



Greater Taree  
City Council

# Draft Environmental Action Plan

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# Presentation Components

- The Draft Environmental Action Plan and proposed projects and priorities
- Resourcing the Draft Environmental Action Plan and proposed levy

# Draft Environmental Action Plan

- The EAP has been drafted using ideas and feedback provided late 2012 and early 2013
- Low cost projects or process improvements that can be undertaken in-house using existing staff & resources
- Larger projects requiring significant investment grouped under the following themes:
  - Estuary & Water Quality
  - Biodiversity
  - Sustainability & Environmental Performance
  - Dredging & Boating Improvements

# Examples of Internal Improvements

| ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE  | CURRENT/PROPOSED ACTION   |
|--|---|
| Investigation into the impacts of Coal Seam Gas (CSG) Mining   | <p>Council has adopted a position statement on CSG mining which supports the rigorous assessment of the environmental risks, social and economic impacts of CSG mining proposals. This position statement was developed in collaboration with MidCoast Water's Sustainable Water Cycle Management Committee.</p> <p>Council will continue to liaise with relevant State Government departments and collaborate with other councils in relation to any investigations into the impacts of proposed CSG mining, and provide information on proposed actions to the local community.</p> |
| Protection of agricultural land from potential impacts of activities like coal seam gas mining, urban expansion, and those which impact on water quality and natural resources | <p>Current agricultural land classification mapping for the region needs to be updated to better inform strategic planning to protect prime areas of agricultural land. This project is the responsibility of the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) which Council may be able to participate in.</p>   |
| Using the development assessment process to deliver improvements in landscape connectivity   | <p>Council will continue to promote programs like Biobanking to developers to offset the environmental impact of development, and collaborate with the NSW Office of Environment &amp; Heritage to identify priority local areas for the targeting of offsets.</p>  |



THEME ONE:

# ESTUARY & WATER QUALITY



\*Acid sulfate soil remediation – Big Swamp



\*Acid sulfate soil remediation Cattai Wetlands



\*Coastal floodplain wetland rehabilitation



\*Pollutant traps to improve water quality



\*Management of urban waterways & drains



\*Stabilisation of roadside erosion & landslips



\*Improvements to roadside erosion control



\*Dune erosion at 4x4 & beach access points



\*Stabilisation of active riverbank erosion



\*Protect & enhance coastal saltmarsh



\*Protect & improve floodplain veg communities



\*Protect & improve vegetated riparian buffers

## Theme 1: Estuary & Water Quality

| PROJECT ACTIVITY  | PRIORITY AREAS  | ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS  | POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS   |
|---|---|--|--|
| a) Acid Sulfate Soil (ASS) Hot Spot Remediation           | Identified ASS Hotspot areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cattai Wetlands</li> <li>Big Swamp</li> <li>Moto-Coopernook</li> </ul>   | Land purchase at market price, plus remediation works at cost<br>Boardwalks = \$450/m<br>Bushfire trail maintenance = \$10,000/yr<br>Weed & pest control at cost | Australian Government<br>NSW Office of Environment & Heritage<br>Catchment Management Authority<br>DPI Fisheries<br>Private Landholders            |
| b) River Health   | Addressing active river bank erosion as documented in the Manning Riverbank Study (1993) (now updated)<br>Areas identified in the Wallis Lake Catchment Management Plan (2003)<br>Areas inputting high nutrient levels into waterways | Fence & replant = \$10,000+ per ha<br>Fence & weed control = \$7,000 per ha<br>Rock Fillets = \$110-250/m<br>Rock Revetment = \$500/m                            | Private Landholders<br>Catchment Management Authority<br>NSW Office of Environment & Heritage<br>Crown Lands<br>DPI Fisheries                      |
| c) Urban Waterway Improvements                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Browns Creek in Taree</li> <li>Manning &amp; Dawson Rivers in Cundletown &amp; Taree</li> <li>Wards &amp; Vinegar Creeks, Harrington</li> <li>Cedar Party Creek in Wingham</li> </ul>          | Regeneration = \$1,000 - \$5,000 per ha<br>Concrete recreational path = \$235/m<br>Gross Pollutant Trap = \$120,000 approx                                       | Australian Government<br>NSW Office of Environment & Heritage<br>Community Groups<br>Neighbouring Residents<br>Local Businesses<br>DPI Fisheries   |
| d) Roadside and Coastal Erosion Control                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4WD/pedestrian beach access</li> <li>Coastal dune erosion</li> <li>Erosion prone roadsides</li> <li>Creek road crossings</li> <li>Crowdy Head &amp; Wallabi Point cliffs</li> </ul>            | Landslip stabilisation = \$20,000+ per site<br>Fence to exclude public access = \$12/m<br>Beach access improvements – costs vary                                 | Private Landholders<br>Catchment Management Authority<br>NSW Office of Environment & Heritage<br>Crown Lands                                       |
| e) Coastal Floodplain Vegetation Protection & Enhancement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manning River Floodplain</li> <li>Lansdowne River Floodplain</li> <li>Other sites as identified (e.g. Stewarts River Floodplain)</li> <li>Priorities from coastal studies</li> </ul>           | Protective fencing = \$12/m<br>Stock watering = \$8,000 per system<br>Habitat enhancements and revegetation at cost  | Australian Government<br>Catchment Management Authority<br>Office of Environment & Heritage<br>Private Landholders<br>Crown Lands<br>DPI Fisheries |

