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**Media release - For Immediate Release**

**Community River Health Monitoring Program Wins NSW Urban Landcare Award**

The Georges River Combined Councils' Committee (GRCCC) Community River Health Monitoring Program was honoured with the 2012 National Urban Landcare Award at the biennial Landcare Australia Awards gala dinner on Tuesday, September 5, 2012 at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The biennial Awards ceremony celebrates the work of the Landcare community across twelve diverse categories. Fourteen awards in total were presented at the event.

The River Health Monitoring Program competed against each state's Urban Landcare Award winner from 2011.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Joe Ludwig, said the event was a chance to acknowledge Landcare volunteers from across the country, including those being honoured with awards. "The National Landcare Awards celebrate the achievements of what is a hugely important and active community movement," said Ludwig. "Landcare has grown from strength to strength and the work of the Landcare community is vital to the sustainability and preservation of our natural resources."

The Urban Landcare category required the delivery of a project or initiative that inspired and involved an urban population in Landcare. Projects could range from on-ground works to campaigns but had to have demonstrable natural resource management outcomes connected with the city.

The River Health Program, currently funded by the Caring for Our Country initiative, has engaged a large number of community members and created greater awareness and understanding of environmental issues relating to the Georges River, in a highly urbanized catchment. It has engaged project partners from all levels of government, such as the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority and the community to work together for long-term environmental management of the river.

"We are thrilled that Landcare Australia recognises the great worth of our Community River Health Monitoring Program, and that Landcare groups and other stewards of the environment from across Australia are now aware of the great work we are doing in the Georges River catchment," said Cr Julie Bourke, Chairperson of the GRCCC. "We hope this recognition helps to generate further support to ensure the future of the program."

Since the program began in 2009 the community has contributed over 2700 volunteer hours to the program which has undertaken sampling events at 47 sites in freshwater and estuarine areas of the Georges River catchment, and 11 sites in the Cooks River catchment.

Data collected from these sampling events is used to produce annual River Health Report Cards which interpret and present results of the data collected, and provide an overall indication of the river's health on a sub catchment and site by site basis.

The next report card is due to be released in October 2012. To view the previous report cards or for more information go to <http://www.georgesriver.org.au/River-Health-Monitoring-Program.html>

To view the Landcare media release go to [http://www.landcareonline.com.au/?page\\_id=9191](http://www.landcareonline.com.au/?page_id=9191)

For more information on the GRCCC go to [www.georgesriver.org.au](http://www.georgesriver.org.au)

The GRCCC is an incorporated association of nine local government councils working in partnership with state and federal government agencies and community representatives to improve the health of the Georges River catchment. The GRCCC represents local government in the Georges River Catchment of NSW. Member councils include Bankstown City, Campbelltown City, Fairfield City, Hurstville City, Kogarah City, Liverpool City, Rockdale City, Sutherland Shire and Wollondilly Shire councils.

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