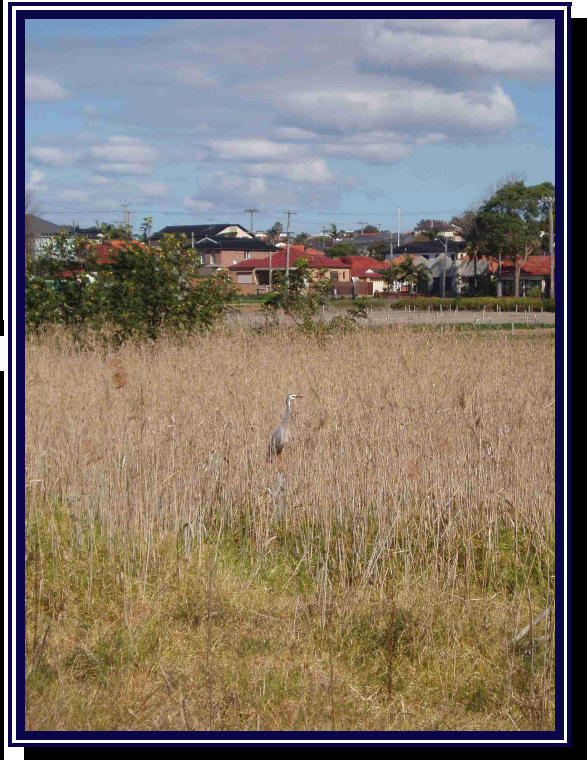




COOKS RIVER
FORESHORES
Working Group



Cooks River Foreshores Working Group

Annual Report 2008/09

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Abbreviations used in this report

BBCCI	Botany Bay Coastal Catchments Initiative
CMA	Catchment Management Authority
CREW	Cooks River Enviro Workers
CRVA	Cooks River Valley Association
CRFIP	Cooks River Foreshore Improvement Program
CRFWG	Cooks River Foreshores Working Group
DECC	NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change
DCP	Development Control Plan
DOP	NSW Department of Planning
DPI	NSW Department of Primary Industries
GRCCC	Georges River Combined Councils Committee
LEP	Local Environment Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
MGP	Metropolitan Greenspace Program
NRM	Natural Resource Management
RTA	NSW Roads and Traffic Authority
SMCMA	Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority
UNSW	University of New South Wales
UTS	University of Technology, Sydney
WCPS	Wolli Creek Preservation Society

Cover photos:

*Green and Gold Bell Frog, sighted in Strathfield South.
Photo: Jenny Maddocks.*

*Riverlife Tour participant admiring the new interpretive sign at Gough Whitlam Park.
Photo: Judy Pincus*

White-faced Heron foraging in the phragmites at Landing Lights Wetlands.

This and all previous CRFWG Annual Reports are available from the CRFWG page on the 'Cooknet' website at <http://www.canterbury.nsw.gov.au/cooknet.htm>

About this report

Improving and managing the health and amenity of the Cooks River, its foreshores and catchment requires the cooperation and collaboration of a multitude of stakeholders.

The Cooks River Foreshores Working Group (CRFWG) aims to provide the structure, focus and coordination needed to facilitate and support this cooperation and collaboration.

This Annual Report presents an overview of our work during FY2008/09, including:

- Activities and operations of the CRFWG to provide this structure, focus and coordination, and
- Outcomes achieved through the efforts of the CRFWG and its' member and participating organisations.



Our vision for the Cooks River

The Cooks River will be a vital and dynamic river system, representing, in all its dimensions, a healthy natural environment within its urban landscape.

The river and its foreshores will provide a rich recreational resource valued by both the local and wider community, catering for all interests from walkers to cyclists, sports groups to picnickers and anglers to boat users.

As a generous river corridor, the foreshores will create an ideal opportunity to restore and conserve a range of native plant communities and wildlife habitats, establishing a link from the River's beginning in Bankstown to its issue into Botany Bay.

The river and its catchment will be managed to assist the natural recovery of water quality, aquatic life and riverbed profile, enhanced by riverbanks that reflect a more natural character.

In all of its dimensions, the long Aboriginal and European history of the river will be recognised through informative, educational and artistic programmes and features along the river's length, bringing to the community that shares and enjoys its many attractions a sense of pride in helping to secure a sound future for this valuable city landscape.

From the Cooks River Foreshores Strategic Plan

Cooks River

Our purpose

The Cooks River Foreshores Working Group (CRFWG) is a voluntary association of councils in the Cooks River Catchment who are working together with state government agencies and the local community to improve the health and amenity of the Cooks River, its foreshores and catchment environment.

Guided by the vision, objectives and strategies of the ***Cooks River Foreshores Strategic Plan*** (Clouston, 1997), the CRFWG facilitates and supports regional collaboration by key stakeholders to establish a more strategic and integrated approach to the management of the River.

The CRFWG provides a forum for catchment councils and state government agencies responsible for managing the Cooks River, its foreshores and catchment to come together to:

- Exchange information and discuss issues and ideas;
- Develop partnerships to address common issues and achieve common objectives;
- Develop joint applications for funding;
- Develop joint submissions advocating desired Cooks River and foreshore outcomes;
- Publicise and promote the Cooks River and the CRFWG to build support for ongoing improvement initiatives; and
- Encourage and promote research in the Cooks River catchment.

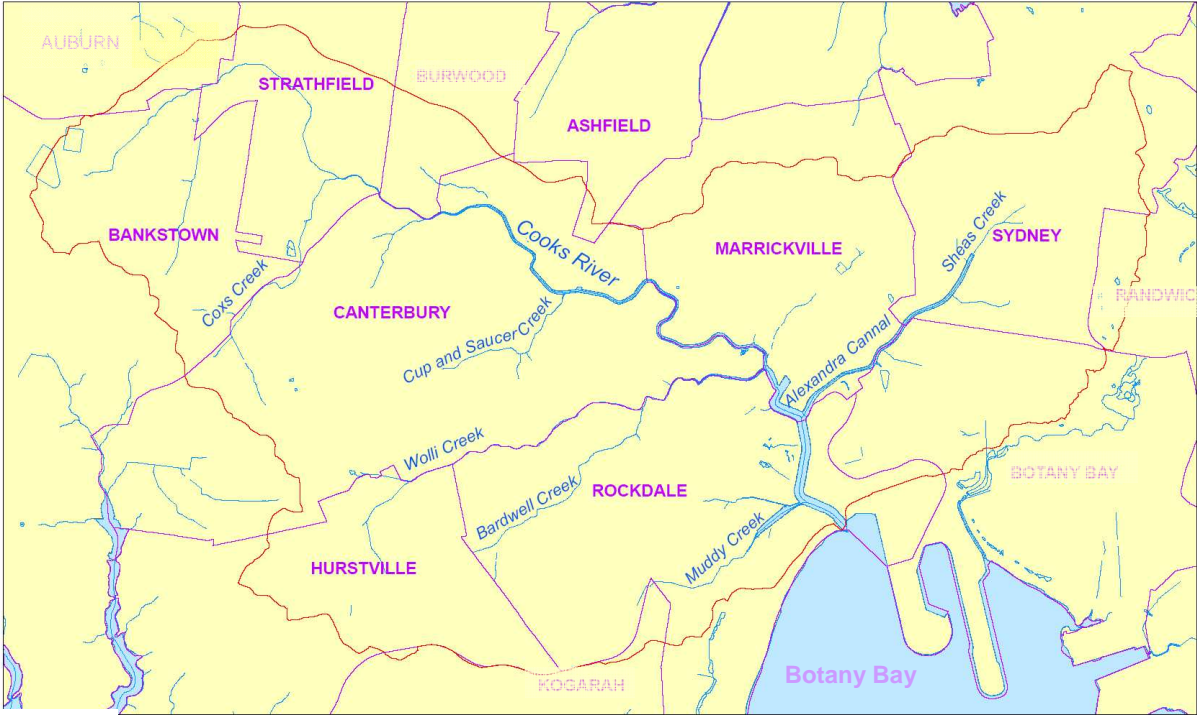
The CRFWG aims to address the full range of issues relevant to river and catchment management, including water quality and riverbank management; biodiversity conservation and restoration; access and recreation; interpretation, promotion and education; cultural heritage and landscape character; community engagement, and the planning and administration needed to move from strategies on paper to actions on the ground.

Through regional collaboration, the CRFWG seeks to ensure coordination of efforts, professional management, optimal use of resources and greater impact on governmental policies and decisions affecting the River than could be achieved by each partner working separately.

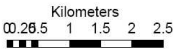
The CRFWG plays a pivotal role in driving Cooks River improvement. Its efforts and initiative have helped to attract significant council, State and Federal investment and have contributed resources and momentum to the many local community initiatives flourishing around the catchment.

Map of the Cooks River Catchment

This map shows the boundaries of the Catchment and the Local Government Areas within it. CRFWG member councils' names are highlighted.



COOKS RIVER CATCHMENT



Legend

- Cooks River Catchment Boundary
- Local Government Boundaries
- Drainage Lines

Aerial Photo: Sinclair Knight Merz Pty Ltd, January 2005

Source: SMCMA (2008)

Achievement highlights - 2008/09

Progress on regional projects



The **Cooks River Sustainability Initiative (CRSI)** has been helping the eight CRFWG member councils and their communities to improve the health of the Cooks River and conserve water resources by through an innovative and collaborative approach to managing water in highly urbanised catchments.

During 2008/09, this three-year, \$2 million project has:

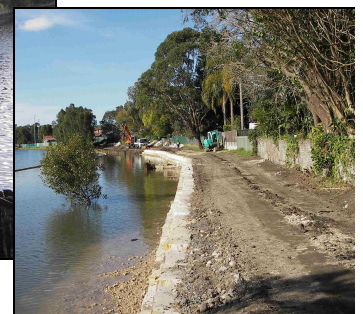
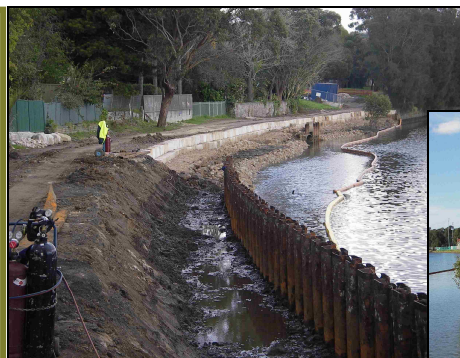
- ✓ Enabled communities to understand their local context and identify solutions appropriate to their local area by compiling physical and social data for five sub-catchments of the Cooks River Catchment into easy-to-understand information booklets;
- ✓ Brought local residents, businesses and council staff together for visioning and planning forums to set goals and identify on-ground works (eg, rainwater harvesting, bio-filtration) and non-structural actions for improving water management within their sub-catchment;
- ✓ Begun feasibility assessments for specific on-ground works identified through the collaborative planning process; and
- ✓ Developed a rigorous research methodology for assessing the organisational capacity of each partner council to implement sustainable urban water management within its LGA.



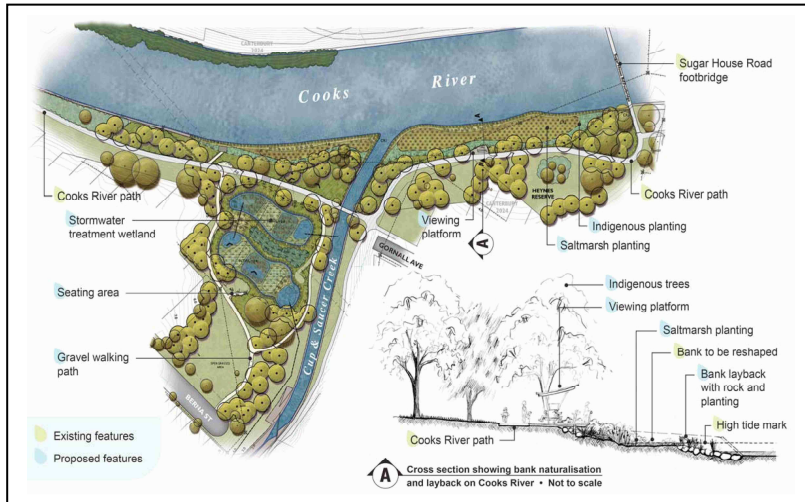
A contractor has been selected to fabricate and install the new regional family of **Cooks River Pathwayfinding and river identification signs** developed through the Cooks River Path Signage Project. The signs will be located along the foreshore and linking paths in Strathfield, Burwood, Canterbury, Marrickville and Rockdale LGAs. Implementation will begin in 2009/10.

The federally funded **Botany Bay Coastal Catchments Initiative**, managed by Sydney Metropolitan CMA, has developed crucial scientific and planning resources to will guide decisions regarding priorities and future investment to improve water quality in the Cooks and Georges Rivers and Botany Bay.

DECC completed Phase One of the **Steel Sheet Piling Removal and Remediation Project**, replacing failing and deteriorating steel sheet piling revetment with large sandstone blocks and plantings of native vegetation along approximately 800m of riverbank in Canterbury. Realising a State Government commitment from 2003, the new works provide a more natural riverbank profile and reinstate riparian ecological values and function while ensuring bank stability.



Before and after removing steel sheet pilings at Earlwood, opposite Ewen Park, 2008. Photos by Judy Pincus.



Sydney Water's **Cooks River Bank Naturalisation Project** identified opportunities for naturalising riverbanks and creating wetlands along the Cooks River from Strathfield to the Alexandra Canal. Concept designs for naturalising three badly deteriorating sections of the concrete channel were completed and have been approved to proceed to detailed design.