A photograph of a forest floor covered in vibrant green ferns. A large, weathered, grey-brown fallen log lies horizontally across the middle of the frame, with its end cut off. The background shows more trees and foliage, slightly out of focus.

## THEME TWO: BIODIVERSITY



\* Management of Council's natural reserves



\*Addressing vandalism of natural reserves



\*Programs to control environmental weeds



\*Removal fish barriers to enable habitat access



\*Active management of threatened species



\*Protection of habitat connectivity areas



\*Improve wildlife movement around roads



\*Revegetate cleared areas in habitat corridors



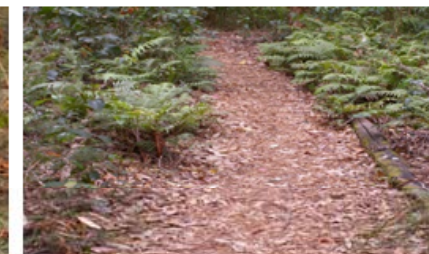
\*Improve wildlife blackspot areas



\*Improve habitat within Council's reserves



\*Feral animal control within Council's reserves



\*Construct walking paths, interpretative signs

## Theme 2: Biodiversity

| PROJECT ACTIVITY   | PRIORITY AREAS  | ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS   | POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS  |
|--|---|---|---|
| a) Natural Reserve Management  | Priorities identified in the surveys of Council's Natural Reserves  | Habitat enhancements and revegetation at cost.  | Crown Lands<br>Catchment Management Authorities<br>NSW Office of Environment & Heritage<br>Community Groups   |
| b) Environmental Weed / Pest Animal Control                              | Significant weed infestations & pest animals which threaten high value conservation areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Camphor Laurel</li> <li>– Small and Large-leaved Privet</li> <li>– Riparian Vine Weeds (Madeira Vine, Balloon Vine, Cats Claw Creeper)</li> <li>– Indian Mynas, Feral Deer, Wild Dogs, Foxes</li> </ul> | \$250 - \$5,000/ha depending on level of weed infestation (mostly \$1,000-\$3,000/ha).<br><br>Pest control varies depending on extent & severity of problem | Crown Lands<br>Catchment Management Authorities<br>NSW Office of Environment & Heritage<br>Community Groups<br>Private Landholders                              |
| c) Fish Barrier Removal  | Priorities identified in DPI Fisheries' Report 'Reducing the Impact of Road Crossings on Aquatic Habitat in Coastal Waterways – Hunter/Central Rivers, NSW'.  | \$10,000 - \$150,000 per site depending on design requirements.   | DPI Fisheries<br>Crown Lands<br>Catchment Management Authorities<br>NSW Office of Environment & Heritage  |
| d) Wildlife Blackspot Enhancements & Landscape Connectivity Improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Known blackspots sourced from wildlife fatalities records (e.g. Koalas in Care, FAWNA).</li> <li>– Predicted problem areas from aerial photo analysis of habitat corridors.</li> </ul>   | Fauna crossings = \$10,000-\$30,000 per site depending on design requirements.<br><br>Revegetation = \$3,000-\$15,000 per ha depending on site.             | Crown Lands<br>Catchment Management Authorities<br>NSW Office of Environment & Heritage<br>Private Landholders<br>Roads & Maritime Services<br>Community Groups |



