Shires Association. | Represents combined interests of Local Government, coordinates programs and policy development. | **Supporting Partner**  
As above, important partner in terms of lobbying for policy changes that will facilitate effective NRM by Local Government (including funding arrangements). |
| Growth Centres Commission. | Growth Centres SEPP 2007  
Precinct Plans  
Infrastructure Delivery Plans. | **Supporting Partner**  
Manages development of major new regional growth centres. There is spatially limited overlap between the two major growth centres in the Sydney Basin with the SMCM region. However, natural resource policies and priorities in the Growth Centres will set precedents for redevelopment and expansion of other urban areas. |
| Department of Local Government. | **Local Government Act 1993.** | **Supporting Partner**  
Can encourage Local Government engagement in NRM and reinforce importance of coastal zone management and community participation strategies, amongst other issues. Currently requires local SoE reports. |
| Sydney Ports Authority. | Botany Bay Port Masterplan. | **Supporting Partner**  
The Authority plays a significant role in managing two of NSW’s most valuable economic resources – Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay. It is committed to minimising impacts on the environment and local communities. |
| Parkland Authorities and Trusts, including Sydney Olympic Park, Centennial and Moore Park, Parramatta Park, Royal Botanic Gardens. | Sydney Olympic Park has a Sustainability Strategy and Master Plan (Parklands 2020) 2002  
Centennial and Moore Park Trust Act 1983. | **Supporting Partners**  
Centennial and Moore Park Trust estimates that 22% of people aged over 18 in Sydney (2.2 million people) visit an urban park at least once a week.  
Major regional parks (such as Sydney Olympic Park) also present opportunities for significant habitat rehabilitation, research on threatened species and communities and community awareness raising. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Statutory and Policy Responsibilities</th>
<th>Important Contribution to State and CAP Targets in the Sydney Metropolitan Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Manages 137 ha of high-profile land (much of it is formerly Defence land) around the foreshore of Sydney Harbour, including North Head, Middle Head, Cockatoo Island. |
| Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority. | Role focuses on creating and caring for significant places for Sydney residents and visitors. This includes both cultural and environmental care. | Supporting Partner  
Manages 400 ha of Sydney Harbour foreshore, with a focus on culturally or historically important sites (such as The Rocks, Circular Quay, and Darling Harbour). Major opportunities for cross promoting NRM issues and responses. |
| Land development organisations – Landcom and other major development groups. | Must comply with Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 in terms of development applications and development consent. Land developers are also required to comply with multiple other pieces of State legislation and policy such as Coastal Protection Act 1989, Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995, National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, Rivers and Foreshores Improvement Act 1948, biobanking. | Supporting Partners  
The inputs and results of Master Planning for major land releases and the inclusion of innovative environmental aspects (e.g. in terms of water sensitive urban design and recycling) of new development (including redevelopment) can add value to natural resource protection and enhancement programs. |
Industry associations can provide leadership for members and also encourage changes to government policy for the benefit of natural resources and natural system processes. Private businesses involved in Biobanking have an important role to play. |
| Universities and other research institutions. | Research activities must comply with legislative requirements where the activity presents a risk to a natural resource value. | Supporting Partners  
Research organisations can make a significant contribution to natural resource knowledge through targeted and properly designed research. |

Left  
A community project was conducted with Auburn Council focusing on the Duck River. Photo: Alissar Chidiac.  
The Sydney region has a population of more than three million people from diverse cultural backgrounds. More than 30 per cent of residents speak a language other than English. (Sydney Metropolitan CAP, July 2009)
Local Government

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA recognises that councils have a pre-eminent role as natural resource managers within the core urban Sydney region.

They have a primary role in land use planning and development assessment and the care and control of public land that influences many of the catchment targets for the urban landscape. Following the closure of the NSW Stormwater Trust in 2006, Local Government has been responsible for levying funds to cover the majority of stormwater management improvements in the region, while the Sydney Water Corporation also manages some stormwater infrastructure.

Local Government has a close working relationship with local and regional-scale community groups and individual councils are in a position to influence community attitudes and behaviour. As it would be resource intense to work with 39 individual councils, the Sydney Metropolitan CMA generally works with groups of councils, especially those with a catchment focus such as Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG); The Georges River Combined Councils’ Committee, (GRCCC); Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) and the Cooks River Foreshores Working Group. The region also contains five Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCs) which also provide opportunities for achieving natural resource outcomes across Local Government boundaries.

The ROCs are:

- Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC);
- Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC);
- Shore Regional Organisation of Councils (SHOROC);
- Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC);
- Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils (MACROC).

Other Significant Partnerships

The scope of the policy, regulatory, funding and on-ground management responsibilities of some organisations overlaps extensively with the core interests of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA. Some key stakeholder groups include:

Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA has a significant and important relationship with the Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust.

The Trust was constituted in 1989. Under its charter the Trust was responsible for mitigating the impacts of flooding, trunk drainage surcharge, deteriorating water quality and other natural hazards. The Parramatta River catchment covers the upper part of The Hills Shire and Blacktown, Holroyd and Parramatta areas. A river management service charge levied on all rateable properties in the catchment provided funding for the Trust.

Projects included construction of infrastructure, flood modelling and data collection and the catchment-wide on-site stormwater detention policy.

In February 2005 the NSW Government decided the Trust would merge with the Sydney Metropolitan CMA. The finalisation of the merger and the abolition of the Trust is now dependent on identifying a source of funds to maintain the Trust’s assets and liabilities after the merger.

Port Hacking Management Panel

This group was established by Sutherland Shire Council to provide advice to Council on all matters related to the preservation, maintenance, sustainable development and use of Port Hacking. This includes ensuring that the Port Hacking Integrated Environmental Management Plan 2007-2012 is contemporary and relevant. Members of the Panel represent Council, commercial operators, The Waterfront Owners Association, the Waterways User Group, and other environmentally-focused groups.

Non-voting members include representatives from the Department of Primary Industries, NSW Maritime Authority, and DECCW agencies including the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Estuary Management Program and the former Environment Protection Authority. The Sydney Metropolitan CMA is invited to attend meetings in an observer capacity.

The Coastal CMAs Working Group

The Coastal Catchment Management Authorities Working Group was set up to provide a forum for the five coastal CMAs to share knowledge, discuss issues and explore solutions. Members are: Northern Rivers, Hunter-Central Rivers Hawkesbury-Nepean, Sydney Metropolitan and Southern Rivers. The group meets quarterly and provides opportunities for the following:

- Development of strategic level NRM recommendations under the guidance of Coastal GMs and/or the joint NSW CMA GMs group.
- Development of consistent operational foundations for policy, regulations, legislation, programs and operations - ensuring flexibility to adapt and vary these as necessary.

- Sharing of knowledge, experience, initiatives through networking.
- Joint problem solving and recommendation development.
- Investigation and, if appropriate, progression of joint funding opportunities for cross-CMA projects.

The regional Bitou Bush Control Project is an example of a successfully implemented cross regional project.

Left: A volunteer-initiated Catchment to Cove project to restore saltmarsh at Sisters and Half Moon Bay was carried out in partnership with the City of Canada Bay. The project won a Highly Commended at the 2008 Local Government Environment Awards in December.

Right: In 2008 a partnership between the Sydney Metropolitan CMA and Canterbury Council and members from the al-Ghazzali Cultural Learning Centre saw volunteers adopt a Bushcare site along the Cooks River at Croydon Park. As an extension to the original project the Sydney Metropolitan CMA produced a DVD to encourage other community groups to get involved in local Bushcare volunteering.
Local Aboriginal Land Councils

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA acknowledges the connection of Aboriginal people to country and the integral connections between the natural resource values (such as water quality and flows and intact plant and animal communities) and the cultural values of the landscape.

The Department of Natural Resources (2005) defined Aboriginal cultural landscapes as:

“A location, area or region valued by an Aboriginal group (or groups) because of their long and complex relationship with that land. It expresses their unity with the natural and spiritual environment. It embodies their traditional knowledge of spirits, places, land uses and ecology. Material remains of the association may be prominent, but will often be minimal or absent.”

The Metropolitan Local Land Council covers the traditional land of 29 clans of the Eora nation. The Land Council’s theme: “Always was, always will be … Aboriginal land” embodies the concept of a cultural landscape that is valued for the continuity that the land represents – for stories, spiritual associations, economic associations (plants, animals, water and stone resources) and community strength.

Other Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALC) and traditional nations that are represented in the Sydney Metropolitan CMA region include:

- La Perouse LALC in the Botany Bay area
- Gandangara LALC, based at Liverpool
- Tharawal LALC, based at Buxton
- Deerubbin LALC, based at Mount Druitt
- Illawarra LALC, based at Wollongong.

In addition to the traditional cultural associations with country, the Land Councils and traditional owners of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA region own a significant area of land in multiple parcels, obtained under the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act, 1983. Some of these land parcels protect locations of high biodiversity values. Many represent links for Aboriginal people between traditional cultural landscape values and contemporary economic independence. Aboriginal people are land managers and important stakeholders in improving natural resource conditions within the Sydney Metropolitan CMA region.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA has participated in consultation with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council as well as local Aboriginal Land Councils within our region, as well as elders and Traditional Owner groups across the region.

Left
Delivering Welcome To Country at the Sydney Metropolitan CMA Regional Awards was Uncle Bob Waterer.

Right
At the Sydney Royal Easter Show Bushcare Stall Aboriginal Heritage Officer, Mark Saunders explains Aboriginal tools to Willoughby Council officer, Liz Shea and Sydney Metropolitan CMA Community Support Officer, Emma Beckley.
Kurnell 2020

Kurnell 2020 is a landscape scale project which aims to build biodiversity corridors and resilient ecosystems across the Kurnell Peninsular. It will buffer and enhance Sydney’s only internationally recognised Ramsar wetland at Towra Point and conserve and enhance eight endangered ecological communities.

The Kurnell 2020 project is based around developing partnerships and collaboration with public and private land owners, including the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council. The initiative adds value to the substantial investment of Sutherland Shire Council and Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water in managing this vulnerable environment, controlling weeds and protecting local plant species.

The project also includes work with private landholders to encourage the protection of Kurnell’s local plant species as well as the involvement of the managers of public lands in weed control.

Many of the species of native plants growing at Kurnell in 2009 are the same as those that would have been found in this location more than 250 years ago.