Concept drawings prepared for Sydney Water for Cooks River bank naturalisation at the confluence of Cup and Saucer Creek, Campsie, including an offline freshwater wetland in Heynes Reserve.

o riverscience
cooks river ecological monitoring program

The **Riverscience Cooks River Ecological Monitoring Program** completed a third round of annual monitoring to assess and benchmark the health of the Cooks River Estuary and applied for grant funding to undertake new sediment monitoring, to increase our knowledge of the presence and behaviour of heavy metals and pollutants in river sediments.

GPT being installed at Coolabah Reserve in the Bardwell Valley to treat stormwater flowing from the local area into Bardwell Creek. Source: Rockdale Council, 2009

On 3 October, 2008, the Federal Government announced \$2 million in new funding to improve water quality and increase biodiversity in the catchment. The **Cooks River Urban Water Initiative (CRUWI)** will install gross pollutant traps (GPT), construct wetlands and bio-filtration systems and undertake restoration, weed control, habitat enhancement and other works in several LGAs across the catchment.

CRUWI will help fund the construction of an offline wetland proposed for Heynes Reserve, Campsie. The wetland will filter water from Cup and Saucer Creek and increase biodiversity in the area.



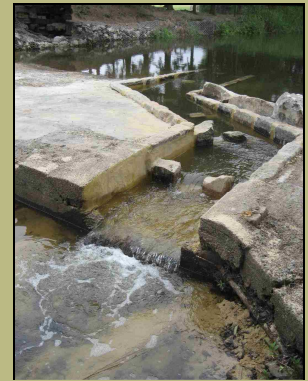
A **Cooks River Estuarine Vegetation Management Plan** is nearing completion under a joint project by Rockdale, Canterbury and Marrickville Councils. The plan recommends management strategies and prioritises areas for rehabilitation and protection of saltmarsh, mangroves and other aquatic and riparian vegetation in the Cooks River Estuary.

On-ground outcomes

- ✓ The **CREW (Cooks River Enviro Workers) Project** removed a further 35.7 tonnes of litter, dumped and organic materials, and more than 270 sharps from the River and foreshores. The six partner councils signed a Memorandum of Understanding extending this popular program for an additional three years.
- ✓ The foreshore councils constructed or upgraded 2,780m of **pedestrian and cycle path** along the River and completed two new on-road cycleways, providing safer access to and along the Cooks River Path.
- ✓ Strathfield Council completed the last major stage of its **Cooks River Restoration Project in Freshwater Park**. Minor rock work and initial weeding and planting were undertaken to stabilise and revitalize a 400m section of the River.

Every season, native fish need to move between salt and freshwater to complete their life cycle. They are now able to move freely between the transitional sections of Wollie Creek, thanks to the completion of the **Turrella Weir Fishway**.

Turrella Weir Fishway,
2009



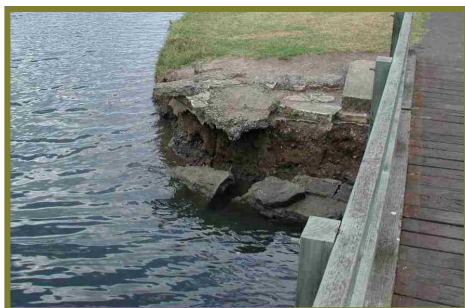
New grants / awards

- ✓ Strathfield Council won the Stormwater and Urban Waterways Award (Division B) at the Local Government and Shires Association Excellence in the Environment Awards in November 2008, for its **Cooks River Restoration Project in Freshwater Park**.
- ✓ The **Riverworks Cooks River Sculpture Competition** won the Environmental Education Award at the Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Cities Awards in August 2008.
- ✓ The Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority awarded the **CRFWG** \$30,000 towards operational expenses for FY2009/10.
- ✓ Rockdale Council was awarded a \$30,000 grant under the DECCW Estuary Management Program for the **rehabilitation of Bardwell Creek through Coolabah Reserve**.

Riverbank restoration projects completed at Gough Whitlam Park and Tempe Reserve were featured as models of best practice in an Environmentally Friendly Seawalls Field Day organised by SMCMA and DECC in June 2009.

Joint applications for funding

The CRFWG facilitated project planning and preparation of a joint application by the eight CRFWG-member councils for \$1.75 million under the Australian Government's 'Caring for Our Country' grants program, to improve water quality in the Cooks River by implementing on-ground works identified through the Cooks River Sustainability Initiative, and increase council and community engagement, capacity and commitment to work collaboratively to improve the Cooks River and its catchment environment. (Unsuccessful, but we plan to reapply next year with greater hope for success.)



Before (left) and after photos of the bank restoration project at Gough Whitlam Park, completed in Spring, 2008.
Source: Judy Pincus



Looking ahead

During 2009/10 the CRFWG is planning to:

- Work with the councils, the SMCMA and DECCW to develop and implement a coordinated catchment-wide monitoring framework for the Cooks River Catchment to support informed decision-making for better management of the River and catchment;
- Redevelop the Cooknet website (<http://www.canterbury.nsw.gov.au/cooknet.htm>) to create a new and improved CRFWG - Cooks River website;
- Reactivate and strengthen the Riverlife Interpretive Tour Program;
- Assist member councils to implement the new regional family of wayfinding and river identification signage developed through the Cooks River Path Signage Project;
- Provide coordination to foster regional consistency and collaboration between councils in their efforts to improve pedestrian and cyclist access and safety along the Cooks River Path based on the Cooks River Pedestrian and Cycle Path Pathway Development Strategy (CRFWG 2006);
- Continue to progress the Our River - Cooks River Sustainability Initiative and seek further funding to implement on-ground works identified through the project to improve water quality and biodiversity;
- Continue to remove rubbish and debris from the River and foreshores through the CREW project;
- Finalise and facilitate implementation of the Cooks River Estuarine Vegetation Management Guidelines.

CRFWG activities

providing coordination and fostering collaboration...

Bringing stakeholders together for regular face-to-face meetings

CRFWG members and participating organisations meet regularly through the year to share information and ideas and plan and manage solutions to priority issues. In 2008/09, CRFWG meetings were held quarterly, with the locations rotating between member councils, as follows:

Date	Host
11 September 2008	Strathfield Council
19 November 2008 (councils only)	City of Canterbury
11 February 2009	City of Canterbury
20 May 2009	Rockdale City Council

Informing and educating members and partners

- ✓ Presentation about Sydney Water's Cooks River Bank Naturalisation Project to Strathfield Council's Integrated Water Management Group – CRFWG Coordinator (August '08)
- ✓ Presentation on the 'Findings and Outputs of the Botany Bay Coastal Catchments Initiative' to the full CRFWG - John Dahlenburg, SMCMA (September '08)
- ✓ Presentation and workshop for council and agency staff to promote and encourage implementation of the Cooks River Integrated Interpretation Strategy – CRFWG Coordinator and Site Specific Pty Ltd (March '09)
- ✓ Presentation on Bankstown City Council's Stormwater Levy Program to the full CRFWG - Mildred Jarvinen, Stormwater Audit Officer, Bankstown City Council (May '09)
- ✓ Meetings with the General Managers of the six CREW project partner councils to increase their knowledge about CREW and other CRFWG initiatives and achievements – CRFWG Coordinator and each council's CRFWG representative. (December '08 – March '09)
- ✓ Advised Strathfield Council's Economic Development officer regarding integrating Cooks River objectives into Council's Draft Economic Development Plan – CRFWG Coordinator (January '09)

Supporting regional initiatives by our partners

CRFWG meetings provide a convenient forum for our participating organisations to communicate directly and efficiently with the Cooks River Catchment councils about current and planned regional projects and activities. The CRFWG Coordinator also represents the CRFWG on all major partner-led regional project committees relevant to the River. Current partner-led regional initiatives in which the CRFWG is actively involved include:

- Botany Bay Coastal Catchments Initiative Reference Committee (SMCMA)
- Cooks River Bank Naturalisation Project Working Group (Sydney Water)
- Cooks River Urban Water Initiative Reference Group (SMCMA)
- Steel Sheet Piling Removal and Remediation Project Stakeholder Reference Committee (DECC)

The Coordinator and a number of CRFWG council representatives also participated in stakeholder and design workshops held by Sydney Water for its Cooks River Bank Naturalisation Project (July and November 2008).

The CRFWG supported the SMCMA's application for funding under the Australian Government's 'Caring for Our Country' program to:

- Develop a Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) for Botany Bay and its Catchment,
- Develop a Decision Support System for Botany Bay and its Catchment,
- Implement real-time water quality monitoring network for the Georges, Cooks and Botany Bay, and
- Implement a devolved grants program for water quality improvement devices in the Botany Bay Catchment.

The CRFWG Coordinator maintains ongoing liaison with the Executive Officer of the Georges River Combined Councils Committee and the Coordinator of the Parramatta River Catchment Group, to facilitate sharing of information, advice and resources between these three main catchment groups in the Sydney region. The overlapping membership of the three groups, along with the overarching oversight provided by the SMCMA, also helps ensure that the activities of the three catchment groups are complementary and that learnings and resources are shared across the region.

Facilitate development of joint project proposals and funding applications

In December 2008, the Australian Government identified Botany Bay and its catchment, which includes the Cooks and Georges Rivers catchments, as a 'priority coastal hotspot' for its Caring for Our Country 2009 grants program. In doing so, the Government's aim is to improve water quality and address threats affecting the environmental values of the Bay and its catchment, including the internationally important Ramsar-listed wetlands at Towra Point, in the southeast corner of the Bay.

Following this announcement, the CRFWG Coordinator convened a meeting of government and community stakeholders from the Cooks River, Georges River and Botany Bay catchments, to explore project ideas and opportunities for collaboration, including a possible joint regional submission. The session was attended by officers from the CRFWG Councils, Sydney Metropolitan CMA, the Cooks River Sustainability Initiative, the Mid-Georges River Sustainability Initiative, Sydney Water, the Australian Government and the Wollie Creek Preservation Society, and spurred everyone to early action in developing proposals.

The Coordinator then facilitated the preparation of a joint application by all eight CRFWG-member councils for \$1.75 million over two years, to implement on-ground water quality improvement works identified through the Cooks River Sustainability Initiative that would reduce pollutant loads entering the Cooks River via urban stormwater run-off. The project also aims to increase community engagement and build council and community skills, knowledge, capacity and commitment to work collaboratively to improve the Cooks River and its catchment environment. Submitted by the City of Canterbury on behalf of all the partners in March 2009, the proposal involves a partnership of the councils and their communities, the CRFWG and leading research institutions.

This application was unsuccessful in this first round, but we anticipate future success following completion of a Botany Bay Water Quality Improvement Plan by the SMCMA, which was the primary object of funding in the first round.

Strategic planning / organisational development

- ✓ Project reporting template – completed Aug 2008
- ✓ CRFWG Communications Strategy – completed September 2008
- ✓ Internal review of progress towards achieving the objectives and strategies of the Cooks River Foreshores Strategic Plan – initiated February 2009
- ✓ CRFWG Statement of Purpose & Operations – updated May 2009
- ✓ Review of Cooks River Catchment governance arrangements – begun through the CRSI project

The CRFWG Branding and Acknowledgment Guidelines set out requirements for the appropriate use of CRFWG, Cooks River and Riverlife logos, and the wording of CRFWG acknowledgments for all communications released by or for the CRFWG or its affiliated projects.

The purpose of these Guidelines is:

- To give a consistent and professional look to CRFWG and CRFWG-affiliated communications;
- To promote awareness of the CRFWG and its contribution, and
- To raise the profile and image of the Cooks River.

Please contact the CRFWG Coordinator for advice and approval before using any of these logos.



Seminar / workshop / field trip attendance

- ✓ Aquatic Habitat Field Trip (SMCMA) – July 2008
- ✓ Biodiversity Seminar for Local Government (DECC) – August 2008
- ✓ DEWHA Better Water Workshop – September 2008
- ✓ Caring for Our Country Grants Program Information Session – December 2008
- ✓ Environmentally Friendly Seawalls Field Day (DECC) – June 2009

Community liaison and partnership building

- ✓ The CRFWG and a number of its regional projects (Riverscience, Cooks River Sustainability Initiative, Cooks River Path Signage Project, CREW, etc) featured in displays and presentations delivered by the CRFWG Coordinator, consultants and member council officers at the Cooks River Valley Association's fifth annual Cooks River Forum, held in November 2009. The Forum provided a valuable opportunity for the CRFWG to engage with the community about current activities and initiatives.
- ✓ The Coordinator and member council representatives provided information and maintained ongoing liaison with Cooks River-oriented community groups, including:
 - Wolli Creek Preservation Society
 - The Mudcrabs – Eco-Volunteers
 - Cooks River Valley Association
 - Friends of Ewen Park
 - South West Enviro Centre
 - Bardwell Valley Bushcare Group
 - Cooks River to Iron Cove Greenway Project
- ✓ Member councils provided financial and in-kind support for many community initiatives, including bush regeneration and revegetation projects, litter removal, water quality monitoring, etc.
- ✓ Project reports, research findings and other information and resources were made available to the public via the Cooknet website.
- ✓ A variety of information was provided to community groups, residents, students, government agencies and media representatives in response to specific enquiries, eg, relating to pollution incidents, a pelican sickness incident (resulting from the ingestion of naturally occurring botulism), school assignments, university research projects, media articles, etc.
- ✓ The Coordinator and a representative from the City of Canterbury spoke to environmental planning and management post-graduate students from the University of Wollongong about urban river management and restoration issues and showed them bank restoration works recently completed at Gough Whitlam Park as part of a course field trip. (May 2009)
- ✓ The Coordinator met with representatives of the SMCMA and the Wolli Creek Preservation Society to consider options for funding ongoing Wolli Creek riparian restoration work (May 2009).
- ✓ Member council officers and the Coordinator attended the DVD Launch - "Walking Together, Working with Nature – An Environmental and Cultural Partnership along the Cooks River," at the al-Ghazzali Centre for Islamic Sciences and Human Development, Roselands – July 2008.