THEME THREE:  
**SUSTAINABILITY &  
ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE**



**\*Install renewable energy systems**



**\*Implement energy saving measures**



**\*Undertake water quality monitoring**



**\*Measures to improve recycling & reuse**



**\*Collect & analyse natural resource data**



**\*Reduce water use & increase water reuse**



**\*Monitoring of air quality & noise pollution**



**\*Ecological surveys of future growth areas**



**\*Promote environmental best practice**



**\*Monitoring & mapping of habitat loss**



**\*Research soil carbon sequestration**



**\*Climate Change Adaptation**

### Theme 3: Sustainability & Environmental Performance

| PROJECT ACTIVITY                                  | PRIORITY AREAS   | ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS   | POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIP   |
|---|--|---|---|
| a) Minimising our Carbon Footprint                | <p>Collaborations, partnerships and projects to address facilities with high consumption of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Power</li> <li>– Water</li> <li>– Consumables / Waste</li> </ul>   | <p>Variation in costs of systems – competitive tendering proposed in addition to seeking government rebates to reduce project costs.</p> <p>1kw solar panel = \$1,500 approx (after rebate)</p>   | <p>Australian Government<br/>NSW Office of Environment &amp; Heritage<br/>Residents<br/>Local Businesses<br/>Community Groups</p>                                     |
| b) Enhanced Environmental Planning and Management | <p>Issues requiring improved monitoring, mapping, information and systems to inform better decision-making around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Water quality</li> <li>– Threatened species</li> <li>– Native vegetation</li> <li>– Resource consumption</li> <li>– Habitat loss</li> <li>– Prime agricultural lands</li> <li>– Development of environmental planning strategies (e.g. Biodiversity Conservation Strategy)</li> <li>– Management of environmental risks / environmental compliance (e.g. through the development of Environmental Management Systems)</li> </ul> | <p>Engagement of consultants to undertake data monitoring and reporting, surveys and mapping will be required in most cases on a fee basis.</p> <p>Purchase of monitoring equipment may also be required.</p> <p>Opportunities for resource sharing with other agencies will be explored to reduce costs.</p> | <p>NSW Office of Environment &amp; Heritage<br/>Department of Planning &amp; Infrastructure Australian Govt<br/>MidCoast Water<br/>Catchment Management Authority</p> |
| c) Climate Change Adaptation                      | Implementation of GTCC Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Plan (2011)  | Costs vary with types of project implemented - adaptation for sea level rise, increased fire frequency, temperatures, storm intensity & flooding.   | <p>NSW Office of Environment &amp; Heritage<br/>Department of Planning &amp; Infrastructure Australian Govt<br/>Business &amp; Industry<br/>SES</p>                   |

