



## RIVERKEEPER PROGRAM REPORT TO 4 April 2016

### 2015-16 Financial Year (Year to Date) Summary:

- Rubbish collection to the end of March 2016: 83.3 tonne from 13,189 community hours
- Bush Regeneration work:
  - Area primary weeded 150,191m<sup>2</sup> (15.0 ha)
  - area maintenance weeded 118,237m<sup>2</sup> (11.8 ha)
  - 1,185m<sup>3</sup> of green waste from 17,319.3 community hours

**Total area worked of 268,428m<sup>2</sup> (26.8 ha)**
- Educational and Promotional activities: total 25 hours including:
  - National Tree Day – Liverpool Council
  - Peakhurst Garden Club Presentation
  - Georges River Seniors Presentation
  - Sans Souci Evergreens Presentation
  - Campbelltown Riverfest
  - ART presentation to St Finbars, Sans Souci Year 1 students
  - Community presentation to East Hills Australia Plants Society group
  - Clean Up Australia Day (Fairfield Park on Prospect Creek).
- Boat usage activities (excluding water quality monitoring): total 13 hours including:
  - Liverpool City Council: Mayoral upper river tour and Upper river aquatic weed survey
  - Kogarah Council: Bathymetric survey of Oatley Bay boat ramp
  - Hurstville Council & Kogarah Council: Foreshore inspections (conducted jointly)
- Summary of resource contribution:

○ Corrective Services:	11,699.5 hours
○ Aboriginal Riverkeeper Team:	4265.4 hours
○ Green Army	12,759.4 hours
○ Community (incl. CUAD)	116.0 hours
○ <u>Contractors</u>	<u>1665.1 hours</u>
<b><u>Total Resource Hours:</u></b>	<b><u>30,505.4 hours</u></b>

**Corrective Services (CS) NSW Teams:** Program continues to run smoothly

### Biodiversity Fund Grant:

- Three new ART participants have been engaged by Eco Logical Australia however one has resigned. A new trainee and a replacement for Stacey who will complete her 18 month traineeship at the end of June are currently being sought.
- TAFE training in Cert 2 Conservation Land Management has commenced.

- On 6<sup>th</sup> April Michael Miller, our project manager at the Department of the Environment conducted a tour of worksites and was happy with project progress.

**Green Army:**

- Stage 4 teams have commenced and all three teams are currently undergoing training at Fairfield Council Nursery. The GRCCC is very appreciative of Reiner Davies and his operation at the Fairfield nursery for supporting the Green Army teams. On-ground works will commence on Monday 18 April after the necessary training.
- Work will be completed in early September.
- The Department of the Environment has made a provisional announcement for Green Army Round 5 applications. The GRCCC will have to apply, if we are to maintain continuity with teams.

**Greater Sydney Local Land Services Grant Project:**

- Works to be conducted by the National Trust under the GSLLS grant are progressing with all work to be completed by the end of April.

**Clean Up Australia Day:**

- The GRCCC hosted a CUAD event at Fairfield Park, Carramar (Fairfield LGA) with 30 participants.
- 285kg of rubbish and litter was collected.
- Students from Hurlstone Agricultural High School, Glenfield's Environment Club made up the majority of attendees and Cllr Najib Peter Najjar also assisted. A letter of thanks was sent to the School Principal.

## **River Health Program Report: April 2016 update**

This report has been prepared by David Reid, GRCCC River Health Program Coordinator.

### **2015/16 River Health Monitoring (River and Estuary)**

- Autumn macroinvertebrate samples were collected from 34 freshwater streams in March-April 2016, with the assistance of a GRCCC contractor
- In addition, six randomly chosen stormwater channels were also sampled to examine the possibility of recalibrating the Report Card grading system.
- All samples collected in autumn are presently being identified to family level by the River Health Coordinator.
- During this reporting period, bi-weekly estuary monitoring using Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting protocols was ongoing to detect peaks in algal growth over warmer months.

### **Community Events**

- Community members from Oatley Flora and Fauna assisted with sampling streams in Hurstville and Dharawal National Park, on 14 and 17 March contributing 62 hours to the program
- The next open River Health community monitoring days will be:
  - 7 May at Orphan School Creek (Fairfield)
  - 28 May at Dairy Creek (Hurstville)

These days will be advertised to the general public and a media release is to be issued.

### **School engagement**

- GRCCC and Georges River Environmental Education Centre (GREET) led 17 students from Epping Boys High school through monitoring activities at Maddens Creek on 9 February.
- GRCCC partnered with Sackville Street Public School (Campbelltown), Campbelltown City Council and GREET to integrate study of the Georges River into the science and geography curriculum of Year 5/6 students. The River Health Program Coordinator taught approx. 100 students about catchment-scale management concepts, developed photographic identification guides and led students through the collection of aquatic macroinvertebrates during excursions at Simmos Beach over 2 days on 23 and 24 March. The materials produced during this partnership will be available for use by other schools across the catchment.
- On 1 April, GRCCC and GREET met with the scientist from New York's Billion Oyster Project with a view to developing school engagement activities for estuaries. Developing activities for estuaries will facilitate engaging with schools in the lower Georges River catchment.

### **Partnerships**

- The GRCCC was successful in their application to join the Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development – Greater Western Sydney (RCE-GWS). The RCE-GWS is endorsed by the United Nations and has gained international recognition for its sustainability research, teaching and community engagement. Members include local government, schools, community groups and universities.
- The River Health Program Coordinator is co-supervising a student from University Western Sydney who is exploring reasons for counterintuitive improvements in water quality in some urban streams in the Georges River catchment. This provides an opportunity to collect additional data relevant to the objectives of the GRCCC River Health Program, strengthen the programs scientific rigour and build a solid working relationship with a growing university.
- The River Health Program Coordinator met with representatives from Hornsby and Kuringai Councils to discuss their waterway monitoring programs on 23 February. Kristy Guise from Hornsby Council subsequently presented information about their monitoring program at a Catchment Managers Group Meeting at Hurstville on 29 March (attended by GRCCC, Cooks River Alliance, Parramatta River Catchment Group, Sydney Coastal Councils Committee and Sydney Water).