Peace flags painted at the Ewen Park Community Picnic, drying in the lovely spring breeze on International Peace Day,

how we do it... (operations)

Membership

Core Members consist of councils contributing financially towards the coordination and operating costs of the CRFWG and participating actively in the group, eg, through regular attendance at CRFWG meetings and participation in regional projects.

Participating Organisations include non-member councils and State Government agencies that participate actively through attending regular meetings and providing technical support, information and advice as needed.

Corresponding Organisations include other State Government agencies and NGOs that are kept informed of CRFWG activities and provide technical support, information and advice on request.

In-kind support

The following are examples of the kinds of valuable in-kind advice and assistance provided by our member and partner organisations:

- Sydney Water's Stakeholder & Community Relations Section provided advice for the planned redevelopment of the Cooknet website (October '08).
- Strathfield Council's Communications team provided advice to assist with the development of the 'CRFWG Branding and Acknowledgment Guidelines' and the 'CRFWG Communications Strategy'.

Financial support

Funding for coordination and operations of the CRFWG is derived from annual member contributions and occasional contributions from participating State Government agencies. Member councils' contributions are calculated on the basis of an in-principle sharing of costs in proportion to the share of catchment area within each LGA.

In FY2008/09, member council contributions increased by 26% to \$58,308. They are set to increase a further 51% in 2009/10, to \$87,982, at which point full-time coordination of the CRFWG will be fully funded by the councils for the first time in the Group's history. The CRFWG has been moving incrementally towards achieving this goal (fully funding administration and overheads solely through member council contributions) since 2005, to secure a stable ongoing source of funding for coordination and ensure local government control of its activities.

The Sydney Metropolitan CMA contributed \$30,000 to support CRFWG coordination and operations in 2008/09, and has committed another \$30,000 for 2009/10. Sydney Water contributed \$5,000 in 2008/09.

Financial and in-kind contributions and commitments towards CRFWG coordination and operations in FY2008/09 and FY2009/10 are shown in the tables below.

CRFWG operational income

Overview

Source	2008/09 (actual)	2009/10 (committed)	% increase / decrease over previous yr
Councils	\$ 58,308	\$ 87,982	↑ 50.9 %
State Government	\$ 35,000	\$ 30,000	↓ 14.3 %
Total	\$ 93,308	\$ 117,982	↑ 26.4 %

Breakdown by contributor

Contributor	% of catchment area in LGA	Cash contribution 2008/09	Cash committed 2009/10	In-kind contribution
Full-fee Members				
City of Canterbury	23.7%	\$15,405	\$24,727	Staff time & meeting support
Rockdale City Council	19.9%	16,000	20,762	Staff time & meeting support
Marrickville Council	11.9%	7,668	12,415	Staff time & meeting support. Admin & staff support
City of Sydney	10.0%	6,500	10,433	Staff time & meeting support
Bankstown City Council	8.9%	5,735	9,655	Staff time & meeting support
Strathfield Municipal Council	6.7%	5,000	6,990	Staff time & meeting support. Hosting of Coordinator
Ashfield Council	0.5%	1,000	1,000	Staff time & meeting support
Subtotal – Members	81.6%	\$57,308	\$85,982	
Participating Councils				
Hurstville City Council	9.1%	1,000	2,000	Staff time & meeting support
Kogarah Council	0.6%	0	0	Staff time & meeting support
Subtotal - Participating Councils	9.7%	\$1,000	\$2,000	
Total - Councils	91.3%	\$58,308	\$87,982	
External Sources				
Sydney Metropolitan CMA		30,000	30,000	Staff time & meeting support
Sydney Water		5,000	0	Staff time & meeting support
RailCorp		0	0	Staff time & meeting support
DECC		0	0	Staff time & meeting support
Subtotal - External Sources		\$35,000	\$30,000	
TOTAL FUNDING		\$93,308	\$117,982	

Staff and administration

The CRFWG employs one full-time Coordinator to coordinate, facilitate and implement many of its activities. The current Coordinator, Judy Pincus, has served the Group since 2000.

Marrickville Council continued to administer and provide managerial support for the employment of the CRFWG Coordinator during the year. Strathfield Council continued to host the position at its offices.

In May 2009, the CRFWG approved the allocation of one-off surplus funds that became available, to employ a part-time temporary project officer in FY2009/10 to assist the Coordinator to reactivate the Riverlife Tour Program and develop a CRFWG/ Cooks River website and other educational, interpretive and promotional resources. Recruitment of the new officer will begin early in FY2009/10.

Regional project management

Regional projects are managed and administered by an officer from one of the project partners, under the direction and guidance of a CRFWG-appointed steering committee comprised of representatives from the project partners' organisations.

The CRFWG Coordinator managed two regional projects during the period covered by this report:

- Cooks River Enviro Workers (CREW); and
- Cooks River Path Signage Project.

The City of Canterbury and Strathfield Councils provided assistance with the financial administration of CREW and the signage project.

Committees

CRFWG committees that were active during FY2008/09 are shown in the table below:

Committee	Current Membership
Cooks River Path Signage Project Steering Committee	Canterbury, Marrickville, Rockdale, Strathfield, Burwood, CRFWG Coordinator
Riverscience Project Steering Committee	Rockdale, Canterbury, Marrickville
Estuarine Vegetation Management Plan Project Steering Committee	Canterbury, Marrickville, Rockdale
Cooks River Sustainability Initiative Steering Committee	Ashfield, Bankstown, City of Canterbury, City of Sydney, Hurstville, Marrickville, Rockdale, Strathfield, CRFWG Coordinator
CRFWG Management Team	Canterbury, Marrickville, Strathfield, CRFWG Coordinator

Regional projects

The following are collaborative regional projects active during FY2008/09, that were initiated or run by the CRFWG or its member councils, or were partner-led projects in which the CRFWG was actively involved.

Unless otherwise stated, funding figures represent the cumulative amount (excluding GST) expended on and/or committed to the project to 30th June 2009. The figures provided are based on the best information available at the time of printing.

Our River - Cooks River Sustainability Initiative (CRSI)

June 2007 - (September 2010)

Project Description

The largest and most ambitious initiative by the CRFWG to date, the OurRiver – Cooks River Sustainability Initiative (CRSI) is helping eight catchment councils and their communities improve the health of the Cooks River and conserve water resources by involving them in an innovative and collaborative approach to managing water sustainably in highly urbanised catchments.

This is being achieved through:

- Applying a proven locally-based, multi-disciplinary, participatory approach to integrated, sustainable water and stormwater management in six diverse sub-catchments, across eight LGAs within the Cooks River catchment; and
- Engaging with catchment stakeholders to establish new Cooks River Catchment governance arrangements.

The CRSI approach will establish the Cooks River Catchment as a leading model of collaborative urban water management. It is based on the innovative model for urban stormwater management developed by



Local residents visit a sustainable back yard during an OurRiver Water Wise Tour in November 2009.

Marrickville Council and Monash University through Marrickville's award-winning Urban Stormwater Integrated Management (USWIM) Project.

Status

During 2008/09, OurRiver:

- Employed a new Project Manager (August 2009) following resignation of previous Project Manager (January 2008);
- Completed community awareness, water use and attitudinal surveys for all six sub-catchment communities;
- Compiled physical and social data for five sub-catchments into easy-to-understand information booklets to help communities understand their local context and identify solutions appropriate to their local area;
- Brought together local residents, businesses and council staff for visioning and planning forums in five of the six sub-catchments, to set goals and identify on-ground works (eg, rainwater harvesting, bio-filtration) and non-structural actions for improving water management and water quality within their sub-catchment;
- Began to assess the feasibility of on-ground works identified through this collaborative planning process;
- Developed a rigorous research methodology for assessing the organizational capacity of each partner council to implement sustainable urban water management within its LGA, with assistance from a PhD student from Monash University's National Urban Water Governance Program;
- Convened regular Steering, Executive Champions, Communications, Applied Research meetings;
- Continued to build partner and stakeholder capacity and forge through presentations, meetings and trainings; and
- Assisted the CRFWG Coordinator with the preparation of a joint application by the

partner councils for \$1.75 million, under the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country Program to implement on-ground works identified through the CRSI planning process.

Partners

- Marrickville Council (Grant administration; project staff employment)
- Strathfield Council (hosting project staff)
- Ashfield, Bankstown, City of Canterbury, City of Sydney, Hurstville and Rockdale Councils
- CRFWG
- A/Professor Rebekah Brown, Program Leader; National Urban Water Governance Program; School of Geography and Environmental Science, Monash University
- Other stakeholders, eg, community groups, residents, businesses, State agencies and other land managers in the sub-catchments

Funding

- DECC, Environmental Trust, Urban Sustainability Program: \$2 million (over three years, 2007 – 2010)
- Ashfield, Bankstown, City of Canterbury, City of Sydney, Hurstville, Marrickville, Rockdale and Strathfield Councils: in-kind

Development of a Cooks River Estuarine Vegetation Management Plan

2007 – (October 2009)

Project Description

The aim of this project is to provide councils and other land managers with best practice guidelines for the management and rehabilitation of indigenous vegetation communities in the Cooks River Estuary, through the development of a Cooks River Estuarine Vegetation Management Plan. The plan will document current activities, recommend

management strategies and prioritise areas for the rehabilitation and management of saltmarsh, mangroves and other estuarine vegetation communities, to help link remnant patches and ensure species survival in the face of climate change.

Status

A project brief was developed and a consultant engaged in late 2008 to prepare the plan. The final draft of the plan was under review as of June 2009. Completion is expected in October 2009.

The plan considers the long-term management of saltmarsh and mangroves along the Cooks River, from the upper tidal limits at Georges River Rd, Enfield, to the mouth of Cooks River at Botany Bay, and along Wolli Creek. It makes recommendations on areas of future rehabilitation and management. The plan also highlights the importance of continued collaboration and an integrated approach involving all foreshore stakeholders to deliver on-ground rehabilitation projects.

Partners

- City of Canterbury (Project management)
- Marrickville and Rockdale Councils
- Sydney Water
- SMCMA
- Wolli Creek Preservation Society
- CRFWG

Funding

- DECC, Estuary Management Program: \$20,000 cash (2007/08)
- City of Canterbury: \$5,000 cash; \$10,000 in-kind
- Marrickville Council: \$5,000 cash; \$5,000 in-kind
- Rockdale Council: \$5,000 cash; \$5,000 in-kind
- Sydney Water: \$5,000 cash
- CRFWG: in-kind

Local residents, council staff and experts propose ways to manage water more sustainably in their local areas, at the Ashbury (left & right) and EC (Eastern Channel) East Sub-catchment Planning Forums, as part of the OurRiver Project.

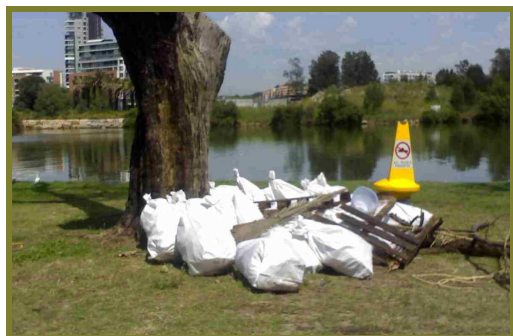


Cooks River Enviro Workers (CREW)

2004 - continuing

Project Description

Modeled on a successful Georges River clean-up program, CREW brings a team of trained volunteers from the Periodic Detention Program of the NSW Department of Corrective Services to the River almost every weekend to remove litter, dumped materials and other debris from the River, riverbanks and foreshores.



Rubbish gathered by the CREW team for disposal by Council staff at Kendrick Park, Tempe.

CREW has been made possible at very low cost through pooling the resources of its many partners: the Department of Corrective Services dispatches, trains and supervises the volunteers; six participating councils provide tools and supplies for the workers and dispose of the rubbish collected; the Georges River Combined Councils Committee (GRCCC) provides technical and logistical support through the resources of its Georges Riverkeeper Program; the City of Canterbury administers project finances and the CRFWG Coordinator manages the overall project.

Status

In 2008/09, CREW removed an estimated 31.5 tonnes of litter and small organic material (eg, leaf litter, which releases nutrients into the

waterway) and 4.2 tonnes of large dumped materials and debris from the waterway, banks and foreshores of the Cooks River. Some 267 syringes plus five dumped containers of syringes were also removed and disposed of safely.

Over the five years since CREW began in July 2004, CREW volunteers have removed more than 136 tonnes of litter and small debris, 20 tonnes of dumped materials and large debris, and 543 syringes from the River.

The litter boom at 'Boat Harbour' in Hurlstone Park has greatly facilitated the capture of in-stream litter by catching it on the outgoing tide and pushing it into the 'Boat Harbour' on the incoming tide, from where it can be easily removed by the CREW team.