THEME FOUR:  
**DREDGING &  
BOATING IMPROVEMENTS**





**\*Dredging of river for navigation purposes**



**\*Boating event promotion & coordination**



**\*Boating access facilities – pontoons**



**\*Riverbank parks and visitor facilities**



**\*Boating access facilities – boat ramps**



**\*Boating user educational signage**



**\*Improvements to car parking facilities**



**\*Fishing access and fishing use facilities**



**\*Fish catch scaling and cleaning stations**



**\*Rowing & dragon boating access points**



**\*Control riverbank erosion to maintain access**



**\*Facilitate use of river for water skiing**

## Theme 4: Dredging & Boating Improvements

| TARGET ACTIVITY                       | PRIORITY AREAS   | ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS  | POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS   |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| a) Dredging for Navigation Purposes   | <p>Priorities as established in the 'Greater Taree Maintenance Dredging Strategy' 2010</p> <p>Possible reuse or relocation of sand from dredging for sand replenishment sites</p>  | <p>\$3-8/m3 for dredging costs (planning, administration and supervision costs additional)</p> <p>\$20,000 per site for revegetation of land disposal site</p> | <p>Crown Lands</p> <p>Local Industry Groups</p> <p>Community Groups (e.g. Farquhar Inlet Management Group)</p> <p>Recreational Boaters</p> <p>NSW Maritime</p> <p>NSW Fisheries</p>  |
| b) Improvements to Boating Facilities | <p>Priorities as established in the 'Manning River Boating Infrastructure Plan' 2012</p> <p>Other priority sites as identified (e.g. river side parks not identified in the current the 'Manning River Boating Infrastructure Plan')</p> | <p>Toilet amenities = \$100,000 - 150,000</p> <p>Fish cleaning station = \$10,000</p> <p>Pontoons = \$130,000</p> <p>Boat ramp improvements – costs vary</p>   | <p>NSW Office of Environment &amp; Heritage, Department of Planning &amp; Infrastructure</p> <p>Australian Government</p> <p>NSW Maritime</p> <p>NSW Fisheries</p> <p>Community Groups (e.g. Farquhar Inlet Management Group)</p> <p>Crown Lands</p> |

# Other Benefits of Proposed Projects

Local economic benefits by:

- Providing employment and business opportunities in the implementation of projects
- Protecting and enhancing our beautiful natural environment which attracts people to visit and move to our area
- Increasing fish stocks and oyster productivity through improved water quality

# Improved Recreational Opportunities:

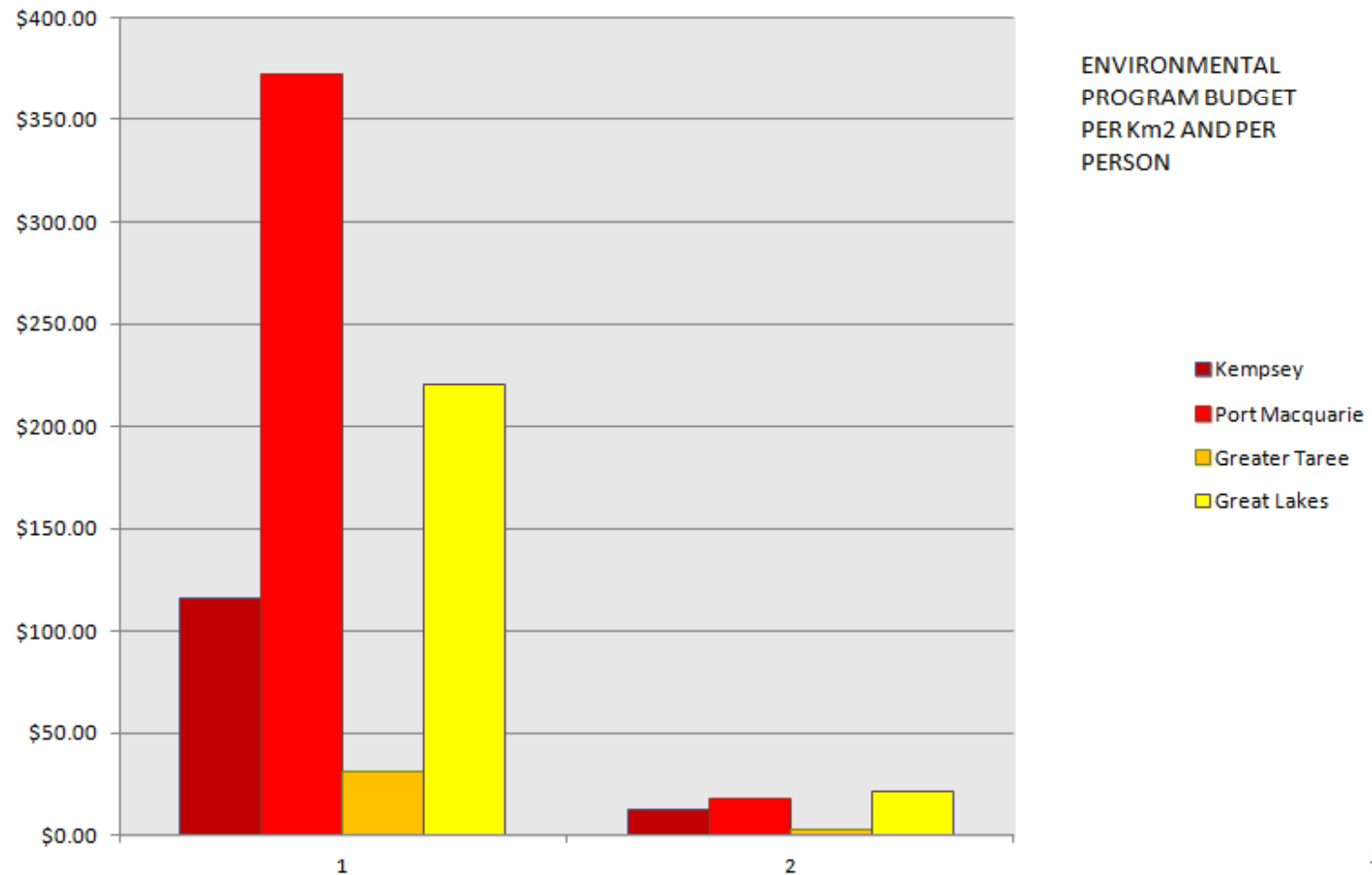
- Cleaner rivers to fish and swim in
- Improved boating access
- Better managed natural areas to visit, picnic and to see our local wildlife, such as Cattai Wetlands