Due to various impacts and the invasion of weeds, we are losing these remaining native plant species. The Kurnell 2020 project aims to preserve this significant part of Kurnell’s natural heritage.

The Importance of Kurnell
The Towra Point Nature Reserve forms the north western side of Kurnell Peninsula. The wetland in this Nature Reserve is listed in the Ramsar Convention and is protected through legislation. Migratory shorebirds, coming to Australia through the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, spend up to six months on the Kurnell Peninsula. Species include the Eastern Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Red Knot, Grey-tailed Tattler and Ruddy Turnstone. Other threatened bird species including the Little Tern and Pied Oystercatcher use the Towra Nature Reserve for breeding every summer. These visitors to our shores also feed on the eastern side of the Kurnell Peninsula at Boat Harbour where an extensive rock platform is included in a monthly survey, part of the Shorebirds Program of Birds Australia, as is the whole area of Towra Point.

All these areas are impacted by problems of invasive plants and animals across the peninsula and the lack of knowledge and understanding of the rare and precious resource that exist on the southern shores of Botany Bay. Through the Kurnell 2020 project, biodiversity corridors will reduce the threats to the bird habitat areas and education and awareness programs will engage the community in an improved understanding and appreciation of one of Sydney’s best kept secret natural wonders.

Natural Resource Management Targets
The Kurnell Peninsula is a focus for natural resource funding as projects can deliver outcomes against strategic Australian and NSW Government natural resource management targets.
Australian Government priorities
The Towra Point Aquatic Reserve is one of the two internationally recognised Ramsar wetlands in NSW. This area is migratory bird habitat for species listed in the Japan and China Migratory Bird Agreements (JAMBA & CAMBA). Bitou Bush is a Weed of National Significance. The Botany Bay area is regarded as a "hot spot" for high priority actions in the Caring for our Country Business Plan.

NSW State priorities
Eight Endangered Ecological Communities are found in the peninsula together with 36 Threatened Species. The Sydney Metropolitan CMA’s Rapid Fauna Habitat Assessment identified the peninsula and Towra Point in the highest priority category for action. Additionally Threat Abatement Plans for rabbits, foxes and Bitou bush apply to the area.

Sutherland Shire Council has endorsed the Kurnell 2020 project and the proposed corridor locations are consistent with the draft Local Environmental Plan for the area.

Funding
Kurnell 2020 was funded in 2008-09 with an investment of $266,000 through the Australian Government’s National Heritage Trust. In March 2009 further funding of $227,000 through the Australian Government Community Coastcare Program was received by the Sydney Metropolitan CMA for a complementary program known as Kurnell 2020: Engaging Community in Integrated Ecological Restoration, Stage 1.

The key elements of this project, delivered in partnership with Sutherland Shire Council, will provide a strategic approach to the on-ground restoration works across the landscape of the whole Kurnell Peninsula. An Integrated Invasive Species Strategy will be developed and a Seed and Nursery Audit carried out to determine what seed sources are available to grow the plants required for the future large scale revegetation of the biodiversity corridors.

This Community Coastcare project also has an important focus on community engagement. A series of workshop and training events will be held to assist current and future community volunteers to improve their skills in restoration, including understanding needs of local fauna. The Indigenous work team, known as the ‘Towra Team’ working in the Kamay Botany Bay National Park will also be supported to undertake accredited training for a Certificate 2 in Conservation and Land Management. This Community Coastcare project will be completed in October 2010.

Significant Events
Mid 08: Formative stakeholder meeting at Kurnell
Dec 08-Feb 09: Australian Government archival filming at Kurnell
Feb 09: Strategic Planning exercises
Feb 09: Field trip by La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council members to their lands at Kurnell.
May 09: Guriwal Aboriginal Cultural Day

Logo
A specific Kurnell 2020 logo was developed to identify and distinguish the project. The logo has been made available to all stakeholders to encourage ownership of the project.

A website: www.kurnell2020.info has also been developed.

Parallel Projects
While the Kurnell 2020 focuses attention on the Kurnell Peninsular it allows other agencies or organisations to develop specific projects that match their corporate objectives. For example, the Australian Government is exploring the development of an Aboriginal employment strategy that includes job opportunities in natural resource management and related industries.

Reports
Corridors Delineation Report prepared by DECC
Strategic Corporate Engagement Plan
Aboriginal Archeology and Heritage Report: Literature Review
Vegetation History and Kurnell Peninsular: Literature Review
Kurnell Community Project: (oral history)
These publications are available on our website: www.sydney.cma.nsw.gov.au
Regional Environmental Awards

The inaugural Sydney Metropolitan CMA Regional Environmental Awards highlight urban bushcare work.

The Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority became an important part of the Landcare Australia story by hosting the inaugural Sydney Metropolitan CMA Regional Environmental Awards in May, 2009.

By sponsoring its first Regional Environmental Awards the Sydney Metropolitan CMA has allowed the spotlight to shine on the hard work being done by thousands of dedicated city-dwelling volunteers.

To emphasise the importance of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA Regional Environmental Awards, Landcare Australia Limited sponsored the $5000 major prize in the Urban Environmental Project category.

Some 120 enthusiastic Bushcare volunteers from across Sydney attended the presentation ceremony at The Kirribilli Club, Lavender Bay on Saturday, May 23 to support and congratulate category winners.

The quality of the entries presented the judging panel with such a challenge in separating exceptional and worthy winners, that Highly Commended certificates were awarded in three of the four categories.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA supported regional winners who were eligible to enter the September NSW State Landcare Awards in Port Macquarie. NSW State winners will be eligible to enter the 2010 National Landcare Awards in Canberra.

Category winners

$5000 Landcare Australia Urban Environment Project Award

Dee Why Wetland-Green Web Sydney Restoration Project. This project “ticked all the boxes” by demonstrating significant on-ground work that increases biodiversity while protecting and improving native habitat for threatened species, especially the Red-Crowned Toadlet, the Giant Burrowing Frog and the Eastern Pygmy Possum. An important “x factor” that made this entry the over-all winner was its focus on linking existing natural resource management plans developed by Warringah Council and DECC. Hands-on work included the planting of some 2000 native tube stock by the Friends of the Bush volunteers. There has been a strong emphasis on involving the community in communicating why wetlands are important and what measures are necessary to keep them healthy.

Highly Commended

The Friends of Lane Cove National Park Ridge to River project impressed the judges. This project continues to deliver on a biodiversity conservation plan started in 2000 which aims to restore the dry sclerophyll and riparian areas of Carters Creek from the headwaters on Delhi Road to the junction with the Lane Cove River. An area of some 3000 square metres has been restored providing native habitat for a range of native animals.
$1000 Community Group Award
The Wolli Creek Preservation Society impressed with its “inspirational” work as an excellent example of volunteering and the benefits that are delivered to both the bushland and the individuals participating. Their major on-ground work is focussed in Bexley North, Paperbark Creek, Bray Avenue wetland, Girrathween East, Tunella Reserve, Jackson and Undercliffe Tracks and Wolli Bluff. In addition to bush regeneration the group produces educational resources for schools; conducts guided walks and kayak trips with commentary, with material for self-guided walks and works with Councils and agencies in research, planning and implementing programs.

Highly Commended
The Mighty Maandowie Volunteer Bushcare Group began in 1993 with a few volunteers working at one site and has continued to expand with some 26 active volunteers working at 23 sites covering 58 hectares. “Maandowie” is the Dharawal word for grey gum – *Eucalyptus punctata*, a species abundant in the area.

$1000 Education Award
Jasper Road Public School was recognised for its environmental work extending back to 1991 when Winston Hills Rotary Club sponsored a shade house to start the “Tree for Survival” project. Students also participate in Streamwatch and conduct energy, water and waste audits at school and home. Students actively support Clean Up Australia Day, World Environment Day, World Tree Day and Earth Hour.

Highly Commended
Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre was recognised for its innovative Grime Scene Investigation (GSI) program which creates an authentic field work learning experience. Students conduct tests and identify the impact of human activity on an estuary. Study material is derived from the Stage 4 science syllabus.

$1000 Aboriginal Environment Award
The Dyin Caribere Women’s Aboriginal Landcare group work at Parramatta Park to regenerate native bush. The name “dyin caribere” means “women gather” in the Darug language. In entering the award the group stated they were Aboriginal women who had lost contact with their traditional lands. They now meet monthly to revegetate native bush and remove rubbish along a section of Domain Creek and have now developed a sense of connection to place and caring for country.

Community Forum
The third Sydney Metropolitan CMA Community Forum was held on May 23 as an introduction to the inaugural Regional Environment Awards.

Sydney Metropolitan CMA Acting Chair, Philip Sansom, presented a 10-minute snapshot of the work being achieved by the Sydney Metropolitan CMA in partnership with Councils, local groups and other government agencies across our region. Megan Tattersall a Caring for Our Country Facilitator with the Australian Government Land and Coasts team, invited participants to share their “101 Secrets” for a successful volunteering group. The “roving microphone” session encouraged delegates to share their success stories.

Above left
Winners from all four Regional Environment Award categories were congratulated by Sydney Metropolitan CMA Chair, Philip Sansom and Board Members.

Above Centre
Maandowie Volunteer Bushcare Group members received a Highly Commended at the Regional Environment Awards from Board Member Suzanne Little (right).

Above Right
Board Member Genia McCaffery presented Jasper Road Public School students with the Education Award in recognition of the school’s extensive program of environmental activities.
Cooks River Urban Water Initiative

About the Initiative
The Cooks River Urban Water Initiative (CRIWI) focuses on two project elements to improve the environmental quality of the Cooks River.

Wolli Creek Stormwater Element
This element of the initiative aims to reduce the impacts of urban stormwater run-off on the Wolli Creek corridor by the installation of Stormwater Quality Improvement Devices to reduce litter, weeds, sediment and improve the water quality in the Creek and River. The eight projects will include the construction of pollutant traps and bio-retention systems to filter stormwater flowing into the Creek.

Wetlands Element
This element consists of the design and re-construction of five wetland areas in both the freshwater and estuarine reaches of the Cooks River. Existing wetlands will be supplemented with restoration works such as re-vegetation and weeding. Design briefs are being constructed in consultation with local land managers.