Because of CREW's success and popularity with the community, the project partners signed a new Memorandum of Understanding extending the project for an additional three years, from January 2009 to the end of December 2011.

Partners

- CRFWG (Project management)
- City of Canterbury (financial administration)
- Bankstown, Marrickville, Rockdale and Strathfield Councils
- Georges Riverkeeper Program, GRCCC
- Periodic Detention Program, NSW Department of Corrective Services
- Sydney Water Corporation

Funding

- Periodic Detention Program, NSW Department of Corrective Services: in-kind
- Georges Riverkeeper Program, GRCCC: in-kind
- City of Canterbury, Bankstown, Marrickville, Rockdale and Strathfield Councils: \$3,500 (2006/07), \$3,410 (2007/08), \$4,581 (2008/09) plus in-kind
- Sydney Water Corporation: in-kind
- CRFWG: in-kind

Summary of CREW outcomes July 2004 – June 2009

Type of rubbish removed	2007/08	2008/09	↑↓ over previous year	Total since July 2004
Litter & small organic matter (est. tonnes)	24.5	31.5	↑29%	136.3
Dumped materials & large debris (est. tonnes)	6.1	4.2	↓31%	>20.5*
Total est. tonnes	30.6	35.7	↑17%	156.8
Sharps (No.)	30	267	↑1000%	543
Volunteer hours	5,082	5,868	↑15%	25,284

*Only partially reported in the first two years of operation.

Cooks River Path Signage Project

2001 - continuing

Project Description

This project involves the planning, design and implementation of a new, coordinated, regional family of wayfinding and river identification signs for the entire Cooks River path from Strathfield to Botany Bay.

The new signs will assist path users to better navigate and explore the Cooks River foreshores and beyond. It is also hoped that their attractive design and beautiful artwork will enhance the look and feel of the river corridor, to reflect and boost the community's growing sense of pride and love for the Cooks River and its environs.

Status

A preferred contractor to manufacture and install the new sign family was jointly selected by the five partner councils. Implementation is expected to begin by mid-2010, following finalisation of map artwork, production templates and other details. Each council will

implement the signage within its own LGA as funding becomes available, with coordination provided by the CRFWG Coordinator.

Partners

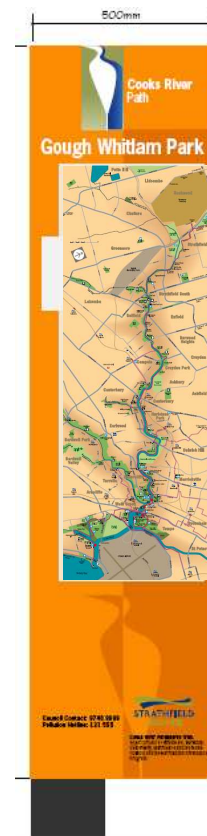
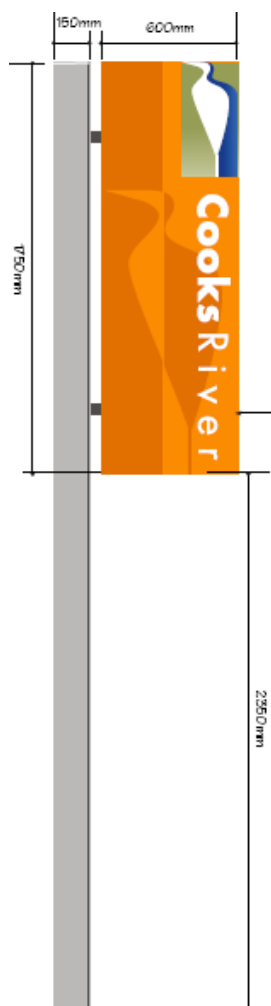
- CRFWG (Project management)
- Burwood, City of Canterbury, Marrickville, Rockdale and Strathfield Councils

Funding – Design & planning

- CRFWG (Project management): in-kind
- Burwood, City of Canterbury, Marrickville, Rockdale and Strathfield Councils: \$38,655, plus in-kind
- DOP, Metropolitan Greenspace Program: \$66,030
- RTA (2002): \$2,669

Funding - Implementation

- DOP, CRFIP (Round 2): \$35,000
- Burwood, City of Canterbury, Marrickville, Rockdale and Strathfield Councils: \$35,000 plus in-kind
- DOP, CRFIP (Round 4): \$30,000 (for implementation in the Strathfield LGA)
- Strathfield Council: \$30,000 (for implementation in the Strathfield LGA)



The new Cooks River Path family of signs, to be rolled out by the five foreshore councils from 2010, will include (clockwise from left) 28 river identification signs at major road crossings, 78 directional pole signs, 14 map signs and 9 road name signs for path users at underpasses.



Cooks River Urban Water Initiative



NEW 1 July 2008 – June 2012

Project Description

The Cooks River Urban Water Initiative (CRUWI) is a federally funded three-year program, managed by the Sydney Metropolitan CMA, that aims to improve the environmental quality of the Cooks River by partnering with local community groups, councils and other land managers in a number of stormwater and wetland improvement projects across the catchment. The initiative consists of two project elements:

- The **Wolli Creek Stormwater Element** aims to reduce the impacts of urban stormwater runoff on the Wolli Creek corridor by installing a number of stormwater quality improvement devices (SQIDs) at key locations. Planned works include the construction of pollutant traps and bio-retention systems that will filter stormwater to reduce the amount of litter, weeds, nutrients and sediment entering and degrading Wolli Creek and the Cooks River.
- The **Wetlands Element** consists of the design, construction and restoration of freshwater and estuarine wetland areas to reintroduce natural filtration and habitat functions that were lost when former wetland areas were filled and destroyed. Existing wetlands will be improved through restoration works such as re-vegetation and weeding.

More information and project news are available at www.cooksriver.info.

Status

Federal funding (\$2 million) for CRUWI was announced in October 2008, fulfilling a 2008 election promise by the Labour Party to improve the water quality of the Cooks River. The total value of the initiative is \$2.5 million.

By 30 June 2009, CRUWI had secured contracts for the following works:

- Hannam Street, Bardwell Valley, Stormwater Management Project (\$150,000), with Rockdale Council: Construction of two GPTs and a small bio-retention wetland to treat stormwater flowing from the local area into Bardwell Creek at

Coolabah Reserve. To date, Council has installed a ROCLA CA600 GPT and an ECOSOL 4450 GPT in Coolabah Reserve at a cost of \$123,000. Construction of the mini-wetland will commence in September 2009, with completion scheduled for December 2009.

- Yarrowee Road Wetland: constructed freshwater wetland for habitat and water-quality improvement (\$120,000), with Strathfield Council.
- Highcliff Road stormwater treatment (two GPTs and a bio-retention swale), with Canterbury Council.
- Design of a constructed freshwater wetland for Heynes Reserve, Canterbury, near Cup and Saucer Creek, to create habitat and improve water quality (\$90,000), with Sydney Water.

A range of other projects are being negotiated with land managers and will be implemented in the near future. On-ground works are expected to be completed by mid 2010. Opportunities for collaboration with university researchers for the monitoring of project outcomes are also being explored.

Committees, including representation by local community members, have been formed and have been working effectively to deliver the project. The CRFWG participates in the Project Reference Committee, which advises the project manager and makes decisions about the allocation of project funds. The Reference Committee met for the first time in June 2009.

Partners

- Federal Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA)
- Sydney Metropolitan CMA (project management)
- City of Canterbury, Rockdale, Marrickville and Strathfield Councils
- Sydney Water
- NSW Department of the Environment, Climate Change and Water
- Wolli Creek Preservation Society
- Cooks River Valley Association
- Macquarie University

Funding (2008/09)

- DEWHA, Water for our Future: \$500,000 cash
- SMCMA: \$30,000 in-kind
- Councils (project management) and community (participation in consultations): Approximately \$100,000 in-kind

RiverScience Cooks River Ecological Monitoring Program

2005 - (continuing)

Project Description

RiverScience is a scientific research program monitoring the ecological health of the Cooks River and its main tributaries. It uses a number of ecological indicators to measure the River's health, including the extent and composition of macroflora (eg, saltmarsh, sea grass and mangroves) and aquatic invertebrates (eg, oysters, barnacles and crabs), as well as various sediment characteristics.

Monitoring these indicators over time, for example, the population of oysters at a specific sampling site, makes it possible to track long-term changes in the ecological health of the River. As the River's health is directly affected by many land use and management practices that can be influenced by local government, Riverscience findings will help councils evaluate the impact of their management practices on the health of the River and give them information needed to make better management decisions.

Status

A third round of annual monitoring was completed in December 2008.

A fourth round of monitoring is expected to be undertaken December 2009.

The full scientific report and a Report Card summarizing and interpreting the results of this monitoring for the community can be downloaded from Cooknet at

<http://www.canterbury.nsw.gov.au/www/html/1876-riverscience-ecological-monitoring-program.asp>.

Partners (Round 3)

- Rockdale Council (Project management)
- City of Canterbury and Marrickville Councils
- DECC
- Wollie Creek Preservation Society

Funding

Program development & first round of monitoring (2006-07)

- City of Canterbury, Kogarah, Marrickville and Rockdale Councils, UNSW, Sydney Water, NSW Department of Natural Resources, DPI - Fisheries: \$30,000 (cash and in-kind)
- DOP, CRFIP (Round 1): \$30,000
- Landcare Australia Ltd and Australand / Landcom: \$15,000
- RailCorp: \$5,000
- Wollie Creek Preservation Society: \$500

2007 Monitoring (Round 2)

- City of Canterbury (\$4,000), Marrickville (\$4,000) and Rockdale Councils (\$3,000)
- DECC: \$500

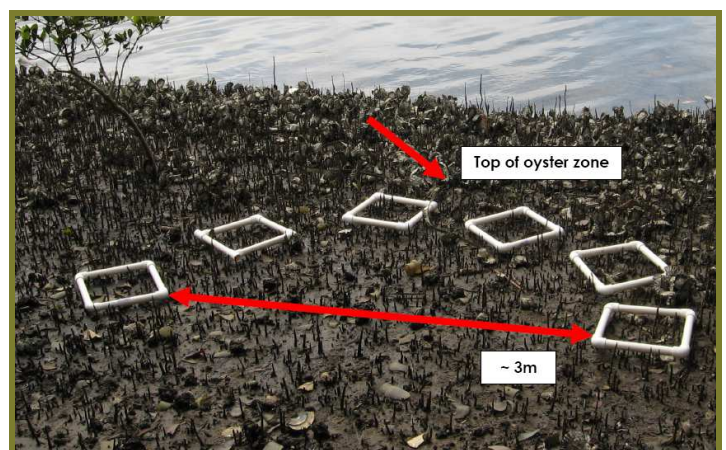
2008 Monitoring (Round 3)

- Canterbury, Marrickville and Rockdale Councils (main partners): \$14,000 cash
- DECC

Riverscience 2008 findings confirm the continuing poor health of the Cooks River. The River has very low diversity and abundance of organisms compared to other estuarine systems in the Sydney region and sediment quality is poor.

However, some improvements were observed over previous years, including:

- Increased diversity and abundance of benthic invertebrates in 2008, particularly at sites near to or within Wollie Creek;
- Crab numbers have increased since 2006;
- Sydney Rock Oysters and barnacles have expanded to colonise a greater number of sites in 2008; and
- Estuarine vegetation in the Cooks River is dominated by healthy mangrove forests and small isolated patches of saltmarsh.



Riverscience crab observation quadrats at mangrove site in Muddy Creek, Kyeemagh. Source: EcoLogical Australia, Riverscience Monitoring Report, Round 3, 2008.

Riverscience Cooks River Sediment Monitoring Program

NEW 2008 – (2010)

Project Description

This project will sample and study sediments in the lower Cooks River to learn more about heavy metal contamination in the river sediments. It will attempt to identify current versus historic levels of contamination, provide information about the mobility of heavy metals in the sediment (ie, whether they move in and out of the water column), develop a sediment monitoring protocol and assess the risk of future contamination through the mobilisation of heavy metals. The findings will be used to identify and prioritise actions needed to improve river health. Results will be communicated to stakeholders and the community.

Status

Rockdale Council received a grant, on behalf of the partner councils, from the Estuary Management Program of DECC, in late 2008. This project will be complete in early 2010.

Partners

- Rockdale (project management)
- Canterbury and Marrickville Councils
- SMCMA

Funding

- Rockdale, Canterbury and Marrickville Councils: \$28,000 cash
- NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change (up to \$28,000)

RiverLife Interpretive Tour Program



2003 - continuing

Project Description

The Riverlife Interpretive Tour Program offers enjoyable and informative volunteer-led tours of the Cooks River Catchment that enable the community to learn about the local environment and how they can help to improve the health of the River and the catchment.

The program includes walking, cycling, kayaking and sketching tours, as well as tours for children and in community languages. The whole length of the Cooks River is represented in the tour program, including tributaries such as Cup and

Saucer Creek and Wolli Creek.

Volunteer guides develop their own tours, which cover a diverse and fascinating range of topics, including local social history, industrial landscape, flora and fauna and local wetlands. All tours increase community awareness of the Cooks River Catchment environment and raise concern for sustainability.

The RiverLife Interpretive Tour Program originated as part of the RiverLife stormwater education project funded by the NSW Government's Stormwater Trust in 2002 – 2003.

Status

Four tours were delivered in 2008/09, with 33 members of the community participating. Since the Program's inception in 2003, over 120 tours have been delivered with 1,047 participants.

