

Cooks River Sustainability Initiative

The Cooks River Sustainability Initiative is about communities, businesses and councils working together in a new way for long term improvement of the Cooks River catchment



Photo by: John Wright

Project Vision

This project vision will establish the Cooks River Catchment as a leading model of collaborative urban water management. It will show how communities and councils, jointly working in varied and highly urbanised contexts, can improve the quality of their social and water environments. The partner councils are changing the way they operate internally, and with each other to create long-term sustainable water management plans.

Partnership

The Cooks River Sustainability Initiative is a partnership between Ashfield, Bankstown, Canterbury, City of Sydney, Hurstville, Marrickville, Rockdale, Strathfield Councils, the Cooks River Foreshores Working Group and Monash University. It is a two million dollar initiative funded through the NSW Environmental Trust's Urban Sustainability Program, running from 2007 to 2010.

Project deliverables

Project deliverables include:

- ≈ Collaboratively developing a community water vision, subcatchment management plan (action plan and master plan) for each of six subcatchments;
- ≈ Investigating a new model for administering regional-scale water planning and management in the catchment;
- ≈ Improving the ability of each council to deliver integrated urban water management.

The initiative also has some funding for on-ground works in each subcatchment.



The six subcatchments are:

1. Munnii Street in the City of Sydney Council
2. EC1 East in Marrickville Council
3. Rookwood Road in Bankstown Council
4. Strathfield South in Strathfield Council
5. Ashbury in both Ashfield & Canterbury Councils
6. Upper Wolli Creek in Canterbury, Hurstville & Rockdale Councils

eight councils with one vision for a healthy cooks river

Why is this Initiative unique?

It will take a new approach to improving the long-term health of the Cooks River by:

- ≈ Working in partnership with local people to ensure catchment management solutions reflect real situations and represent local ideas, knowledge and values;
- ≈ Taking a multidisciplinary approach to urban water management, involving social scientists, ecologists and engineers;
- ≈ Planning at a subcatchment scale and undertaking detailed social, physical and organisational profiling to ensure that the solutions and strategies developed are right for the subcatchment and its community.

Role of the CRSI team

Working closely with key council staff and communities members of the team will develop the social, physical and organisational profile of each subcatchment.

Key milestones include the:

- ≈ Distribution of a Community Water Survey to develop the social profile by gauging knowledge and attitudes towards water management and the local environment, the survey will also assist in the planning of community forums where council and the community collaborate to develop the subcatchment management plan;
- ≈ Development of the water-budget for each subcatchment – this is created from the physical profile and outlines where water comes from, how water is used and where it is disposed;
- ≈ Investigation of a regional administration model for the Cooks River Catchment; and
- ≈ Investigation of external funding for on-ground works.

Role of Partner Councils

Council staff will assist the Cooks River Sustainability Initiative team in achieving the project deliverables by actively participating in working groups and committees and providing expert advice and local knowledge. Each council will be involved in the planning of community forums for their subcatchments, and assist in promoting the project and its outcomes.

Contact the team

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cooks river sustainability initiative