The total value of the initiative is $2million and is funded under the Australian Government’s Water for the Future program. On-ground works are expected to be completed by mid 2010. This is a complex project and more information is available at www.cooksriver.info

Highlights in 2008-2009
• Funding of $2million was announced by the Australian Government in October 2008
• Project co-ordinator position created and filled
• Cooks River logo and website developed
• Over $500,000 committed in project contracts with land managers
• On-ground works began with the installation of a gross pollutant trap at Turrella

Water Sensitive Urban Design capacity building with Councils
An important part of the CRIWI has been to encourage and assist councils to design some of the stormwater treatment systems ‘in house’ rather than contracting out the work to a third party. To date Councils have taken a positive approach to this opportunity.

Research links
A postgraduate research project involving monitoring the outcomes has been set up at Macquarie University with additional funding from Sydney Water Corporation.

Above
The announcement of $2million funding in October 2008
Left to right: NSW Member for Lakemba and Mayor of Canterbury, Robert Furolo; Federal Member for Lowe, John Murphy; Sydney Metropolitan CMA Chair, Philip Sansom; Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Member for Watson, Tony Burke; Federal Member for Grayndler, Anthony Albanese.
The Community Riverhealth Project with the GRCCC

There has never been a regional scale community-based study of macroinvertebrate populations within the Georges River Catchment.

In 2008 the Sydney Metropolitan CMA partnered with the GRCCC to apply for Australian Government funding for a community based, catchment wide aquatic macroinvertebrate monitoring program. Information gained will be used by the councils of the Georges River Catchment and the Sydney Metropolitan CMA to make important natural resource management decisions, such as targeting areas for preservation and restoration.

A vision for the project is to bring together Local Government, community groups, Bushcare and Streamwatch groups and schools to participate in a scientific study of aquatic macroinvertebrate populations within the Georges River Catchment.

By training and assisting the community to monitor their local environment this project will allow residents to participate directly in the management of the River. The Community Riverhealth Coordinator will ensure that data collected is accurate and available to assess the health of the Georges River and its tributaries.

This is a GRCCC project in association with the Georges River Environmental Education Centre, Sydney Water Corporation, Sydney Metropolitan CMA and the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water.

Community Coastcare Program

Improving the health of the Georges River is also the theme of a complementary Sydney Metropolitan CMA project also funded through the Australian Government Community Coastcare Program, Community Support for Biodiversity Restoration in the Georges River Catchment.

This project starting in mid 2009 will involve a series of workshops to encourage the participation of new volunteers from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. On-ground restoration projects will be supported and used as case studies and opportunities for engagement of new volunteers. A map of community involvement across the Georges River sub catchment will also be produced as part of the project. It is hoped this will also be able to take account of the new activities undertaken through the macroinvertebrate study.

The Georges River is an important recreational waterway for the people who live in its catchment. A project developed by the Sydney Metropolitan CMA and the GRCCC created opportunities for community members to take an active role in monitoring the health of the river and providing necessary data for high-quality natural resource management decisions. A specialist Community Riverhealth Coordinator has been employed by the Sydney Metropolitan CMA on behalf of the GRCCC.
The Botany Bay Coastal Catchments Initiative

The Botany Bay Coastal Catchments Initiative (BBCCI) is a major program for the Sydney Metropolitan CMA. This case study provides a brief snapshot of the project. More information is available at: www.sydney.cma.nsw.gov.au/bbcci/

The Botany Bay Coastal Catchments Initiative (BBCCI) is majority funded by the Australian Government and being project managed and part funded by the Sydney Metropolitan CMA. The BBCCI seeks to achieve long-term protection of the surface waters of Botany Bay, its estuaries and its catchment.

A major goal of the BBCCI is to produce a scientifically derived ecological response model of Botany Bay and its estuaries that can be used to model the impact changes in the catchment will have on the Bay's ecological communities.

Data collection for the model will primarily be focused on the pollutants washing off the hard surfaces in the catchment (suspended solids, nitrogen and phosphorus). An important component of the BBCCI is to engage with Local Government and key stakeholders in the Botany Bay Catchment so they can participate in finding and implementing innovative solutions to improve water quality.

The BBCCI’s ultimate goal is to develop an agreed Water Quality Improvement Plan for the surface waters of Botany Bay and its catchment.

Major activities of the BBCCI are to:

- Prepare a Scoping Study
- Map the Botany Bay Catchment and sub-catchments
- Prepare a Consultation Strategy
- Set draft levels of protection for the environmental values of Botany Bay and its catchments waterways
- Model the current contributions of nutrients and sediments pollution in the catchment
- Conduct an ecological characterisation of the Towra Point Ramsar site
- Develop a hydrodynamic model for Botany Bay and catchment watercourses
- Establish an ecological response model of Botany Bay and its estuaries, which will be used to determine how much of several key pollutants that Botany Bay and its major tributaries can receive each year before irreversible ecological damage occurs
- Identify opportunities and barriers to the adoption of water sensitive urban design in the catchment
- Develop draft water quality objectives and load targets needed to protect the draft environmental objectives
- Develop management options to meet the water quality objectives and load targets and assess the cost and effectiveness various options and select most appropriate options to achieve targets
- Develop a water sensitive urban design (WSUD) adoption strategy and support councils and other government agencies to include WSUD in their planning processes
- Review the statutory and institutional arrangements relating to protecting water quality in Botany Bay, its estuaries and catchments.

Above
Botany Bay and its catchment has been declared a Caring for our Country Coastal Hotspot. The area contains a diversity of native plant species and provides habitat for many endangered native animals. In addition to its important natural resources, Botany Bay is Australia’s largest general port, handling more than one-third of the national containerised trade in 2004.

Kingsford Smith Airport extends across reclaimed land in Botany Bay and is Australia’s busiest airport.
Finding ways to manage water in the urban environment that replicates natural systems as closely as possible is one of the principles of water sensitive urban design.

Water Sensitive Urban Design in Sydney Program

This program aims to influence projects across 2,000 square kilometres and the 39 Local Government Councils within the Sydney Metropolitan CMA region.

The strategy of the Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) in Sydney Program is to enhance the ability and willingness of Local Government Councillors and staff to promote and implement more sustainable water management practices in their operations and in urban development projects in Sydney.

The Sydney Metropolitan WSUD project officer has developed key partnerships focussed on promoting WSUD strategies. Key contacts include planners, designers, architects, engineers, construction and operational staff from 39 councils, universities, peak industry bodies, Landcom, the Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust, the Regional Organisations of Councils and Council groups, the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, the NSW Department of Water and Energy, the Sydney Water Corporation, the Rouse Hill Infrastructure Consortium, the Local Government and Shires Association, the NSW Department of Planning and project officers within other NSW CMAs.

During 2008-2009 a series of seminars, issues-based workshops and site visits have been conducted to outline the main opportunities and challenges of WSUD and ways to improve water sustainability in urban development. WSUD planning and technical guidelines have been developed for use in the Sydney Region of Australia. A sustainable water challenge was facilitated this year, with councils from around NSW entering projects they have been involved with that deal with more sustainable water management in some way.

A key achievement was the findings from an independent review which showed the Sydney Metropolitan CMA WSUD program was a key regional driver for embedding integrated water cycle management into Local Government policies, procedures, projects, initiatives and on-ground works.
Regional Weeds Committees

(Including Sydney North, Sydney Central, Sydney West/Blue Mountains and South West Sydney)

The Sydney region is characterised by large tracts of highly urbanised areas intersected with isolated areas of native vegetation. Remnants of original bushland continue to exist as corridors, often in steep terrain, in the north and south; on the alluvial flats of the Cumberland Plain; and in large tracts in National Parks on the coastal and outer boundaries.

Many tiny fragments are scattered throughout the built up areas of central Sydney. In all locations bushland edges are significantly impacted by invasive weeds, associated with adjacent urban pressures such as stormwater runoff and high nutrient loads.

Four Regional Weeds Committees (known as the Sydney Weeds Committees) have been established to promote a cooperative and co-ordinated regional approach to weed management across the Sydney Metropolitan region.

The Committee regions are based on Local Government boundaries, and membership of each committee includes representatives from the councils in that area, as well from relevant NSW and Australian Government agencies.

The Sydney Weeds Committees and the Sydney Metropolitan CMA are now implementing some of the key actions in the Weed Management Strategy for the Sydney Metropolitan CMA Region 2007-2011.

These include:

- Prioritising weeds in the region
- Collating baseline data and mapped information about high priority weeds
- Developing regional maps of the high priority weeds
- Developing community information and educational resources
- Providing best practice training for weed officers and industry practitioners
Award Winning Plan to Beat Bitou Bush

The implementation of the Bitou Bush Threat Abatement Plan (Bitou TAP) won a Highly Commended award in a search for the best Australasian restoration projects in 2008.

The Society for Ecological Restoration International, supported by the Ecological Management and Restoration Journal, launched the search in 2008 as part of its Global Restoration Network to identify the best restoration projects being carried out in Australasia.

The coastal CMA’s Bitou Bush Control Project was selected because of the on-ground ecosystem restoration works component. Implementation of the Bitou TAP across high priority sites involves extensive support from the five coastal NSW CMAs, DECCW, Local Government, the Department of Lands and numerous community groups, assisted by a DECCW coordinator.

The invasive South African shrub Bitou Bush (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera* ssp. *rotunda*) has spread along 80 per cent of the NSW coastline, threatening native plant species from the king tide mark to coastal woodlands and forests. This threat was acknowledged with the listing of Bitou Bush as a key threatening process under the *NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.

The Bitou TAP was developed to ensure that control of the weed led to the protection and restoration of coastal plant communities.

Detailed monitoring of the effectiveness of the control program is based on sound ecological techniques and extensive field testing with stakeholders.

Understanding how Bitou Bush causes native species to decline is a key component of the Bitou TAP and DECCW is currently exploring this field with the University of Wollongong. There has also been an economic assessment of the Bitou TAP in conjunction with the University of New England.
Urban Nature Photographic Competition

The Urban Nature Photographic Competition was designed to encourage catchment residents to explore their local environment through the use of photography.

A photographic competition was seen as an innovative and interesting approach to engage the community and promote awareness of the Parramatta River, its catchment, and extent of urban bushland to be found within the region. The 210 entrants were invited to capture the beauty and importance of local animals, plants and natural areas.