Due to lack of funding and the resulting inability to employ a Riverlife Program coordinator, it was not possible to offer any tours in 2009. The CRFWG and partner councils are keen to reinvigorate the program during the coming year and will be investigating options for managing and funding it on an ongoing basis.

Partners

- Marrickville Council (project management)
- City of Canterbury and Strathfield Councils
- Community volunteers
- CRFWG

Funding

- DECC, 'Our Environment: It's a Living Thing' Program: \$64,919 (June 2005)
- Marrickville Council: in-kind
- Community Volunteers: in-kind



RiverLife Volunteer Leigh Shearer-Herriot, right, leads a Riverlife Interpretive Tour along the River in 2008. (Photo by Judy Pincus)

Cooks River Bank Naturalisation Project & Flood Study (Sydney Water)

2007 - continuing

Project Description

Significant sections of the concrete that lines the Cooks River in Strathfield, Burwood and Canterbury, are deteriorating due to aging and the harsh environment in which they are located. As part of its stormwater infrastructure renewals program, Sydney Water, is investigating the potential for naturalising some of these sections rather than simply replacing them with more concrete, in order to improve the River's health and restore its natural character. Sydney Water is consulting and collaborating with the CRFWG, Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority, local councils and other land and water managers, both to ensure meaningful stakeholder input and to expand the scope of the project to achieve greater flood management, environmental, social, aesthetic and financial benefits than would be possible if they did it all alone.

Status

A flood study, Cooks River Naturalisation Master Plan and concept designs for three priority sites have been completed.

The naturalisation master plan identifies a number of opportunities for Sydney Water, the foreshore councils and other landowners to naturalise banks and create wetlands along the river between Centenary Drive, Strathfield (freshwater), and Alexandra Canal (tidal, saltwater).

The flood study was undertaken, in partnership with a number of the councils, to ensure the hydraulic capacity of the River would not be compromised (ie, the risk of flooding would not be increased) by the renewal works. It resulted in the development of a new flood model for the

River. This model was used to test the concept designs for the three priority sites and found no negative impacts on potential flood levels and extents. Sydney Water also provided training for council flood management staff in how to use the new flood model.

Apart from the potential for acid sulphate soils, which are widespread in all estuarine environments, geotechnical investigations found no significant soil contamination.

Stakeholder consultations, including local resident and community surveys, found overwhelming support for naturalisation as a riverbank renewal option. They also provided useful feedback on concept designs, which will inform the development of detailed designs for the priority sites.

Sydney Water is preparing a business case for internal approval of capital funding to proceed to the detailed design phase and then construction. (Ed. Note: Approval to proceed to detailed design was granted in late 2009.)

The concept designs for bank naturalisation around the confluence of Cup and Saucer Creek include the construction of an offline wetland in Heynes Reserve to filter (clean) water from the creek and increase biodiversity in the area. The Cooks River Urban Water Initiative (see project update above) will be the primary source of funding for this wetland (Ed. Note: In early FY2009/10, Canterbury Council also committed funding for the wetland construction.) It is expected that wetland construction will commence in early 2010, with the riverbank works to follow in late 2010.

Partners

- Sydney Water
- Rockdale, Marrickville, City of Canterbury, Burwood, Strathfield, Sydney and City of Botany Bay Councils
- SMCMA
- CRFWG
- Sydney Airports Corporation



Deteriorated concrete panel on bank of Cooks River (Source: Sydney Water)



Three sites proposed by Sydney Water for bank naturalization along Cooks River. (Source: Sydney Water)

Botany Bay Coastal Catchments Initiative (BCCCI)

2007 - continuing

Project Description

This initiative seeks to achieve long term protection and improvement of the surface waters of Botany Bay, its estuaries and catchment. It is one of several Coastal Catchments Initiatives underway around Australia under a national program designed to improve and protect water quality in coastal hotspots by promoting competent water quality planning.

The ultimate goal of the BCCCI is to develop an agreed water quality improvement plan for the Bay and its catchment. To this end, a key output of the project is the development of a scientifically derived ecological response model for Botany Bay and its estuaries that can be used to model the impacts of changes in the catchment on the ecological communities of Botany Bay and its estuaries. The model primarily focuses on the impacts of pollutants washing off hard surfaces in the catchment, eg, suspended solids, nitrogen and phosphorous, and ending up in the Bay and tributaries.

Another key aim of the project is to engage with councils and key stakeholders in the Botany Bay Catchment so they can participate in finding and implementing innovative solutions to improve water quality in the Bay and catchment.

The CRFWG is represented on the BCCCI Stakeholder Reference Committee, which was established to inform community and government stakeholders of progress and provide input on issues as they arise.

Status

The BCCCI commenced at the beginning of

2007. The first phase, completed in June 2008, included the development of the Ecological Response Model (ERM) and the use of that model to estimate pollution loads from specific council and land use areas and examine the effects of various future growth and management scenarios on the Bay and its estuaries. The ERM was further refined and calibrated during 2008 and 2009, which enabled additional scenarios to be run through it.

Draft water quality objectives, pollutant load targets aimed at protecting environmental objectives identified through the project, as well as management options for meeting those objectives and targets, have been finalised. These were based on the results of various scenarios run using the ERM.

A model LEP clause for stormwater and water sensitive urban design (WSUD) was developed to support councils in their planning processes. A draft model WSUD DCP was also prepared and released for comment, again to support councils with improving their planning policy.

The SMCMA has applied for further funding to enable it to proceed with development of a water quality improvement plan for the Bay and its catchment.

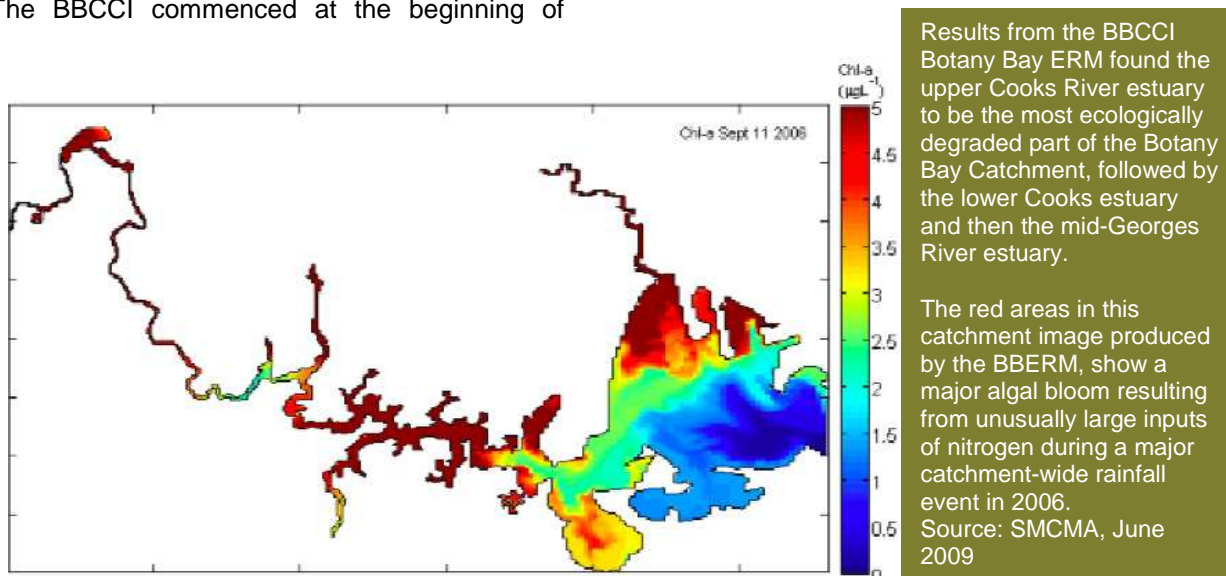
Further information can be found on the BCCCI website at www.sydney.cma.nsw.gov.au/bccci.

Partners

- SMCMA (project management)
- Australia Government, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

Funding

- SMCMA (part) and the Australian Government (majority): \$1,180,000 (January 2007 - June 2009)



Member & partner projects

The following is a partial listing of projects active during FY2008/09 that were initiated, run and/or supported by CRFWG partners to contribute towards realising the vision of the *Cooks River Foreshores Strategic Plan*.

Unless otherwise stated, funding figures represent the cumulative amount (excluding GST) expended on and/or committed to the project to 30th June 2009. The figures provided are based on the best information available at the time of printing.

Alexandra Canal Path Concept Design Study

2007 – continuing

Project Description

Marrickville Council has the long-term aim of creating a green space and active transport corridor alongside the Alexandra Canal. This project will take a significant step towards achieving this goal through developing designs, negotiating access and surveying the potential route.

Status

Commencement of this project has been delayed due to construction activities for the desalination plant water distribution pipeline in this area.

Partners

- Marrickville Council

Funding

- DOP, CRFIP: \$15,000
- Marrickville Council: \$15,000

Bank Restoration, Gough Whitlam Park

2002 – continuing

Project Description

This project entails design and construction of works to stabilise and rehabilitate eroding riverbanks along Gough Whitlam Park, Earlwood, using ecologically sensitive treatments, including re-creation of saltmarsh and mangrove areas and planting of riparian zones with local provenance native species. The works also aim to improve access and visual amenity of the foreshores and to provide visitors with opportunities to learn about restoration ecology.

This site was identified as requiring erosion control works in the CRFSP and was one of three sites (along with Kendrick Park and

Freshwater Park) for which initial site assessments and concept designs were undertaken through the CRFWG's Cooks River Bank Restoration Project (2001 – 2002).

Status

Foreshore restoration works along an approximately 650m stretch of riverbank, between Unwins Bridge at Bayview Avenue and the aqueduct at the eastern end of Wanstead Avenue Reserve, have been planned and staged for completion as funds become available.

Construction and planting of 410m of riverbank, 3,050m² of new saltmarsh and 80m² of phragmites habitat in Zones C and D (upstream from Unwins Bridge) commenced in May 2007 and were completed in late 2007. Council obtained a grant under the Metropolitan Green Space Program to complete works in Zones A and B (downstream from the aqueduct) and expects to complete this work by March 2010.

Partners

- City of Canterbury

Funding

- City of Canterbury: \$360,000
- DECC, Estuary Management Program: \$150,000
- DOP, Metropolitan Green Space Program: \$238,239



The saltmarsh constructed by Canterbury Council at Gough Whitlam Park in 2007, is thriving, as seen here during the King Tide inundation in January 2009. Source: Linda Clutterbuck

Bardwell Creek Rehabilitation Project

NEW 2008 - continuing

Project Description

Rehabilitation of degraded banks along Bardwell Creek through Coolabah Reserve. Works include regarding steep banks, weed and willow removal and replanting with local provenance indigenous species, to improve biodiversity safety, water quality and amenity in the area.

Status

Council was awarded a grant under the DECCW Estuary Management Program to undertake construction works along 150m of the creek, from the weir north to the railway line. Council has applied for additional EMP funding to rehabilitate a further 200m of bank, from the weir south to Bardwell Road.

Partners

- Rockdale Council

Funding

- Rockdale Council: \$38,000 cash
- DECCW, Estuary Management Program: \$38,000 (2008/09)

Bardwell Valley Plan of Management

2006 - continuing

Project Description

Rockdale Council is updating the 1993 Plan of Management for Bardwell Valley following a detailed review of the existing plan.

Status

A draft Plan of Management has been completed. Though the plan is yet to be finalised, Council is able to use the draft as a guide for various works.

Partners

- Rockdale Council

Funding

- Rockdale Council

Bush Regeneration, Campsie Bushland

2004 - continuing

Project Description

This project involves bush regeneration of a small patch of remnant Cooks River/Castlereagh

Ironbark Forest bushland, an Endangered Ecological Community under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995, along the Cooks River in Campsie. This vegetation is highly significant and of regional conservation value. It is the only remnant of this type still existing on the Cooks River and, indeed, in the inner west of Sydney. Work is based on actions identified in the Plan of Management prepared by Council for this site in 2005, and complements past work by a team from the National Trust of Australia (NSW).

Status

Continuing work in this remnant bushland has primarily concentrated on weed control to encourage extension of native species. Contractors from the National Trust of Australia (NSW) conducted 205 hours of bush regeneration work and associated reported in the reserve from August 2008 to June 2009.

Partners

- City of Canterbury
- National Trust of Australia (NSW)
- DOP

Funding

- City of Canterbury: \$7,500 cash (2005/06); \$10,000 cash (2008/09)
- DOP, CRFIP (Round 4): \$7,500



Remnant Xanthorrhoea, with Kunzea in the background, Campsie Bushland. Source: National Trust of Australia (NSW)

Bush Regeneration, Wollie Creek Regional Park, Johnston Street, Earlwood

2006 - continuing

Project Description

The Wollie Creek Preservation Society is rehabilitating a 2ha area of bushland in the western section of the developing Wollie Creek Regional Park. The area has been identified as a priority area in the Wollie Creek Regional Park Bushland Regeneration Operations Plan.

This project is taking an innovative approach to

long-term willow replacement along the creek bank and includes a community education element.

Status

The WCPS was awarded a three-year grant, in 2006, under the NSW Government's Environmental Trust, to continue bush regeneration work below Johnston Street.