### **Conference presentation**

- The River Health Program Coordinator is drafting a paper on the comparability of stream macroinvertebrate data of citizen scientists and an aquatic ecologist that is to be presented at the Australian Stream Management Conference in the Blue Mountains in August. This will begin to address the question of robustness of citizen scientist data that was raised during 2014 external reviews of the River Health Program.

## **Estuary Management Program Update to April 2016**

### **First Steering Committee Meeting for the Regional WSUD Capacity Building Program**

The GRCCC Programs Manager attended the first steering committee meeting, see [draft Terms of Reference](#) on a regional capacity building project addressing urban water management, climate change adaptation and developing water sensitive city outcomes. Blacktown Council, Sydney Water and OEH are funding this 15 month project. The Committee will meet every 8 weeks to track progress and share knowledge, materials, undertake education and training to build staff capacity for adaptive planning and to implement water sensitive city actions.

### **Georges River Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) Action Plan update**

The GRCCC Program Manager met with member Councils to get an annual update on each Councils progress towards implementing the 25 agreed management actions identified in the Georges River CZMP Action Plan. The plan guides management over a period of 5-10 years of the Georges River estuary and prioritises management actions. Councils are actively implementing the agreed on ground, education and policy actions within the plan to improve the ecosystem health of the River. Campbelltown City Councils actions were also included in the Action Plan this year despite not having estuarine frontage. The plan strengthens member Councils estuary grant applications. Given pending Coastal reforms, the CZMP will still be relevant as there will be a 5 year transitional period to enable Councils that already have a Coastal Zone Management Plan to update their plans by 2021.

### **Sydney Water Workshop**

The GRCCC has been collaborating with Sydney Water on developing an agenda for a Healthy Waterways workshop planned for the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The workshop will be externally facilitated and will provide information to member Councils and seek their advice on:

- a) Incident response programs and protocols including notifications
- b) Data and information sharing
- c) Sewer Leak Training
- d) Stormwater/WSUD Management and presentation of 2 case studies by member Councils.

### **Marine Estate Management Authority Workshop**

The GRCCC attended the Marine Estate Management Authority (MEMA) workshops that presented eight (8) suggested management initiatives to enhance marine biodiversity conservation and help reduce priority threats to the environmental assets and social and economic values and uses of the bioregion. MEMA are currently assessing these options to enhance marine biodiversity conservation in the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion including the Georges River estuary, while including opportunities for a wide range of recreational and commercial uses. These initiatives are detailed in a [Discussion Paper](#) which also outlines the process, the evidence that was considered, and the outcomes of the threat and risk assessment. Public submissions close Sunday 24 April 2016 and the GRCCC will prepare a submission on behalf of members.

### **Catchment Managers Meeting**

The GRCCC hosted a meeting of the Catchment managers groups including the CRA, PRCG, SCCG and Sydney Water to hear updates on the work that each group is doing and to coordinate joint efforts where we can work together e.g on advocacy. A presentation was also delivered by Hornsby Shire Council on their water quality monitoring program.

### **Draft Coastal Management SEPP and maps**

A meeting was held by the OEH and DoPE to provide Councils with the opportunity for input into the draft coastal management area maps developed and shared online that will accompany the draft Coastal Management SEPP. This is part of the NSW Coastal Management reforms that includes a draft bill, a proposed new SEPP and a draft coastal management manual released in November 2015. The GRCCC advised member Councils that the public exhibition of the draft SEPP and maps is imminent and Councils have the opportunity to comment and provide feedback on the maps/SEPP. Four coastal management areas that collectively make up the NSW Coastal Zone, are proposed as follows:

1. Coastal vulnerability areas
2. Coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests
3. Coastal environment areas
4. Coastal use areas

### **Biosecurity reforms to NRM**

GS LLS hosted a review of the [four discussion papers](#) related to the new NSW Biosecurity Act reforms in order to provide feedback to Department of Primary Industries on Councils perspective and recommend preferred options. The DPI presented on the Biosecurity reforms at the workshop. The four discussion papers that impact NRM managers relate to weeds, pest animals, wild dogs and abandoned horticulture enterprises. The GRCCC and its member Councils were given the opportunity to review the papers and identify their concerns. The GS LLS is to collate these concerns into a joint submission from Councils perspective. The Act impacts on 14 current pieces of legislation and repeals the Noxious Weeds Act. It will commence once the regulations and supporting guidance documents are prepared.

### **Waterway Pollution Interagency Meeting**

The Sydney Coastal Councils Group held an interagency meeting to discuss and clarify the roles, responsibilities and jurisdictions of all relevant state agencies and local councils in responding to waterway pollution incidents. The meeting enabled concerns to be raised about clarity and communication between councils and state government agencies regarding waterway pollution incident responses, notification of pollution incidents, and inconsistency and uncertainty around protocols and legalities of installing temporary/permanent signage. The aim is to help Councils develop timely and consistent protocols for pollution incident responses. A survey was also distributed prior to the meeting to inform discussion and identify key issues, knowledge gaps or room for improvement relating to current pollution response and notification. A panel of SG agencies presented at the meeting and took questions from the floor - presentation summaries will soon be available on the Agencies approaches. A data sharing & notification protocol MOU between SCCG and SW is being developed; half of the Council's do not have a pollution notification/communications protocol and some don't have an incident response plan. This information could be shared by member Councils.