The competition was hosted by the Parramatta River Catchment Group in partnership with the Sydney Metropolitan CMA. The Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) is a regional organisation. Local Government members include: Ashfield, Auburn, Bankstown, Blacktown, Canada Bay, Holroyd, Hunters Hill, Leichhardt, Parramatta, Ryde and Strathfield. Membership also includes representatives from NSW Government departments and authorities and representatives from Indigenous and environmental community groups.

The aim of the PRCG is for members to work together to improve the health of the Parramatta River and its catchment.

To assist potential photographers, and to further reinforce the message behind the competition, a number of photography workshops were conducted in council areas to provide entrants with an opportunity to experience their local environment.

The competition, launched on April 3, culminated in an awards ceremony and exhibition held on World Environment Day, June 5 attended by 95 guests.

Head judge was Carl Bento, Manager of Photography at the Australian Museum. Winners were: Open category, Clive Collins, for his photo of the Great Egret and Young People’s category, Persephonie Jamons, for her photo of footprints in the sand on the Parramatta River. Winning the People’s Choice Award was Soonlee Lim for his photo of a waterlily.

Some $3000 in prizes were awarded, including $350 for each category winner, plus cash and other prizes for runners-up and the People’s Choice winner.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA was joined in sponsoring and supporting the competition by Harvey Norman Supercentre Auburn; NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service; Australian Geographic; Greater Union Cinemas Parramatta, Taronga Zoo and Sydney Aquarium.

Winning photos have been used in a special web gallery promoting the natural beauty of the Parramatta River catchment. Visit: www.parramattariver.org.au

A tour of the best 100 of the entries was scheduled to be exhibited at public libraries, Council Chambers and other locations throughout the Parramatta River catchment between June and November, 2009.

Above
A selection of entries from the Urban Nature Photographic Competition on display at Parramatta Library in September.
Boronia Park
Benefits from Good Neighbours

Arthur Mashford is 95 and has been a life-long friend and neighbour to Boronia Park at Hunters Hill.

Since buying a block of land and building his family home in 1938, he has been a volunteer guardian of the 25 hectare (63 acre) expanse of bushland reserve at his front door.

Mr Mashford is a foundation member of the Friends of Boronia Park which started in 1989 with a core of six to 10 people.

Over the decades Mr Mashford has dedicated thousands of hours eradicating invasive weeds from the park, removing the competition so that native grasses, shrubs and trees can thrive.

His work has inspired daughter Rae Mashford who joined the Friends of Boronia Park in 1993. She has kept up the family tradition and since 1997 has spent periods of up to 20 hours a week weeding, watering and documenting the flora, fauna and human activity in Boronia Park.

The voluntary work of the Mashford’s, and other members of Friends of Boronia Park, has resulted in the regeneration of an important grove of original Turpentine Ironbark vegetation.

The Mashfords and other members of the Friends of Boronia Park play a vital role in protecting and restoring bushland essential to the survival of our native birds, animals and vegetation.

On-going rehabilitation of Boronia Park is an important natural resource management project and targeted work can assist the survival of native plant and animal species.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA provided $49,000 of Australian Government funding to and Hunters Hill Council contributed some $41,000 of its funds to the project.

Boronia Park is a haven for birds, with more than 70 species recorded in the locality.

On-ground work will enhance biodiversity, improve water quality and increase fauna habitat. Work will include restoration of the saltmarsh, mangrove and riparian vegetation along the Lane Cove River, as well as an upgrade of stormwater mitigation works in Brickmakers Creek to reduce erosion, improve water quality and trap and remove litter.

Boronia Park is an example of how it is possible to retain and build connecting bushland corridors across Sydney.

Above
Arthur Mashford and daughter Rae each have a lifelong connection to Boronia Park. They were interviewed in March for a media release targeting their local newspapers.

The Mashfords are an example of the 8,000 dedicated Bushcare volunteers that weed, water tubestock, monitor and nurture the corridors of natural bush in their neighbourhoods.
Biodiversity

The Biodiversity Theme focuses on the conservation of native vegetation recognising that healthy vegetation communities provide the base habitat for other forms of life.

Bitou Bush Control (Stage 3)

This project was designed to assist in the strategic and coordinated management of Bitou Bush (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera* ssp. *rotundata*) along the coastal zone in the Sydney Metropolitan region, and in the implementation of the Sydney Weeds Committees’ Sydney Bitou Bush / Boneseed Regional Management Plan (2004-09).

Bitou bush has been identified as a Weed of National Significance (WONS), a Key Threatening Process under the Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995, and the number one priority weed in the Sydney Metropolitan CMA region. It is causing significant environmental impacts on threatened plant species and endangered ecological communities in the region such as the Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub and Themeda Grassland headlands. It also has the potential to spread much more widely along the coastline than it currently occurs.

The project concentrated on managing and reducing the extent and spread of this weed on council land, private land and DECCW – NPWS managed land. This will greatly assist in protecting the catchment’s environmental resources.

The grant funding was used to employ contractors to control and eradicate infestations of Bitou Bush using best practice management techniques and to conduct new and ongoing survey and mapping in some areas.

Works were completed in June 2009, with 114 hectares of Bitou Bush treated.

Funded by: Catchment Action New South Wales
Budget: $50,000
Proponent: Sydney Metropolitan CMA, Randwick City Council and DECCW
Timeframe: 1 March 2009 – 30 June 2009
Status: Complete

Weed Strategy Implementation – Weed Mapping

This project follows on from the Priority Weed Mapping in the Sydney Metropolitan Region which was undertaken in 2007-2008 which mapped five priority aquatic weeds and two grasses.

The project involved surveying and mapping, in cooperation with the Sydney Weeds Committees and land management agencies, to produce up to date Sydney Metropolitan CMA-wide digital information of the distribution and density of Tussock (Paspalum). All relevant land management agencies in the Sydney Metropolitan region with known locations of Tussock Paspalum were consulted, including Australian, NSW and Local Governments.

Three workshops were held for Local Government and industry representatives on weed management. Two of the workshops focussed on GIS mapping of weed infestations, and the last workshop was a weedy grass identification workshop.

Above
The Sydney Metropolitan CMA has made controlling Bitou Bush a major priority for project funding.
Tussock paspalum was identified in 10 of the 39 LGAs within the Sydney Metropolitan CMA region, and an up to date spatial database of locations and core attributes of Tussock paspalum was produced.

Funded by: Caring for our Country
Budget: $50,000
Proponent: Total Earth Care Pty Ltd and Sydney Metropolitan CMA
Timeframe: 4 May 2009 – 26 June 2009
Status: Complete

Demonstration Sites for Threatened Species Populations and Communities in the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority Area

This project was developed to provide guidance to community volunteers and land managers by demonstrating best practice management of threatened species and ecological communities. It showcased best practice management of 10 threatened species and ecological communities. This was achieved through the preparation of interpretive signs, brochures and best practice guidelines, as well as the running of field days, for each demonstration site. The guidelines outline innovative management practices for threatened species and communities by managers of each site and provide a technical guide for land managers and the community who manage the species and communities elsewhere. It is hoped this will facilitate better management of these species, populations and communities across their range.

On-ground works were also undertaken at three of the sites to improve the status of native vegetation and enhance biodiversity values.

Funded by: NHT
Budget: $290,000 (an additional $100,000 was provided from SSF to undertake on-ground work at three sites)
Proponent: Sydney Metropolitan CMA and DECCW
Status: Complete

Conservation Incentives (Cumberland Plain)

This project aimed to encourage and facilitate the enhanced management of significant remnant endangered ecological communities of the Cumberland Plain on private land through a targeted incentive based program. Sites were targeted from areas identified in the Cumberland Plain Protected Areas Plan. Funded activities included:

- Assisted natural regeneration
- Fencing of remnants
- Weed control
- Selected plantings
- Rubbish removal and other actions in accordance with Best Practice Management Guidelines.

Funded by: NHT & SSF
Budget: $260,000 (NHT $60,000, SSF $200,000)
Proponent: DECC, HNCMA and Local Government
Timeframe: June 2006 – November 2008
Status: Complete

Native Vegetation Mapping (Stage 2)

This project aims to produce a comprehensive vegetation community map of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA region, which is consistent with other vegetation community mapping projects in the Sydney Bioregion. The map will provide a sound basis for improved planning and management of remnant vegetation. It will also provide a basis for the prioritisation of restoration of degraded areas. Stage 2 of the project began in 2006 and included plot work and ground truthing to map the region at a 1:5,000 scale. Aerial photograph interpretation was undertaken by the Royal Botanic Gardens (RBG). Extensive vegetation surveys of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA area have been undertaken by DECCW to ground truth the photograph interpretation. The high resolution vegetation map for the Sydney Metropolitan CMA area is due for completion at the end of September 2009.

Funded by: NHT
Budget: $141,500
Proponent: DECC
Timeframe: May 2007 – September 2009
Status: In progress

More than 550 native fauna species can be found in the Sydney region including 53 threatened fauna species.
Capacity Building for Local Government in Biodiversity Management (Stage 2)
This project aims to improve the capacity of Local Government to manage threatened species, populations and endangered ecological communities. Stage 1 of this project began in 2006 and provided a scoping study developed by Local Government and Shires Association of NSW (LGSA). Stage 2 of this project funded a project officer (housed at DECCW) to assist Local Government to improve their capacity, which was done through facilitation of a number of cluster meetings aimed at identifying council requirements and improving council networks, a workshop focussed on local Government councils to protect biodiversity, creation of a Local Government tools and resources webpage on the DECCW website, and the formulation of an accredited training course for Local Government staff.

Funded by: NHT
Budget: $185,000
Proponent: DECCW, LGSA and DoP
Timeframe: June 2007 – October 2008
Status: Complete

Aquatic and Terrestrial Pest Management
This project sought to raise awareness of rabbit management responsibility and Best Practice control methods among a diverse range of land managers. It provided incentive funding for a monitoring and management action regime and to encourage a coordinated effort aimed at identifying rabbit populations, implementing integrated control, and increasing community participation to reduce the detrimental impacts of rabbits within the Sydney Metropolitan region. Funds supported on-ground works to implement annual Rabbit Action Plans for 11 agencies, incorporating four National Parks and eight Local Government Areas work in-conjunction with two regional pest animal committees: Sydney South Feral Animal Management Committee; and the Urban Feral Animal Action Group – Sydney North. An area of 3,403 hectares was surveyed with 3,320 hectares subjected to rabbit management actions, with a significant decrease in rabbit numbers observed at the majority of treatment sites, thereby reducing the impact of competition and grazing by rabbits on species in the Sydney Metropolitan region.