Volunteers and contractors have continued primary weed removal and path work. Community planting days were held in 2006 and 2007 and the plantings have been maintained since then. Preliminary work was completed on rehabilitating a stormwater outlet below Johnston Street. A professional team has worked a total of 913 hours on this project and volunteers from the WCPS have contributed a total of 1,814 hours. Additional funding is being sought to support further works in this area. The final report for this project was sent to the Environmental Trust in December 2008.

Partners

- Wolli Creek Preservation Society
- City of Canterbury

Funding

- Environmental Trust: \$39,318 (2006-2008)
- WCPS: in-kind
- City of Canterbury: in-kind

Cahill Park Plan of Management

2006 - continuing

Project Description

Rockdale Council is developing a Plan of Management for Cahill Park.

Status

A draft plan has been prepared and is yet to be finalised.

Partners

- Rockdale Council

Funding

- Rockdale Council

Cooks River Restoration Project, Freshwater Park



2003 – 2009 COMPLETED

Project Description

Strathfield Council first began to address flooding and erosion problems in the Freshwater Park area with a major bank rehabilitation

project, carried out in 2001 – 2002, to a 200m section of the Cooks River that runs adjacent to numerous homes, just upstream from Hedges Avenue.

Since 2002, Council has undertaken two further stages of works to stabilise the riverbed and banks between Hedges Avenue and Centenary Drive. Engineering and landscaping measures undertaken have included:

- Battering of riverbanks to reduce steep bank slope;
- Stabilisation with local provenance native vegetation, geotextiles and natural rock; and
- Ongoing monitoring and maintenance.

To date the site has improved dramatically, with over 55,000 local indigenous plants now preventing erosion and providing a valuable seed source for other vegetation projects.

Over the long-term this project aims to restore the waterway and riparian corridor to a condition that is self-sustaining, rich in biodiversity and demonstrates the efficient use of open space in a highly urban area.

Status

Strathfield Council won the Stormwater and Urban Waterways Award (Division B) for this project, at the Local Government and Shires Associations Excellence in the Environment Awards ceremony held in November 2008.



Source: Strathfield Council, 2009

During 2008-09, the final 400m of bank stabilisation works were completed. Works included minor rock work to prevent further erosion caused by a stormwater outlet, widening of the riparian corridor, removal of weeds, including willows, and planting with indigenous, local provenance species.

Strathfield Golf Club will assist Council with ongoing revegetation, monitoring and maintenance of the site.

Partners

- Strathfield Council (Project management)
- Strathfield Golf Club

Funding

- Strathfield Council: \$256,480 (\$227,230 cash; \$29,250 in-kind)
- DOP, CRFIP (2005/06): \$160,000

SUSTAIN: Cooks River Eco Fest (Cooks River Arts and Sustainability Festival)

2005 - continuing

The annual Cooks River Arts and Sustainability Festival showcases local arts alongside environmental education and awareness programs with a lot of good fun. For the fifth annual event, held at Steel Park, Marrickville, in April 2009, the festival theme was extended beyond environmental sustainability to encompass local economic sustainability and community cohesion as well, thus broadening the appeal of the event. In keeping with this theme, the name was also changed to 'SUSTAIN: Cooks River Eco Fest'. Around 4,000 people attended on the day, lower than expected due to rain.

The festival once again featured the Sustainable Water Showcase, which promoted rainwater tanks, water-saving cleaning methods and grey-water reuse and inspired visitors with information about Sustainable Water Ambassadors, Sub-catchment Working Groups, Marrickville Community Nursery and the Cooks River Sustainability Initiative (CRSI).

The 2009 festival also offered a Sustainable Energy Showcase; sustainability workshops (eg, rainwater harvesting, solar water heating, energy saving at home, Water Sensitive Urban Design, no-dig gardening, etc); an Eco-Learning Showcase (including an animal learning zone); and a RiverLife Interpretive Tour observing the cleaning of a nearby gross pollutant trap and discussing the history of parks along the Cooks River.

A welcoming ceremony included a Welcome to Country by Aunty Phemie Bostock, followed by the official welcome from Councilor Sam Iskandar, Mayor of Marrickville, and addresses

The Sustainable Water Showcase attracted lots of interest at SUSTAIN: Cooks River Eco Fest, 2009.

by the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Federal Member for Grayndler, and the Hon Linda Burney MP, Member for Canterbury.

Attendees rated a high level of satisfaction with the variety of environmental, economic and social sustainability activities and information provided. The event continues to grow and is one of Council's best events for providing a message that promotes positive change in the community.

The Mudcrabs - Cooks River Eco-Volunteers

2005 - continuing

Project Description

'The Mudcrabs' was established in July 2005 as an initiative of local residents in the Hurlstone Park - Earlwood area. The group undertakes litter cleanups and ongoing bush regeneration / revegetation projects along the foreshores in the Canterbury and Marrickville LGAs. Both City of Canterbury and Marrickville Councils provide tools and equipment for their work and they have secured small grants from various organisations

Status

The Mudcrabs have over 500 members and regularly attract 30 - 40 people to monthly (and sometimes more frequent) working bees. Since their launch, The Mudcrabs have removed more than 3,000 bags of litter from the Cooks River. They have also removed 550 bags of weeds and planted about 7,000 native trees and shrubs at bush restoration or revegetation sites at Rosedale Reserve, Foord Ave, Hurlstone Park, Ewen Park, Steel Park and Richardson Reserve. In 2008-09, 189 volunteers generously spent 567 hours filling 395 bags of rubbish from the river banks and 229 volunteers gave 687 hours of their time to plant and look after (ongoing weeding and mulching) 3,575 plants along the foreshores in the Canterbury LGA.

Partners

- The Mudcrabs
- Cooks River Valley Association
- City of Canterbury and Marrickville Councils



Funding

- City of Canterbury and Marrickville Councils: \$3,000 (cash and in-kind)
- The Mudcrabs: in-kind
- Cooks River Valley Association: (insurance)

Cooks River Valley Garden

July 2001 - continuing

Project Description

Located within Tempe Recreational Reserve, this living museum showcases over 80 plant species native to the Cooks River Valley. It was originally planted by the community to help restore the Alexandra Canal foreshore and to establish a section of green corridor as part of a Natural Heritage Trust and Sydney GreenWeb funded project.

All species for the gardens have been collected and propagated within the Cooks River Valley (by Marrickville Community Nursery, Strathfield Council's Strathfield Native Nursery or Randwick Council's nursery), which means the CRVG can become an additional seed bank for propagating indigenous species for future revegetation projects. Plant selection has been based on the book, *Missing Jigsaw Pieces* (Sydney Royal Botanic Garden with assistance from the CRFWG, 1999).

Planting and maintenance work are performed by volunteers from the local community, with support from Council.

Status

Members of the Friends of Cooks River Valley Garden, launched by Council in May 2005 to foster community ownership of the site, have continued maintenance works, including weeding, mulching, pruning and in-fill planting, with Council support.

Since the initial grant funding ran out, Marrickville Council has continued to fund ongoing management of the garden. Conservation Volunteers Australia were engaged to work with the Friends of Cooks River Valley Garden between July and October to assist in maintenance of the site, and a Management Plan for the gardens is being developed to implement longer term maintenance.

Partners

- Marrickville Council
- Marrickville Community Nursery (plants)
- Friends of the Cooks River Valley Garden
- Conservation Volunteers Australia

Funding

- Marrickville Council: \$29,600 + in-kind
- Community volunteers (2008/09): \$2,385 (in-kind)

Cooks River Vegetation Regeneration

2006 - continuing

Project Description

Propagation and vegetation enhancement at Richardson's Lookout and Tempe Reserve.

Status

Richardson's Lookout planting works were completed in May 2008 following Stage 2 stormwater drainage works. A third stage of planting and embankment control works were completed in May 2009. A vegetation management program was commenced in Warren Park in April 2009.

Implementation of the Tempe Reserve planting master plan is on hold while the site is occupied for construction of the Kurnell desalination plant water distribution pipeline. Planning is underway for the work to be undertaken in 2010, following completion of the pipeline.

Partners

- Marrickville Council

Funding

- Marrickville Council: \$65,000 (cash & in-kind)
- DOP, CRFIP: \$65,000

Dean Reserve Pit Stop - Stage 4 Upgrade

2007 - continuing

Project Description

This extra stage of the extremely successful upgrade of Dean Reserve involves the installation of a public toilet and a teen hangout area, including stone seating and a small court area for handball / basketball.

Status

Construction of a toilet block was begun but work was delayed due to bad weather. Completion is expected by the end of 2009.

Partners

- Strathfield Council

Funding

- Strathfield Council: \$230,000

Ewen Park Revegetation

2009 - ongoing

Project Description

The Ewen Park Revegetation Project arose after the Steel Sheet Piling replacement program works were completed. An area of the Ewen Park foreshore that was disturbed during construction was revegetated by volunteers with native plants. The community was consulted and approached to participate in the revegetation of the foreshore to provide greater biodiversity and amenity along this section of the river which had previously been grass.

Status

The Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority awarded funding for the project in February 2009, and the funded plantings were completed in September 2009. Five community planting sessions were held with 5,174 native plants planted by 155 volunteers in an approximately 1800 m² area between the river and the cycle path in Ewen Park. The project will continue to be supported by volunteers through ongoing weed control and infill planting.

Partners

- Canterbury Council (Project management)
- The Mudcrabs
- Friends of Ewen Park
- SMCMA
- DECC
- Marrickville Community Nursery

Funding

- Canterbury Council: in-kind
- DECC: \$3,000 (site preparation; from Steel Sheet Piling Remediation Project budget)
- SMCMA, Greenweb: \$19,000 cash
- The Mudcrabs, Friends of Ewen Park: in-kind

Increasing Biodiversity in Streetscapes

2006 – continuing

Project Description

This project aims to improve ecological and environmental quality in the urban landscape through the use of local native species in street and park plantings.

While there are a number of environmentally beneficial non-native and non-local native species that can be used in horticulture, the intent of this project is to concentrate on

identifying and trialing local native species, to improve local biodiversity and complement other work being undertaken by the CRFWG, its member councils and the State Government.

Status

Strathfield Council and the University of Technology Sydney undertook research for local trials of different urban trees. They then produced plant lists and information, developed and refined a decision support process and identified test planting sites.

In December 2008, Strathfield Council resolved to support the Increasing Biodiversity in Streetscapes Project and establish some examples of nature-strip plantings throughout the municipality with the assistance of interested residents.

Implementation Guidelines to Increasing Biodiversity in Streetscapes were completed in March 2009, and circulated to stakeholders. These guidelines are designed to be transferable to other areas and will be provided to other councils to help them implement similar programs in their area.

Strathfield Council will extend the project on its own initiative, including seeking ongoing support from local community groups and residents to plant and maintain nature strip plantings.

Including in-kind contributions, total project value to date is estimated at \$66,565.

Partners

- Strathfield Council
- Sydney Metropolitan CMA
- University of Technology, Sydney
- CRFWG

Funding

- SMCMA, Catchment Initiatives Icon Projects Program: \$38,000 (2005)
- University of Technology, Sydney: in-kind
- Strathfield Council: in-kind

Kendrick Park Foreshores Restoration

2002 - continuing

Project Description

This project involves detailed design and on-ground works for the rehabilitation of eroding banks and restoration of saltmarsh and other local native riparian vegetation along the foreshores at Kendrick Park.

Status

A feasibility assessment, concept and master

plan, incorporating both foreshore restoration and refurbishment of the path network and park facilities, were completed in 2005/06. Designs have been prepared for stage one foreshore improvement works, which include a canoe launch and viewing area, rock armouring and saltmarsh planting. The project also includes drainage works to protect heritage values of the site and an Aboriginal interpretive area. A development application for the work was submitted in March 2009.

A Conservation Management Plan is currently being finalised in consultation with the Marrickville Aboriginal Consultative Committee. Construction is scheduled for 2010, following assessment of the DA and a tender process.

Partners

- Marrickville Council

Funding

- Marrickville Council: \$130,000 (cash and in-kind)
- DECC, Estuary Management Program: \$100,000
- DOP, CRFIP (Round 1): \$30,000
- DOP, CRFIP (Round 4): \$165,000

Kyeemagh Boat Ramp Reserve Upgrade

2006 - continuing

Project Description

Council is undertaking a major refurbishment of Kyeemagh Boat Ramp Reserve (Mutch Ave, Kyeemagh) to incorporate more landscaping and leisure facilities along the Cooks River at this location. The existing access road and part of the existing parking area will be replaced with landscaping and other facilities, and a new access road and replacement parking areas will be constructed on the southern side of the site.

Status

Council is waiting on final DA approval of detailed design plans prepared during 2008/09. Construction is scheduled to start in early 2009/10, and will take approximately three months to complete.

Partners

- Rockdale Council

Funding

- Rockdale Council: \$68,250
- DOP, CRFIP (2006/07): \$68,250

Kyeemagh Boat Ramp Improvements

2008 – 2009 **COMPLETED**

Project Description

Council upgraded the existing four-lane regional Kyeemagh Boat Ramp with the installation of a new floating pontoon on the eastern side of the ramp to improve access to and encourage recreational use of the river for boating activities.

Status

Completed.

Partners

- Rockdale Council

Funding

- Rockdale Council: \$56,000
- NSW Maritime (Maritime Infrastructure Program): \$28,000



New boat ramp at Kyeemagh Boat Ramp Reserve.
Source: Rockdale Council

Long-nosed Bandicoots in the Inner West

In November 2008, the Long-nosed Bandicoot (*Perameles nasuta*) population in inner western Sydney was listed as a Threatened Population under the *NSW Threatened Species Act 1995*. Because there has been limited research to date, the area of occurrence has not been clearly defined. For the purpose of this determination, it includes the Local Government Areas (LGA) of Marrickville and Canada Bay, with the likelihood that it also includes Canterbury, Ashfield and Leichhardt LGAs. The listing is based on a number of parameters as well as tracking and mapping carried out by the Department of Environment and Climate Change. The Australian Museum believes the bandicoots may be using the rail corridor to access parkland to the north and the Cooks River foreshores to the south. Future research may better define the population and possibly indicate a wider distribution.

Marrickville Council is working to incorporate the Threatened Species Assessment Guidelines into the Development Control Plan (DCP) provisions of its Local Environment Plan, which has been under review this year. In the future, this will allow the Council to assess whether a proposed development or activity is likely to have a significant impact on the Long-nosed Bandicoot population, based on current knowledge of their behaviour and habitats.

Ludwigia and Alligator Weed Control, Wollie Creek

2004 – (2009)

Project Description

As part of a five-year regional project focusing on implementation of Sydney-wide Ludwigia and Alligator Weed Management Plans in the Sydney Central region, City of Canterbury and Rockdale Councils are working to remove Alligator Weed and Ludwigia from Wollie Creek.

These two introduced plants are extremely invasive and have the potential to threaten creek lines, wetlands and market gardens.

If you think you may have found either one of them in a local reserve or backyard, contact your local council immediately!

Status

Work commenced in March 2004. Follow-up Alligator Weed control was conducted over three applications between November 2005 and April 2006, and again in 2007/08. The City of Canterbury Council undertook Alligator weed and Ludwigia eradication in Wollie Creek in 2008/09, with financial assistance from NSW Department of Primary Industries. Three treatments of Alligator weed and Ludwigia were undertaken between Bardwell Creek and Turrella Reserve and 46 hours were spent at Bray Ave removing Ludwigia.

Partners

- City of Canterbury and Rockdale Councils
- DPI

Funding (2008/09)

- City of Canterbury: \$1,458 (Ludwigia removal) + \$1,975 (Alligator Weed removal)
- DPI: \$1,400 (Ludwigia removal)

Nanny Goat Hill Bush Regeneration

1990s - continuing

Project Description

The City of Canterbury has contracted the National Trust (NSW) since the 1990s to undertake bush regeneration at Nanny Goat Hill, a prominent sandstone outcrop overlooking Wollie Creek that contains a good example of Sydney Sandstone Heath vegetation.

Status

A bush regeneration team from the National Trust (NSW) carried out 274 hours of weeding

and maintenance work on and around Nanny Goat Hill from August 2008 to June 2009, for the City of Canterbury.

Partners

- City of Canterbury
- National Trust (NSW)

Funding

City of Canterbury: \$10,000 (2006/07); \$10,000 (2008/09)



Fern area being regenerated along Wollie Creek near Nanny Goat Hill. (Source: National Trust (NSW))

Riverworks Cooks River Environmental Sculpture Competition



Riverworks 2008 was awarded the Environmental Education Award at the Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Cities Awards in August 2008. The award is an important recognition of the contribution that art and artists can make to our relationship with nature and with others in our community.

Riverworks was a Cooks River-themed community environmental art competition that was held three times, in March 2006, June 2007 and March 2008, on the banks of the Cooks River at Gough Whitlam Park, Undercliffe. It was initiated by local artist Bronwyn Tuohy and supported by members of the community, including The Mudcrabs – Cooks River Eco-Volunteers, to provide an opportunity for people to come together to celebrate and enjoy the Cooks River through artistic and creative fun.

It was not possible to hold a fourth Riverworks event in FY2008/09, due to lacking of funding.

Steel Sheet Piling Removal and Remediation Project – Phase One (DECCW)

2003 – 2009

Project Description

This project involves the removal of failing and deteriorating sections of steel sheet piling embankments along the Cooks River in the Canterbury and Marrickville LGAs, and their replacement with more ecologically viable, safe and aesthetic bank treatments. The vertical steel sheet piling was originally installed by the State Government during the 1950s through to the 1970s, as 'bank protection works'. It has resulted in a loss of the riparian zone and associated ecological values and is now considered an inappropriate riverbank treatment.

Status

Approximately 800m of riverbank have been remediated on both sides of the River between the Foord Avenue footbridge (Hurlstone Park) and just downstream of the Lang Road footbridge (Earlwood and Marrickville) at a cost of \$2.5 million.

Remediation works have involved trimming and removing the top portion of the sheet piling to around Mean Sea Level, stepping back the riverbank behind the cut sheet piling through the placement of large sandstone blocks and plantings of native vegetation along the banks, including Sea Rush (*Juncus kraussii*), Seablite (*Suaeda australis*), Samphire (*Sarcocornia quinqueflora*) and Grey Mangrove (*Avicennia marina*). This 'softer' bank treatment provides a more natural riverbank profile and reinstates riparian ecological values and function while ensuring bank stability. The stepped sandstone blocks protect the soft works against wave and current action, allow retention of the narrow foreshore reserve and provide informal access and seating. With the remaining funding,



New sandstone embankments being constructed behind the deteriorated steel sheet piling, and completed works, prior to planting.
Photos: DECC, 2008

DECCW has begun pre-construction activities relating to further remediation works for the remaining sections of sheet piling downstream of the completed works, as far as the Illawarra Road Bridge where the steel piling terminates. These activities include drilling to ascertain soil strength and chemistry, surveying, and preparation of a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) and design of selected remediation configurations. Construction timing is subject to the availability of additional funding.

Partners

- DECC
- City of Canterbury and Marrickville Councils
- CRFWG

Funding

- DECCW: \$2.92 million (allocated)

Sydney Water Stormwater Improvement & Reuse

Sydney Water manages the stormwater trunk drainage system, consisting of 12 stormwater systems with a total length of 124 km, within the Cooks River Catchment. (Thirteen local councils have responsibility for local drainage.)

Sydney Water's 14 Stormwater Quality Improvement Devices (SQIDs) collect litter and sediment from a 2,245 hectare catchment area within the Cooks River catchment.

In 2008/09, 1,232.5m³ of rubbish (85% organic and 15% other) and 1,146.5 tonnes of sediment were collected. Since 1998/99, these SQIDs have prevented some 11,168.5m³ of litter and 10,702.5 tonnes of sediment from entering and degrading the Cooks River.



Sydney Water is working in partnership with the City of Sydney to build a pilot stormwater harvesting and reuse scheme in Sydney Park, Alexandria. This is the largest scale stormwater reuse scheme to filter stormwater through a bio-retention system before using it for irrigation that Sydney Water has been involved in.

Sydney Water also completed a review of options for improving the quality of stormwater entering the Alexandra Canal and concluded that none of the options were feasible.

Tempe Reserve Picnic Grounds Upgrade and Planting

2005 - continuing

Project Description

This project involves a further stage of habitat improvement and embellishment of the regional picnic grounds, originally planned for 2006/07.

Status

All embellishment and construction activities have been on hold since November 2006, due to construction of the Kurnell desalination plant water distribution pipeline through the Tempe Reserve site. Planning is underway for the work to be undertaken in 2010, following completion of the pipeline.

Partners

- Marrickville Council

Funding

- Marrickville Council: \$130,000
- DOP, CRFIP: \$70,000

Turella Reserve Weed Control and Revegetation

June 2007 - December 2008

Project Description

This project incorporates two sub-projects involving weed control and revegetation works along a 140m section of Wollie Creek in Turrella Reserve. NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change undertook works to protect and improve the condition of remnant bushland through removal of weeds, stormwater remediation and infill planting, while the Wollie Creek Preservation Society and the City of

Canterbury undertook revegetation of a riparian lawn to extend and close the gap in the native vegetation corridor in the Wollie Creek Regional Park.

This project was identified through SMCMA consultations with the CRFWG councils and WCPS as part of the SMCMA's Waterways Health Strategy project. It was implemented through funding from the Green Web Sydney Corridor Improvement Program.

Status

The DECC component of the grant-funded project is now complete with maintenance and further expansion planned. Wollie Creek Preservation Society and the City of Canterbury have completed a large area of revegetation along the Wollie Creek bank, while a second area of revegetation planned for the drainage line had to be relocated due to stormwater works to be undertaken in 2009/10. Instead, a weed-infested storage pond was converted to a small freshwater wetland in the spring of 2008.

Partners

- City of Canterbury (Project administration)
- Wollie Creek Preservation Society
- SMCMA
- DECC - National Parks and Wildlife

Funding

- SMCMA - GreenWeb Sydney (NHT): \$69,000
- DECC: \$35,000 + in-kind
- City of Canterbury: \$34,000 + in-kind
- WCPS: in-kind

Vertebrate Fauna Study of the Strathfield LGA

2008 - 2009 (completed)

Project Description

Strathfield Council commissioned a survey of vertebrates in all public parks and reserves within its Local Government Area, including seven within the Cooks River catchment. The study provides a snapshot of the distribution and relative abundance of fauna within the municipality, as well as recommendations for the future management of these parks to provide habitat for native fauna.

Fauna surveys conducted for Strathfield Council in 2008, found that the revegetated parklands along the Cooks River are significant habitat areas for native fauna in the Strathfield LGA and provide a north-south wildlife corridor, as well as shelter, foraging and breeding habitat.

Status

Now complete, the study found that the revegetated parklands along the Cooks River, particularly Ford Park, Maria Reserve and Elliott Reserve, are significant habitat areas for native fauna in the Strathfield LGA. Together, they provide a north-south wildlife corridor through the LGA, as well as shelter, foraging and breeding habitat.

Collectively, 51 fauna species were recorded in these reserves. Four fauna species (Sugar Glider, Southern Boobook and Sacred Kingfisher in Maria Reserve, and Tawny Frogmouth in Elliott Reserve) were not recorded anywhere else in the Strathfield LGA during the study.

Twenty-seven (27) fauna species were also recorded in Cox's Creek Bushland Reserve, including three Green and Golden Bell Frog individuals spotted during a nocturnal survey. This is significant as the Cox's Creek Reserve population was previously believed to be locally extinct because no frogs had been detected there for at least three years.

A copy of the final report can be downloaded from Council's website at <http://www.strathfield.nsw.gov.au/page/sustainability/biodiversity/vertebrate-fauna-study/>.

Partners

- Strathfield Council

Funding

- Strathfield Council: \$20,000 (cash)

'Walking Together, Working with Nature – An Environmental and Cultural Partnership along the Cooks River' DVD

February 2008 - July 2008

Project Description

An 8-minute DVD was produced by the Sydney Metropolitan CMA, in partnership with staff from the City of Canterbury and community volunteers from the al-Ghazzali Centre for Islamic Sciences and Human Development in Roselands. The DVD promotes the benefits and contributions of bushcare and environmental volunteering by following a volunteer bushcare group from the al-Ghazzali Centre, during one of its monthly meetings on site. Interviews with team members and supervisors describe the project to restore native vegetation on the Cooks River bank at Rosedale Park, Croydon Park, and give practical tips on how to turn an existing

community group into a bushcare group.

Status

The DVD was launched at a special event at the al-Ghazzali Centre on 2nd July 2008. Copies of this valuable and inspiring tool for encouraging bushcare volunteering may be obtained from SMCMA.

Partners

- SMCMA (Project management)
- City of Canterbury
- Al-Ghazzali Centre for Islamic Sciences and Human Development, Roselands

Funding

- City of Canterbury: in-kind
- SMCMA, Ethnic Communities Support Project (2007/08): \$9,600 (\$4,600 cash; \$5,000 in-kind)
- Al-Ghazzali Centre: \$1,000 in-kind

Wolli Creek Bush Regeneration, Bray Avenue, Earlwood (Stage 4)

2006 – (2010)

Project Description

The Wolli Creek Preservation Society (WCPS) has been doing bush regeneration at this site near the junction of Harthill-Law and Bray Avenues, Earlwood, since February 2003. The site is located within the proposed Wolli Creek Regional Park and was given high priority in the Wolli Creek Regional Park Plan of Management, as it contains the last remaining off-stream wetland in the Wolli Valley.

Status

Weed removal has continued including the removal of large willows and privets. Weeding has also continued along the edge adjacent to the Harthill-Law Bridge. The stormwater outlet that is currently impacting on the wetland has been reconstructed, with a retention basin to catch sediments. There are now plans under the Cooks River Urban Water Initiative to install a Gross Pollutant Trap above the outlet to further reduce sediment and general street rubbish entering the system. Barrier plantings using local provenance stock were undertaken in July 2005, and these have grown well and been extended to the nearby roadside slope subsequently.

The work was supported from 2005 to late 2008 under the Cooks River Foreshore Improvement Program of the then Department of Planning. In 2008, a Metropolitan Greenspace grant was awarded for Stage 4 works, which include continuing weed control new plantings and a walking track to reroute the Two Valley Trail to

pass through part of the site. Work on this stage commenced in December 2008 and is due for completion in December 2010. Weeding and planting of the area are continuing. Volunteer contributions on this project for the financial year 2008/9 included 230 hours of direct on-ground work.

Partners

- Wolli Creek Preservation Society
- City of Canterbury
- DECC – NPWS

Funding (Stage 4)

- WCPS: \$2,300 + in-kind
- DoP, MGP (Stage 4): \$ 27,186 over two years
- City of Canterbury: \$2,000 + in-kind
- DECC – NPWS: in-kind

Wolli Creek Fishway, Henderson Street, Turrella

2006 - 2009

Project Description

This joint project between Rockdale Council and the City of Canterbury involved the construction of a fishway through the weir near Henderson St, Turrella, to assist the passage of native fish and enable species needing to move seasonally

between salt and freshwater to complete their life cycle.