Funded by: NHT
Budget: $100,000
Proponent: Local Government: Sutherland, Ku-ring-gai, Mosman, Pittwater, Willoughby, and Randwick councils; NSW Government: Rural Lands Protection Board; DECC NPWS (Lane Cove, Garigal, Towra Point, Royal). Zoological Parks Board (Taronga Zoo); Sydney Water Corporation (Botany Bay Wetlands); Sydney Airport Corporation Ltd, through University of Sydney Wildlife Research. Department of Environment and Climate Change (Royal NP and Towra Point NRI), Sydney Water Corporation (Botany Bay Wetlands), Sydney Airport Corporation Limited through University of Sydney Institute of Wildlife Research. Timeframe: March 2008 – October 2008
Status: Complete

Green Web Sydney (Stage 3)
Green Web Sydney Program, managed by the Sydney Metropolitan CMA, began in 2006. It promoted the establishment of a green web of native vegetation to protect, conserve and enhance remnant bushland in the Sydney region. The Program aims to increase the extent, condition and/or connectivity of habitat corridors and ultimately link fragmented patches of bushland and facilitate the migration of wildlife and the natural dispersal of native plants. Stage 3 funded revegetation to establish riparian vegetation along a section of the Cooks River at Ewen Park, Hulstone Park; regeneration and revegetation to protect and connect patches of remnant coastal heath at Burrows Park, Clovelly; and intensive weed removal to protect and restore an endangered Blue Gum High Forest community at Pennant Hills.

Funded by: Commonwealth Government - Caring for our Country
Budget: $ 19,000.00
Proponent: Canterbury City Council
Timeframe: April 2009 – September 2009
Status: Complete

Restoration of Riparian Zone at Ewen Park
Funded by: Commonwealth Government - Caring for our Country
Budget: $ 66,565
Proponent: Canterbury City Council
Timeframe: February 2007 – February 2009
Status: Complete

Improving Connectivity of Native Vegetation at Burrows Park
Funded by: Commonwealth Government - Caring for our Country
Budget: $ 30,000
Proponent: Randwick City Council
Timeframe: January 2009 – August 2009
Status: Complete

Restore Blue Gum High Forest Connectivity – Pennant Hills
Funded by: Catchment Action NSW
Budget: $ 40,000
Proponent: Mount St Benedict College
Timeframe: March 2009 – June 2009
Status: Complete

Improving Biodiversity in Streetscapes – Cooks River Icon Project
This project improved ecological and environmental quality in the urban landscape through the use of local native plant species in street and park plantings with a focus on biodiversity outcomes. Strathfield Council and the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) undertook research for local trials of different urban trees. Outcomes included the production of a list of recommended plants with supporting information. The tree selection decision support process was refined and test planting sites were identified. Local communities were encouraged to participate in tree planting and maintenance of sites.

While non-native and non-local native tree species can be used for street planting, the focus of this project was to identify and recommend planting of local native species to improve biodiversity. This project complemented a range of other programs run through the Cooks River Foreshore Working Group (CRFWG) and the NSW Government.

Budget: $40,000
Project delivered by: Strathfield Council
Project Partners: University of Technology; Cooks River Foreshores Working Group
Timeframe: February 2007 – February 2009
Status: Complete
Sydney Metropolitan CMA Priority Action Statement Implementation Strategy

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA is developing an Implementation Strategy for the Priority Action Statement for threatened species, populations and ecological communities in the Sydney Metropolitan CMA area. The Implementation Strategy will identify the highest priority threatened species, populations and ecological communities within its catchment area and list the relevant actions that the Sydney Metropolitan CMA can undertake. The Sydney Metropolitan CMA will use this document as well as several other documents and reports to improve coordination and to identify future investment and project development to assist in the recovery of threatened species.

Funded by: Caring for our Country
Funding: $50,000
Proponent: Sydney Metropolitan CMA
Timeframe: January 2009 – June 2009
Status: In progress

Coastal NRM Plans

As part of this project Coastal CMAs provided support to Local Government with completed natural resource management plans to implement on-ground work and other programs that have been identified as contributing to improved coastal resource condition.

This is a cross-regional project that was implemented in all coastal CMA regions. To encourage investment in all coastal Local Government areas, priority NRM actions were considered from other current coastal zone strategic NRM plans, particularly in areas where coastline and Estuary Management Plans were not yet in place.

Project Outcomes.

• Priority actions within local government coastal NRM plans identified and implemented
• Coastal zone terrestrial and aquatic natural resources protected/enhanced/rehabilitated

Funded by: National Heritage Trust funding through Northern Rivers CMA
Budget: $257,000
Proponent: Local Councils: Pittwater, Randwick, Strathfield, Hunters Hill and Sutherland.
Timeframe: September 2008 – May 2009
Status: Complete

Tide to Table 4

In 2005 OceanWatch Australia initiated a program with the Sydney Metropolitan CMA called “From Tide to Table”. This program focuses on the link between the commercial seafood industry and the restorative activities in the waterways and riparian zones of Sydney’s catchments. The pilot year of the program was based within the physical boundaries of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA.

Both primary producers and commercial fishers rely on clean healthy waterways and viable fish habitat to sustain healthy fish populations and their livelihoods. Activities, which improve habitat and water quality, have a direct benefit to fish stocks.

A key aspect of this project promoted the message that natural resource management changes within the Sydney Metropolitan CMA area can have significant impact on downstream primary production.

Several promotional events targeted markets such as the spear fishing fraternity who are participated in activities designed to the condition of bushland and waterways.

Projects were undertaken with members of the oyster and dairy industries, NSW farmers peak industry groups the Department of Primary Industry and the NSW Food Authority. Events proved to be valuable achieving environmental gains and better outcomes for the industries. Having a funding source to carry out medium term maintenance allowed for a better longer term output in revegetation terms.

Funded by: National Landcare Program (NLP) and the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) through the Sydney Metropolitan CMA.
Budget: $110,000
Proponent: OceanWatch Australia
Timeframe: 1 July 2008 – 30 June 2009
Status: Complete
The Water Theme aims to protect water sources from contamination, over extraction and interruption of natural processes. It aims to maintain or improve aquatic riparian, wetland and groundwater ecosystem health to protect biodiversity and support sustainable use of these resources.

Lane Cove Fishway Aids Bass Breeding

Increased numbers of native fish such as Australian Bass can be expected following the opening of a new fishway in Lane Cove National Park that provides improved access to breeding grounds.

This project will protect the long-term survival of native fish species such as Australian bass, allowing them to move upstream and downstream to feed and breed in a river system that runs through the heart of Sydney.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA allocated $150,000 of Australian Government and NSW funds towards the design and installation of this high priority fishway. Key project partners included the NSW Department of Primary Industries through the “Bringing Back the Fish Project”, DECC and the Australian Bass Fishing Club, all working together for the benefit of our waterways.

Fishways provide essential passage around or through weirs and culverts. The type of fishway installed at this site is a “partial width rock-ramp fishway” which is a series of small man-made pools and ridges constructed to the side of the weir. These replicate natural river rapids that allow fish to move around the weir during high tide.

**Total funding amount $132,300 Australian Government funding, $22,750 NSW matching, volunteer $5,830, TOTAL= $160,891**

*Timeframe: 3 September 2007 – 30 April 2009*

*Status: Complete*

Audley Weir Pool and Upper Hacking River Catchment Sediment Study

Sediment accumulation upstream of Audley Weir has significantly reduced the depth of the water column and provided a favourable habitat for the growth of aquatic weeds (eg *Egeria densa*, Ribbon Weed, Parrot’s Feather, and Cumbungi). Upstream landuse activities have caused erosion and released nutrients which have fostered weed growth.

The proliferation of aquatic weeds and continued reduction in water depth has impacted on the recreational amenity and heritage values of Audley Pool, particularly recreational boating. It has also had a negative impact on habitat values of the upper Hacking River.

This study investigated the recreational and environmental impacts of sedimentation of the Hacking River, detailed a site investigation and recommended management options for accumulated sediment in the Audley Weir pool. The study also assessed likely pollution sources in the upper catchment and recommended management works and strategies to make improvements dealing with the problem.
Environmentally Friendly Seawalls

As climate change will lead to rising sea-levels, it is increasingly important that seawalls in urban estuaries can meet the challenge of protecting low-lying infrastructure while maintaining biodiversity and healthy tidal waterways. This is particularly important in Sydney, where seawalls are a dominant feature of the foreshore. Inappropriately built seawalls can mean a dramatic loss of natural habitat, however, there are designs that can mitigate this loss and allow for the enhancement of biodiversity.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA in partnership with DECC’s Coast and Estuaries section have developed guidelines to improve the design and construction of seawalls. The guidelines aim to help councils, other government agencies and private contractors design, build and repair environmentally friendly seawalls. The objectives are to increase opportunities to retain or increase habitat; to soften wave action and to improve water quality. The principles of the new guidelines are:

Principle 1 – maximise the use of native foreshore and estuarine vegetation,
Principle 2 – maximise habitat diversity and complexity, and
Principle 3 – create low-sloping seawalls or include changes in slope.

Two free field trips (16 and 18 June) were conducted for council and agency officers and consultants to showcase environmentally friendly seawalls. Interpretive signage will be installed at four demonstration sites. A brochure was also developed for distribution to foreshore owners to alert them to alternative seawall designs.

High Conservation Value Areas: O’Hares Creek Upland Swamp Rehabilitation

O’Hares Creek Upland Swamps are a magnificent sedgeland and wetlands area that form part of the largest north-south green corridor in the Sydney Metropolitan CMA area, and beyond. This corridor stretches from the Drinking Water catchments of Cataract and Cordeaux to the south, through the Darawal State Conservation Area, heading north onto Heathcote and Royal National Parks, the Military Reserve up to the Georges River at Voyager Point.

More than 500 plant species occur in the reserve and O’Hares Creek catchment is home to 17 species listed as vulnerable, rare or threatened as well as several threatened animals: the Broad-headed Snake, Long-nosed Potoroos and the Green and Golden Bell Frog.