Partners

- City of Canterbury (administration)
- Rockdale Council (design and construction)
- Sydney Metropolitan CMA
- Department of Planning
- DPI - Fisheries
- Wolli Creek Preservation Society

Funding

- City of Canterbury and Rockdale Councils: \$20,000 (\$10,000 each)
- DOP, CRFIP (Round 3): \$20,000
- Sydney Metropolitan CMA: \$50,000
- DPI – Fisheries & NSW Coastal CMAs, Bring Back the Fish Program: \$30,000

Status

The fishway was completed in March 2009, and is operating as designed. DPI will help with ongoing monitoring and the community will be invited to assist.

An excellent video showing mullet using the new fishway, made by Gavin Gatenby of the Wolli Creek Preservation Society, can be viewed on YouTube, at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lq-wzocd0B0>.



The new Wolli Creek Fishway in full flow following two days of heavy rain in February 2009. Source: Deb Little

Cooks River Pedestrian and Cycle Path Improvement Projects

Works completed, underway or planned during 2008/09

Most works shown below implement recommendations from the CRFWG's *Cooks River Pedestrian and Cycle Path Pathway Development Strategy* prepared for the CRFWG and Strathfield, Burwood, Canterbury, Marrickville, Rockdale and City of Sydney Councils in 2006.

Status: C = completed; U = underway; P = planned

Council	Location	Type of works	Status	Comments	Funding
Rockdale	Cooks River Path in Rockdale LGA	Installation of new regional family of Cooks River Path signs	P	Installation proposed for 2009/10, pending approval of Council funds	○
Rockdale	Mount Olympus Boulevard, Wolli Creek, and along the Illawarra Rail Line	Construction of new on-road cycleway as part of new road (Mt Olympus Blvd)	C	The new route links the Cooks River Pedestrian & Cycle Path at the Princes Highway, near Tempe, to an existing on-road route leading to Turrella Reserve. It allows for safer passage than the previous, more heavily trafficked Arncliffe Street route.	○ Rockdale Council and Section 94 contributions from developers in the Wolli Creek precinct: \$1.8million
Rockdale	Cook Park, Kyeemagh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New path construction. ○ Separation of cyclists and pedestrians for public safety. 	U	During 2008/09 a section of the Cooks River Cycleway through Cook Park was resumed by Sydney Water to facilitate construction of the desalinated water distribution pipeline. To replace the existing path, Council required Sydney Water to construct a new 525m long x 2.5m wide concrete path adjacent to General Holmes Dr. On completion of the desalination project (scheduled for January 2010), Council will retain this new pathway for cyclists only and dedicate the existing path for pedestrian use only, to avoid clashes between the two types of path users, in the interest of public safety.	○ Sydney Water – as part of Kurnell Desalination Plant pipeline construction works.
Rockdale	Cooks Cove Development site, North Barton Park, Arncliffe	Construction of new pedestrian / cycle path along Cooks River between Marsh Street / Giovanni Bridge and Muddy Creek at Kyeemagh	P Delayed indefinitely	Construction of a new section of path along the Cooks River foreshore to replace the current meandering route around the western side of North Barton Park, has been delayed indefinitely, due to the developer's decision to stop work on the \$1 billion residential/commercial Cooks Cove development in the wake of the current economic climate.	○

Council	Location	Type of works	Status	Comments	Funding
Canterbury	Lindsay Street Footbridge to Broughton St, Canterbury	Upgrade of the existing path including widening and improvement of surface	C	Works completed along 950m of path in 2008/09.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Canterbury: \$70,000 cash DOP, CRFIP (Round 4): \$70,000
Canterbury	Close St Reserve, Canterbury, to Foord Ave, Hurlstone Park	Upgrade of the existing path including widening and improvement of surface	C	Construction of a new 800m-long concrete path along Cooks River foreshore (north bank).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DECC (in conjunction with adjacent bank remediation works)
Canterbury	Wardell Rd to Flinders Road, Earlwood	Upgrade of the existing path including widening and surfacing improvements	C	Construction of a new 730m-long concrete path along Cooks River foreshore (south bank).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Canterbury
Canterbury	Access to foreshore path (downstream) from Homer Street	Replacement of existing steps with ramp or ramp/step arrangement.	U	The new ramp will improve bicycle access between the foreshore path and Homer Street. Design work has commenced. Construction to be done in conjunction with bank stabilisation works.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Canterbury
Marrickville	Kendrick Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocation of paths. Route safety improvements thru existing car park and access road, including line-marking, signage and short path link 	P	Park master plan showing future location of paths adopted by Council in 2007. Work to be undertaken in stages over several years. Foreshore restoration works scheduled to commence in 2010 will realign the cycleway to go through the existing asphalt road/carpark with line marking and minor path adjustments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marrickville Council: \$3,000
Marrickville	Mackey Park & West of Mackey Park	Installation of new regional family of Cooks River Path signs	P	Planned for 2009/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Marrickville	Mackey Park to Warren Park	Pathway upgrade works	C	300m of new 3m-wide path laid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marrickville Council: \$150,000 DOP, MGP: \$50,000
Marrickville	Warren Park to Steel Park	Pathway upgrade works	P	Planned for 2009/10. Applied for Metropolitan Greenspace Program funding in 2008/09.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Council	Location	Type of works	Status	Comments	Funding
Marrickville	Steel Park	Replacement of existing foreshore path	P	400m of new path to replace existing path. Planned for 2009/10 or beyond, subject to progress of WaterPlay Park in Steel Park.	○
Marrickville	All recently upgraded pathway sections	Installation of centrelines and RTA path use signage	P	Sites include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tempe Reserve (Holbeach Ave to Alexandra Canal pedestrian bridge) ○ Tempe Station car park ○ Mackey Park Project deferred pending completion of Desalination pipeline project (paths are within works compound, some paths need reinstatement)	○ As yet unfunded
Marrickville	Other pathway sections	Installation of centrelines and RTA path use signage	P	To be installed as each section is upgraded	○
Burwood	Lees Ave at Cooks River to Parramatta Rd	Construction of on-road north-south cycleway through Burwood, linking Cooks River to Parramatta Rd	C	New on-road cycleway provides a link from Cooks River at Lees Ave to Henley Park, Canada Bay, etc.	○ Burwood Council: \$40,000 ○ RTA: \$40,000
Burwood	Flockhart Park To Walsh Ave Reserve	Solar lighting along Cooks River Path	U	Fourteen (14) additional solar lights are planned for installation by December 2009, to complete the provision of continuous lighting along all of Burwood's section of the Cooks River Path.	○ Burwood Council: \$41,142 ○ DOP, Metropolitan Greenspace Program: \$41,142
Strathfield	Bicentennial Park to Ada Ave	Improvements to on-road sections of the Cooks River cycle path, eg, pavement repair, road crossing upgrades, bike shoulder lanes, bike lamps, etc.	P	Council applied for a grant of \$163,438 under the Australian Government's Job Funds program (part of the Government's 2009 economic stimulus package) to implement all outstanding improvements recommended in the <i>Pathway Development Strategy</i> for on-road sections of the Cooks River Path in the Strathfield LGA.	○ Strathfield Council: \$163,438 (budgeted for 2009/10) ○ Australian Government, Jobs Fund: pending approval

Projects index

PROJECTS INDEX

Location	Project Name	Issues addressed										Pg No		
		New, Completed, Ongoing	Natural conservation & restoration (Biodiversity)	Water quality / pollution	Riverbank rehab & restoration	Education, Interpretation & Promotion	Community initiative / involvement	Strategic initiative / cultural heritage	Access, recreation & planning	Research & Monitoring	Integrated water management			
Rg	Cooks River Enviro Workers (CREW)	O												18
Rg	Cooks River Path Signage Project	O												19
Rg	Development of a Cooks River Estuarine Vegetation Management Plan	O												17
Rg	OurRiver: Cooks River Sustainability Initiative (CRSI)	O												16
Rg	RiverLife Interpretive Tour Program	O												22
Rg	RiverScience Cooks River Sediment Monitoring Program	N												22
Rg	RiverScience Cooks River Ecological Monitoring Program	O												21
Rg	Cooks River Urban Water Initiative (CRUWI)	N												20
Rg	Botany Bay Coastal Catchments Initiative	C												24
Rg	Cooks River Bank Naturalisation & Flood Study (Sydney Water)	O												23
Rg	Sydney Water Stormwater Improvement & Re-use	O												33
C	Bank Restoration, Gough Whitlam Park	O												25
C	Bush Regeneration, Campsie Bushland	O												26
C	Bush Regeneration, Wollie Creek Regional Park, Johnston Street, Earlwood	O												26
C	Ewen Park Revegetation	N												30
C	Nanny Goat Hill Bush Regeneration	O												32
C	Turella Reserve Weed Control & Revegetation	NC												34
C	Walking Together, Working with Nature' Al-Ghazzali Partner DVD	C												35
C	Wollie Creek Bush Regeneration, Bray Ave, Earlwood (stage 4)	O												35

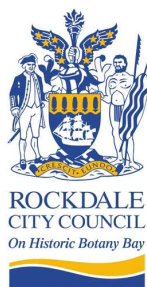
Location	Project Name	Issues addressed										Pg No				
		New, Completed, Ongoing	Natural conservation & restoration (Biodiversity)	Water quality / pollution	Riverbank rehab & restoration	Education, Interpretation & Promotion	Community involvement & involvement	Strategic initiative / cultural heritage	Access, recreation & other planning	Research & Monitoring	Integrated water management					
C, M	Cooks River Eco-Volunteers (The Mudcrabs)	O														28
C, M	Steel Sheet Piling Removal & Remediation - Phase One	C														33
C, R	Ludwigia & Alligator Weed Control, Wollie Creek	O														32
C, R	Wollie Creek, Turella Weir Fishway	C														36
M	Alexandra Canal Path Concept Design Study	O														25
M	Wollie Creek Fishway, Turrella	O														28
M	Cooks River Valley Garden	O														29
M	Cooks River Vegetation Regeneration	O														29
M	Kendrick Park Foreshores Restoration	O														30
M	Long-nosed Bandicoots in the Inner West	O														31
M	Tempe Reserve Picnic Grounds & Planting	O														34
R	Bardwell Creek Rehabilitation Project	N														26
R	Bardwell Valley Plan of Management	O														26
R	Cahill Park Plan of Management	O														27
R	Kyeemagh Boat Ramp Improvement	C														31
R	Kyeemagh Boat Ramp Reserve Upgrade	O														31
S	Cooks River Restoration, Freshwater Park	C														27
S	Dean Reserve Pit Stop - Stage 4 Upgrade	O														29
S	Increasing Biodiversity in Streetscapes	O														30
S	Vertebrate Fauna Study of the Strathfield LGA	C														34
C, M, R, S	Pedestrian & cycle path improvement projects	NCO														37-39

Members and partners

Core Members

Ashfield Council	Janene Harris, Environmental Officer (Chairperson)
Bankstown City Council	Cherie Blackburn, Environmental Planning Officer – Catchments (Rebecca Piper, Environmental Projects Officer)
City of Canterbury	Nell Graham, Team Leader Environmental Issues (Tracey Gigg, Environmental Policy Officer)
City of Sydney	Bhakti Lata Devi, Senior Water Coordinator (Cara Peterie, Senior Environmental Development Officer)
Hurstville Council	Ian Curtis, Manager Environmental Sustainability
Marrickville Council	Jan Orton, Manager Environmental Services Victoria Currie, Biodiversity Coordinator (Anumitra Chand)
Rockdale City Council	Alexandra Vandine, Coordinator Environmental Strategy Deb Cooke, Environmental Projects Officer (Kristy Gooding, Environmental Strategist)
Strathfield Municipal Council	Jon Stiebel, Sustainability Programs Co-ordinator Jean Muspratt, Environmental Projects Officer

Note: Names in parenthesis were no longer involved as of 30 June 2009.



Participating Organisations

Kogarah Council	David Towns, Catchment Management Officer
NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change	Arthur Michos, Senior Natural Resource Officer, Coasts & Estuaries (Ben Khan, Ranger – Harbour South Area, Parks and Wildlife Group)
NSW Department of Planning	Belinda Rollason, Greenspace Programs Coordinator (Carl Malmberg, Director, Open Space and Transitional Lands) (Christina Timmins, Greenspace Grants Project Officer)
Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority	Phillip Birtles, Project Officer
Sydney Water Corporation	Daniel Cunningham, Natural Assets Manager Stormwater
RailCorp	Peter Semple, Senior Natural Resources Officer

Corresponding Organisations

Darug Tribal Aboriginal Corporation	Leanne King, Chairperson
Georges River Combined Councils Committee	Ali Hanlon, Executive Officer Simon Annabel, Georges Riverkeeper
NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change	Kieran Horkan, Principal Officer Sydney Catchments Ray Fowke, Conservation Planning Officer, NPWS
NSW Department of Primary Industries	Drew Egan, Fisheries Officer
NSW Maritime	Graeme Dunlavy, Operations Manager, Botany Bay Port Hacking
Total Environment Centre	Leigh Martin, Urban Campaigner

Note: Names in parenthesis were no longer involved as of 30 June 2009.



COOKS RIVER
FORESHORES
Working Group

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