Three studies undertaken by the Sydney Metropolitan CMA (Waterways Health Strategy, Wetlands Prioritisation and the Rapid Fauna Habitat Assessment) have identified O’Hares Creek catchment as an area of very high biodiversity and habitat value. It is also listed on the Directory of Important Wetlands of Australia.

Additionally, under the full catchment prioritisation of waterways, the O’Hares Creek wetlands were identified as a very rare geomorphic type (Channelised fill) which is highly fragile, that is, it is highly susceptible to erosive forces and sediment movement – and therefore the wetlands were identified for highest priority action for works to ensure their stability.

The rehabilitation works targeted the closure and stabilisation of six illegal trails formed by motorised trail bikes and four-wheel drive vehicles. Heavy duty gauge wire and iron girders were used as impenetrable fencing at the boundary of the State Conservation Nature Reserve to prevent illegal access. Soft engineering works were installed at the site of the most impacted sections of the swamps, using coir logs pegged into the eroding area to stabilise them. Other areas
had vegetation matter and rock work placed across/on the trails to prevent access and to assist with stabilising the soil surface. Some 32 hectares of wetland have been reconnected as a result of closure of these illegal trails.

Project delivered by: DECC NPWS
Funding: Caring for our Country
Funding: $101,000 Australian Government funding, $44,100 NSW In-kind/matching
TOTAL = $145,100
Timeframe: 1 February – 30 June 2009
Status: Complete

Improving Estuaries and Coastal Lakes
This project was funded through the Australian Government Caring for Our Country program. The aim was to support Local Government to implement priority natural resource management actions from existing Estuary Management Plans (EMP), in order to improve estuary and coastal resource condition through on-ground works in the Sydney Metropolitan CMA region.

An amount of $183,364 was allocated for on-ground projects in riparian areas adjacent to, or flowing directly into estuaries. Local Councils provided additional cash and in-kind contributions of $136,354. Three key sites within the Sydney Metropolitan CMA area were identified for works.

These included:
- Prince Edward Park Saltmarsh Conservation project (City of Canada Bay)
- Oatley Bay Bank Stabilisation project (Kogarah Council)
- Deep Creek Restoration Project (Warringah Council).

Project sites were identified from actions within Estuary Management Plans, an expression of interest process open to Councils in the Sydney Metropolitan CMA region, and site inspections by Sydney Metropolitan CMA officers.

More than 2,500 plants have been planted, 1,410 square metres of land treated for soil erosion, and 1,600 square metres of weed control measures implemented. Prince Edward Park Saltmarsh Conservation and the Oatley Bay Bank Stabilisation projects were completed in June 2009. Warringah Council’s Deep Creek Restoration Project is due for completion in February 2010.

Funding Source: Caring for Our Country
Total funding amount: $105,400
Timeframe: July 2008 – February 2010
Status: In progress

Mapping Estuarine Vegetation Outside Sydney Harbour
The Sydney Metropolitan CMA allocated Australian Government and NSW funds to this project.

Seagrasses, saltmarsh and mangrove are key estuarine habitats, providing a food source and refuge for many species including fish, invertebrates and migratory birds. They also enhance bed and bank stability for waterways and improve water quality through the filtering of sediments and nutrients. The protection, monitoring and where possible enhancement of these habitats is an important issue for natural resource management. Therefore the Sydney Metropolitan CMA in partnership with Industry and Investment NSW have undertaken a comprehensive mapping program to determine where these habitats occur now and where they have occurred in the past.

This project builds on the estuarine vegetation mapping conducted for Sydney Harbour and tributaries and the estuarine vegetation mapping for Port Hacking undertaken as part of a coastal-wide Marine Habitat Mapping project.

A comprehensive database and maps of the current and historic distribution of estuarine vegetation within the Georges and Cooks Rivers, Botany Bay, Sydney Harbour and the four coastal lagoons within the Sydney Metropolitan CMA area (Narrabeen Lagoon, Dee Why Lagoon, Harbord Lagoon and Manly Lagoon) have been produced from aerial photography, with ground-truthing where appropriate. This provides the Sydney Metropolitan CMA with baseline information on the current distribution but also trend information from historic distribution to determine if and where the area of these habitats is declining.

The GIS layers are available free to local councils and other government departments to assist land and water managers to protect and enhance these important habitats. The information will also be used to compare with other available data to try and determine possible impacts on estuarine vegetation.

Project delivered by: DECC
Funding: Australian Government
Total: $80,000
Timeframe: March 2008 – May 2009
Status: Complete

Marine Habitat Mapping
The NSW Marine Habitat Mapping Project was a regional project between the Coastal CMAs in collaboration with DECCW and the Department of Primary Industries.

Jointly funded by the Australian and NSW Governments, the best available bathymetric and seafloor habitat data has been compiled to create the first marine habitat maps for all NSW State coastal waters. As part of the project DECCW undertook the marine mapping and Department of Primary Industries the estuarine mapping, with a number of external consultants conducting more detailed biodiversity assessments for key faunal and floral groups. A review of underwater volunteer groups in NSW was also undertaken to examine their capacity to collaborate with scientists on future projects.

The aim of the project was to collate all existing NSW information on the spatial distribution of key oceanic and estuarine benthic habitats in NSW, and to conduct targeted mapping and habitat surveys to increase knowledge of the extent, distribution and structure of marine habitats. Habitat mapping was undertaken using acoustic side scan sonar methods, satellite imagery and aerial photography, and habitat surveys were undertaken using digital video and still camera imagery.

Marine and estuarine habitat maps are required by NSW CMAs for sustainable natural resource management by focusing investments on activities such as seagrass friendly moorings, coastal catchment initiatives and habitat protection through community education. Baseline habitat information is also essential for monitoring, evaluation and reporting which measures performance towards natural resource management targets. The mapping work is being coordinated with other current initiatives including the NSW Government’s Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) program.

The final estuarine and offshore maps are produced in a standard GIS format and these will be made available through Google Earth and other websites.

Project delivered by: Department of Environment and Climate Change and Department of Primary Industry
Project Partners: Coastal CMAs
Funding Source: Australian Government
Status: Complete
Marine Pests Education Strategy
Stage 2 - Boating and Recreational Fishing Strategy to Reduce the Spread of Marine Pests

This project was funded by the Australian and NSW Governments, including a Forging Partnerships grant from NSW’s Natural Resources Advisory Council. It involved the implementation of a boating and recreational fishing strategy in the Sydney Metropolitan CMA region based on results from the Marine Pest Risk Assessment (2008) and the Recreational Boat Owner Survey (2008), to help reduce the risk of spreading marine pests.

The project was carried out in partnership with NSW Department of Primary Industries, NSW Maritime, Boating Industry Association of NSW, Boat Owners Association of NSW and Coastcare. It aimed to improve knowledge of the risks and prevention of spreading marine pests, encourage best practice and build capacity of the boating and recreational fishing communities in Sydney, through the development and dissemination of educational material and training.

This included:

- Six workshops for more than 75 participants including Fishcare Volunteers, Towra Green Team Indigenous volunteers, Council Officers, Maritime Boating Safety Officers, and EcoDivers
- Twelve presentations were conducted for more than 250 people from boating, sailing and fishing clubs
- Educational materials:
  - Best practice guideline booklets (30,000 copies produced)
  - Ten translated flyers (Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese and Arabic initially; then Macedonian, Greek, Italian, Croatian, Spanish and Serbian)
  - Bumper stickers
  - Posters
- Booklets, brochures and bumper stickers were distributed in the Sydney Metropolitan CMA area to boating, sailing, fishing and diving clubs, Fishing Licence agents (bait and tackle stores), marinas, NSW DPI and NSW Maritime offices, local councils and other community groups and also handed out at the Rosehill Boat Show and the Sydney International Boat Show.

Project delivered by: Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority
Project Partners: Industry and Investment NSW, NSW Maritime, Boating Industry Association of NSW, Boat Owners Association of NSW and Coastcare
Funding Source: Australian and NSW Governments, Natural Resources Advisory Council
Total: $95,000.
Timeframe: June 2008 – August 2009
Status: Complete

Wetland Management Program - Stage 3 - Prioritisation and Plans of Management

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA Wetlands Program identifies significant wetlands in the Sydney region through a prioritisation technique developed in collaboration with Wetland Care Australia. This prioritisation technique provides a decision support tool for wetland rehabilitation investment across Sydney based on values, such as presence of threatened species or Endangered Ecological Communities, while accounting for threats, such as the level of weed invasion and poor water quality. The process will continue as more information becomes available on Sydney’s wetlands.

The primary activity of Stage 3 was the development or updating of Wetland Plans of Management (PoM) for wetlands in the Sydney region. A Wetland PoM is a document that identifies issues affecting a wetland and outlines how that wetland and surrounding area is intended to be used, improved, maintained and managed in the future. By providing incentive funding to land managers to update or develop PoMs, the level of knowledge of wetlands in the Sydney region, the capacity of landowners to prioritise their own funds into priority actions, and the ability to seek future grant funding will improve.

Plans of management were funded for the following wetlands:
- Park Central (Marsden Park) – Campbelltown Council
- Cabramatta Creek Wetland – Fairfield City Council
- Baludarri Wetland (Pemberton Street) – Parramatta City Council
- Cox’s Creek Reserve Constructed Wetland (Greenacre) – Strathfield Municipal Council
- Marton Park Wetland (Kurnell) – Sutherland Shire Council

This program also contributed to wetland rehabilitation works at Towra Point, Kurnell. It also includes continued investigation into the status of wetlands in Sydney, and improvements to the Geographic Information System data available by reviewing and updating current data to provide a more accurate layer of the location and classification of wetlands in Sydney.

Funding: Australian and NSW Governments
Total funding amount: $230,000
Timeframe: June 2008 – December 2009
Status: In progress
Community

The Community Theme undertakes to support and encourage organisations and communities to increase their capacity to contribute to improved natural resource management practices. Community Support Officers work with Local Government, corporate and community groups, Bushcare and Landcare groups, Indigenous groups and all stakeholders within the catchment engaged in activities designed to deliver improvements in natural resources across Sydney.

Sydney Royal Easter Show Bushcare Stall

For the past six years the Sydney Metropolitan CMA has partnered with Willoughby Council and the VCN to exhibit at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. The Sydney Metropolitan CMA considers this an opportunity to engage with people who may be unfamiliar with the role it holds in natural resource management. With more than three million people in Sydney, the Sydney Metropolitan CMA focuses its limited resources to partner with agencies and groups who are already engaged in natural resource management activities. In 2009 more than 750 people were provided with advice and information about a range of NRM issues. (See figure p.46).

Ethnic Communities Support

A component of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA’s investment in community activities in 2008-2009 included ongoing support for engagement of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities in natural resource management. An external audit of 20 Local Councils was conducted with recommendations regarding their CALD engagement programs. The audit identified that seven councils were implementing policies to engage CALD communities in natural resource management. The on-ground engagement element of this project was focussed on the Duck River sub-catchment in the Auburn and Parramatta council areas. In partnership with the Auburn Community Development Network and council staff, several capacity building and educational events were held to develop community awareness of the value of the local environment.

Some of the outcomes of this project will be carried through in 2009-2010 with the Bilingual River Guides project for which the Sydney Metropolitan CMA received $32,535 from the NSW Environmental Trust in May 2009.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA initiated a CALD-related project in May 2009 funded by the Australian Government’s Community Coastcare Program entitled Community Support for Biodiversity Restoration in the Georges River Catchment. This project will work with Liverpool, Bankstown and Hurstville Councils to build community capacity, with a focus on CALD communities and provide incentive funding for on-ground projects. The project will be completed in October 2010.

Funding for the Ethnic Communities Project was $25,000 from the Australian Government Caring for our Country program and an external contractor was engaged to undertake the project.

Mapping Volunteer Engagement

In 2008-2009 the Sydney Metropolitan CMA continued the previous year’s successful pilot spatial mapping of Bushcare sites managed by councils and other community on-ground projects. The Sydney Metropolitan CMA

Above
The Sydney Royal Easter Show Bushcare Stall provides an opportunity for the Sydney Metropolitan CMA to promote its activities and engage with the community.
collected and collated data from councils and community groups regarding the location and contact details for volunteer work sites. The data was transferred into Google maps. These can downloaded from the website: www.sydney.cma.nsw.gov.au. All on-ground projects in the Parramatta River sub-catchment were mapped. More than 650 sites have now been mapped to people interested in volunteering in Bushcare activities.

Community Support for Professional Networks

As part of their role in increasing community capacity to engage in NRM, Sydney Metropolitan CMA community staff participate in a range of professional networks. The most important of these is the Volunteer Coordinators Network (VCN) which is the forum for agency, council and non-government organisation staff who manage volunteers in on-ground projects. The Sydney Metropolitan CMA coordinated four regional VCN meetings this year and managed all related administrative tasks. Projects such as Bushcare mapping, the Sydney Royal Easter Bushcare stall and Bushcare accredited training are coordinated through the VCN.

In 2008-2009 VCN meetings were hosted by Woollahra, Penrith and Pittwater Councils and by the Sydney Metropolitan CMA at Parramatta. A total of 35 agencies - mostly councils participated. These organisations represent some 8000 volunteers.

The VCN is a significant NRM network in Sydney that undertakes some of the functions of a Landcare Network, having extensive links to community volunteers.

In June 2009 the Sydney Metropolitan CMA Regional Facilitator was invited to present at a Environmental Volunteering Forum jointly hosted by the Department of Premier’s and Cabinet (DPC) and DECCW. The presentation outlined Bushcare volunteering in Sydney and the role of the VCN. Several new enquiries to join the VCN followed this presentation.

Sydney Metropolitan CMA staff participated in two environmental education networks - the Sydney Environmental Education Network and the Western Sydney Environmental Educators Network to help promote the educational targets of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA’s Catchment Action Plan.

A group of council and agency staff also held meetings during 2008-2009 as a Sydney Biodiversity Network to discuss Ibis and Flying Fox management issues. The Sydney Metropolitan CMA maintains contact details for this network.

Funding for a Community Support Officer to assist the VCN and other related tasks was from Catchment Action NSW.

Each year Sydney hosts more than 2.7 million visitors from overseas and 7.5 million overnight visitors from elsewhere in Australia. This is the equivalent of more than one-third of Australia’s population of 21 million spending one night in Sydney each year.

(Sydney Metropolitan CAP, July 2009)

Above
Members of the Pretoria Avenue Bushcare group at Mosman: Angela and Robert Hart and Cherie Romaro. Photo Jamie Slaven.
Sydney Bushcare – a top 25 Ecological Restoration project

In early 2009 the editor of Ecological Management and Restoration academic journal requested the Sydney Metropolitan CMA, as the regional lead organisation, to nominate Sydney’s Bushcare Program as one of Australasia’s top 25 ecological restoration projects to be highlighted on the Global Restoration Network website. Sydney Bushcare was successful in being judged a “top 25” project and the Sydney Metropolitan CMA web page was linked to the website of the SERI Conference.

Communications

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA continued to use a range of means to communicate with the community. Membership of the E-news group Sydney Nature Carers (SNaC) grew and 13 bulletins were published with information about NRM events, grants and opportunities for participation. Four editions of the Mambara newsletter were published with a focus on catchment-wide NRM activities.

A Community Support Officer also provided advice and information in response to volunteer enquiries, including corporate enquiries, schools requiring assistance with Junior Landcare grants and groups eligible for Landcare funding.

Whale Watching at Cape Solander

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA extends three nautical miles off the NSW coast. Funding of $5000 was provided to assist 12 volunteers to record whale sightings during May and July for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. The volunteers contributed 1480 hours and from their base at Cape Solander in Kamay Botany Bay National Park they recorded:

- 1905 Humpback whales
- 3 Southern Right whales
- 3 Minke whales
- 470 dolphins and
- 6 fur seals

Restoring Biodiversity Industry Forum

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA provided $5000 in sponsorship for the Restoring Biodiversity Industry Association Inc (RBIA) in March 2009 and staff participated in the Steering Committee to deliver the first of a series of events for the restoration industry. This partnership is an important one for the Sydney Metropolitan CMA as RBIA represents a broad spectrum of those involved in implementing restoration projects across the catchment area including Council bushland managers, Council bush regeneration supervisors, natural area restoration educators and independent contractors who deliver on-ground works.

Key goals of this industry group are to establish better project management outcomes, consistent monitoring practices and overall improvement in the health of the industry and its on-ground delivery. The first RBIA event, “Contract management: How can we work smarter?” was held in March at Ryde TAFE and attracted more than 70 attendees. Outcomes from this event will inform the content of events planned for 2009-2010.

Sydney Coastal Councils Climate Change Forum Series

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA contributed $6000 to the Sydney Coastal Councils Group to hold two Climate Change forums. Planning and funding for the events was undertaken prior to June 30, and the events were held in August 2009. The events were aimed at addressing climate change issues. One event was aimed at a community audience to present the most up to date climate science and climate scenario information and the second event was aimed at Councillors to present specific Local Government climate adaptation and mitigation case studies.

Topics of Conversation and Brochures Distributed at the Bushcare Stall at Sydney Royal Easter Show 2009

Far left

A display from a humpback whale thrills volunteer watchers at Cape Solander in Botany Bay National Park.

Left

Sydney Metropolitan CMA community support officer Rosanna Luca, with Chris Williams and Local Government and Shires Association project officer, Geoff Hudson at Ryde TAFE in March.
Community

Engaging Aboriginal Communities in Natural Resource Management

In 2008 the Sydney Metropolitan CMA Board established an Aboriginal Advisory Committee (AAC) to advise and assist on engaging with Aboriginal communities within the region.

The first meeting of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA AAC was held in August 2008, with meetings in November, March and June.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA acknowledges the culturally inherent rights of Aboriginal traditional owners-custodians, native title holders, Aboriginal knowledge holders, Aboriginal elders and Aboriginal community members.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA also accepts the significance of Aboriginal boundaries, both traditional and contemporary in catchment management planning, decision-making programs and service delivery.

Through the AAC, the Sydney Metropolitan CMA engages with Aboriginal communities by ensuring Aboriginal people are partners in decision-making on issues relating to managing the Sydney Metropolitan catchment.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA also acknowledges that there are traditional and contemporary Aboriginal cultural heritage values that link to all natural resource management.

Parramatta Park Aboriginal Landscape Trail

An Aboriginal landscape trail is being constructed in Parramatta Park. On-ground work includes weed control and strategic planting of locally extinct or under-represented plant species. This is improving species diversity and is expanding the habitat available to fauna. It also demonstrates sources of raw materials for traditional food collection and processing. Partners are Parramatta Park Trust, Sydney Metropolitan CMA and the Western Sydney Aboriginal Landcare Group.

La Perouse Field Trip

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA funded a field trip for the La Perouse Land Council members to inspect their land at Kurnell Peninsula. For some members it was the first time they had visited this particular block of land.

Cultural Experience Workshop

A Cultural Experience Workshop was hosted by the Guriwal Aboriginal Corporation in May. The day allowed school leavers to have a hands-on experience with Aboriginal Art. Some 32 students from Matraville Sports High School attended as part of their Aboriginal Studies. Also attending was NSW NPWS Officer, Dean Kelly and the Towra Team. In the first session the group made wattleseed scones and bush jams. The second session involved shell work with local elders and recognised shellwork artisans, Marilyn Russell and Esme Timbery. Wood burning was the feature of the afternoon session following a seafood BBQ lunch. The day concluded with a walk on the Bush Tucker Track. The workshop was funded by the Sydney Metropolitan CMA.

Aboriginal Woman’s Mentor Program

The Empowering Aboriginal Woman for Strong Communities and Healthy Country Program established a women’s network to offer training, mentoring, a State conference and support for other programs located across Australia.

Twelve NSW delegates completed the mentoring component of the program and were presented with a “Statement of Attainment in Mentoring” at the State Conference held in Nelson Bay in May, attended by 150 delegates from across NSW.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA delegates, AAC member, Kaye Mundine, and Sydney Metropolitan CMA Indigenous Catchment Officer, Tabatha Timbery-Cann were presented with certificates in “Empowering Aboriginal Woman Strong Communities and Healthy Country –Making it Our Business in NSW”. A presentation by the Sydney Metropolitan CMA included the DVD “Talkin up Urban Landcare” and distribution of “Bushcare with Care” booklets.

Left
Woodburning completed by students from Matraville Sports High School

Centre
Shellwork completed by students from Matraville Sports High School.

Right
Students take part in a woodburning workshop as part of the Kurnell 2020 Guriwal Aboriginal Cultural Day in February.
Land

Many terrestrial and soil-based aspects of land capability including slope, erodibility, acidity and productive capacity were mapped more than a decade ago. The classification of bushfire hazard has been documented for many years. How climate change may increase geomorphic, soil and fire hazards is not yet clear.

The link between soil constraints and urban development has not been communicated and enforced to adequately minimise offsite impacts of development on vulnerable sites. The roles of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA in improving the correlation between land capability and land management decisions include:

- Facilitating the transfer of improved technical knowledge among planners who make decisions about land use
- Coordinating planning responses so that there is a consistent position on key land capability issues across the region
- Supporting research that demonstrates the economic impacts of poor land capability decisions
- Contributing to projects that enhance community capacity to recognise and adapt to land capability issues
- Coordinating regional scale responses and consistency of approach on management issues.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA has identified Management Targets that primarily address improved management of land capability. The cost of ground remediation makes it impractical for the Sydney Metropolitan CMA to allocate its limited funds for these works. Accordingly, the focus is on improved strategic coordination and vigilance in the planning system.

Local Government Engagement and Capacity Building in Regional NRM

This project aimed to build the capacity of Local Government across NSW to plan for and deliver natural resource management outcomes aligned with their local priorities. A priority was achieving consistency with NSW CMA CAPS. The program initially focussed on two levels of engagement of Local Government:

- **Capacity Building Local Government in NRM Across Inland NSW**

  Funded jointly by National Action Plan for Salinity and NHT grants, this project focussed on improving the capability of Local Government Councillors and staff to integrate NRM principles and priorities into strategic and operational plans and activities. Information and awareness programs have been provided for councils across NSW. A two-volume manual has been developed prior to June 30 2009 and workshops were scheduled for delivery in August.

  **Funded by:** Strategic Reserve NAP & NHT
  **Funding:** $250,000
  **Proponent:** Local Government and Shires Association of NSW and Southern Rivers CMA
  **Timeframe:** December 2007 – December 2009
  **Status:** In Progress

*Above*  
The Restoring Biodiversity Industry Forum held at Ryde TAFE in March was hosted by the Sydney Metropolitan CMA. The forum provided an important networking and discussion opportunity for people working in the restoration industry, such as contractors, consultants and Bushcare workers.*
Integration of NRM into Local Government Landuse Planning

Conducted in partnership with the Local Government and Shires Association of NSW and the Southern Rivers CMA, this pilot project involved Councils in the Southern Rivers CMA region. The Councils investigated opportunities for integrating NSW CMA CAP Management Targets into their strategic and operational plans, with specific focus on their Local Environment Plans (LEPs).

Funded by: NAP & NHT
Funding: $400,000
Proponent: Local Government and Shires Association of NSW and Southern Rivers CMA
Timeframe: December 2007 – June 2009
Status: Complete

Erosion and Sediment Control in Bushland Areas

Delivered by the Department of Lands – Soil Conservation Service, this project prioritised locations for biodiversity conservation through the identification and management of actively eroding tracks affecting nearby bushland areas. On-ground work at identified high priority sites promoted and demonstrated best practice management and rehabilitation.

Opportunities were created at each demonstration site for educational and awareness-raising activities such as community workshops, best practice promotional fact sheets/brochures and signage for the sites were also produced.

Priority areas included:
- Tracks and trails in bushfire prone land and areas commonly used by recreational 4WD groups
- Actively eroding tracks upslope of remnant bushland or endangered ecological communities and near watercourses and riparian zones
- Catchments upstream of priority receiving waters
- Unused tracks that have been made redundant or identified to be retired that are in priority bushland areas.

The project partners, Wollondilly Council, Warringah Council and BHP-Billiton completed the rehabilitation of three sites: Wheeler Creek near Cromer, Manly Dam mountain bike track and Appin East Crown Reserve.

Proponent: Department of Lands – Soil Conservation Service
Project Partners: Wollondilly Council, Warringah Council, BHP-Billiton
Funded by: NHT

Funding: $325,000
Status: Complete

Redfern Creek Riparian Zone Rehabilitation and Community Education Project

Delivered by Campbelltown City Council this project involved the rehabilitation of Redfern Creek riparian zone at Clifford Walk and Treelands Walk, Ingleburn. The project had four major components:

- Treatment of Alligator Weed and *Ludwigia* infestations
- An extensive rubbish removal program via Periodic Detention Centre teams, supervised by the Georges Riverkeeper
- Extensive bush regeneration and revegetation works to restore and enhance the existing Shale/sandstone Transition Forest
- Fencing to enhance the success of revegetation and
- Formation of a Redfern Creek Stream Care Group participating in on-ground activities fostering a sense of community ownership.

This project complemented the new pedestrian bridge and walkway adjacent to the creek and the existing weed control program. The control of Alligator Weed and *Ludwigia* and replanting local native vegetation has established a more resilient riparian corridor.

Project Partners: Georges Riverkeeper
Funded by: Sydney Metropolitan CMA
Total funding amount: $85,919
Timeframe: October 2006 – October 2008
Status: Complete

Salinity Mapping for Sydney Metropolitan Area: Phase 2

This project is focussed on updating maps identifying areas affected by potential urban salinity across western Sydney. A system to identify urban salinity was developed and applied to the Sydney Metropolitan CMA area.

The next stage involved the development of frameworks for groundwater flow systems, and the sharing of an understanding of how salinity develops in western Sydney. New saline outbreaks in the Sydney Metropolitan CMA area were identified using the developed methodology for an urbanised environment and the concept models of groundwater flow systems for western Sydney. Two training workshops were hosted for agency and council staff regarding building in a saline environment.

In engaging with its stakeholders the Sydney Metropolitan CMA subscribes to the the view that the strategic importance of improved communication, engagement and collaboration is at least equal to the value of on-ground works.

*(Sydney Metropolitan CAP, July 2009)*
Monitoring and Evaluation Reporting

Over the last two years as part of the NSW NRM Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting Strategy, agency staff working in Theme teams developed draft State of the Catchments Reports for each region across NSW.

Each Theme reflected one of the 13 State NRM targets and teams were composed of staff from relevant agencies. Although CMA staff were not part of the teams there were opportunities for them to have input into the reports. The intention was to provide access to resource condition data and periodic formal reports to inform the policy, investment and best practice management decisions made by Government, agencies, CMAs, Local Governments, Landcare groups, landholders and other natural resource managers across NSW.

Specifically, State of the Catchment Reports aim to:

- Provide a preliminary assessment of the condition of natural resources in each catchment
- Inform investment decisions within and between CMA regions
- Inform other natural resource managers’ investment decisions in each region
- Assess progress towards catchment targets.

Additionally, the system is to make progress towards open-access integrated databases across all resource Theme areas to assist decision-makers make best use of available information as it emerges.

With 13 Themes and 13 CMAs this was a huge project which was limited by the available time and resources. However, it has for the first time in NSW, brought together a wide range of data held in different agencies to develop a State-Pressure-Response model for each region for each State target Theme. This information will also be used to inform the state-wide State of the Environment Report which is produced every three years in NSW. That report is due to be published at the end of 2009 and it is anticipated that the individual State of the Catchments Reports will be finalised after that.

From November 2009 the Sydney Metropolitan CMA will employ a Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Officer. Part of this role will be to develop and implement a formal monitoring, evaluation and reporting strategy. Such a strategy is critical to assess progress and inform management decisions for the Sydney Metropolitan CMA. However, sufficient funds have been found to employ a temporary officer and recruitment has commenced. It is anticipated that an appointment will be made in October 2009.
Looking Ahead

Now that the CAP has been approved as the integrated NRM plan for the region it needs to be promoted to Local Government and agency partners as well as to community groups and other land managers, so that they can become more engaged in delivering the CAP.

As well as the CAP itself it will also be important to publicise the mapping, best practice guidelines and other baseline information developed by the Sydney Metropolitan CMA in recent years so that land managers have the best available data on which to make their decisions. In particular, where councils and agencies are developing integrated planning documents, these may be aligned with the CAP so that a consistent regional approach can be achieved.

The NRC audit in the coming months will provide an independent assessment of the Sydney Metropolitan CMA’s progress towards delivering the CAP. The recommendations from the audit will help the Sydney Metropolitan CMA continue to improve its capabilities. Now that baseline data is available, the Sydney Metropolitan CMA will be continuing to develop its Program Logic to identify the short and medium term actions required to deliver the CAP in conjunction with its partners. The appointment of an Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting officer in the coming year will enable the Sydney Metropolitan CMA to develop a Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting Strategy to clearly enunciate strategic priorities and show how progress is being monitored and evaluated. The Plan will need to address the reporting requirements of both Federal and State Governments.

Australian and NSW Governments are working to resolve arrangements for water management and regulation. NSW also has state-wide targets for water that will be met by water sharing plans, purchasing water and other activities. While these issues are of most concern in rural areas the Greater Metropolitan Water Sharing Plan will be released in the coming months and the Sydney Metropolitan CMA will be working with the Office of Water and both Southern Rivers and Hawkesbury Nepean CMAs to help ensure that the relevant industry and community sectors have an opportunity to understand the Water Sharing Plan. The Sydney Metropolitan CMA will also continue to focus on the impacts of stormwater in the urban context.

Three critical Acts relating to NRM are being reviewed in the 2009 calendar year. The Sydney Metropolitan CMA will contribute submissions towards the reviews of the Catchment Management Authorities Act 2003, the Natural Resources Commission Act 2003 and the Native Vegetation Act 2003.

In urban Sydney, development continues to be a defining characteristic as the region remains subject to intensive and growing urban, industrial, transport and recreational land uses. These place enormous pressure on sensitive natural systems, some of which also bear the long-term effects of poorly controlled historical industrial and urban pollution. Through the CAP the Sydney Metropolitan CMA hopes to highlight the importance of the natural environment for our health and well being so that the community is able to determine how best to balance providing for the increasing population with the preservation of natural assets.

Climate change will also be a significant issue in the coming years as more information becomes available on the likely impacts such as sea level rise, decreased annual rainfall but more intense and frequent storms with greater risks of bushfires. As clear predictions of future impacts can be difficult to determine, it is clear that adaptability will be a critical skill, so that the Sydney Metropolitan CMA and the community more generally can react to the range of possible impacts that could arise.