# Resourcing the Plan

- Through the use of Council's ability to control and guide development and building activity
- Existing programs like waste management & noxious weeds
- Existing staff and resources for internal projects
- External grant programs to supplement resources
- Collaborations and partnerships
- Development offsets
- Special Rate Variation for an Environmental Levy

# Current Budget - Environmental Projects



# External Grant Funding

- Neighbouring councils having an Environmental Levy means that we are not able to effectively compete for external grant funding
- Council is currently implementing many projects where matching funding is not required (e.g. Federal Funding)
- This results in our Council not being able to obtain its fair share of external funding for environmental projects

# Neighbouring Councils with Env Levy

- **Great Lakes Council** has a 6% levy which generates **\$1.7M** annually for environmental projects in its region (including 1% specifically for dredging)
- **Port Macquarie-Hastings Council** has a levy which generates \$432,000 towards its annual budget of **\$1.3M** for environmental projects in its region
- **Kempsey Shire Council** has a levy which generates **\$468,000** annually for projects.

# Environmental Levy

- An Environmental Levy is a Special Rate Variation (SRV) which Council recently implemented for our roads
- Need to demonstrate to Council community support for an Environmental Levy in deciding whether to apply for an SRV – report to Council in November 2013
- SRVs are approved by the Division of Local Government (DLG), referred to IPART to comment on social impacts
- DLG decide on actual % rate and duration
- SRV Application is due March 2014
- Approved SRV would commence 1 July 2014

# What happens at the end of an Environmental Levy?

- Return to current level of funding allocated by Council to environmental projects (\$115,000/yr in 2012/13) - so 90% drop in available resources
- Ad hoc implementation of projects as resources and funding opportunities become available
- Inability to provide matching funding to secure external grants
- Extension or continuation of the SRV could be sought

## Example of an Environmental Levy Works Program

(Based on 5% over 5 years)

| THEME AREA                                    | %                     | 2014/15            | 2015/16            | 2016/17            | 2017/18            | 2018/19            |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Estuary & Water Quality                    | 2.5%<br>(50% of levy) | \$667,000          | \$687,000          | \$707,600          | \$728,900          | \$750,700          |
| 2. Biodiversity                               | 1%<br>(20% of levy)   | \$266,800          | \$274,800          | \$283,000          | \$291,500          | \$300,300          |
| 3. Sustainability & Environmental Performance | 0.5%<br>(10% of levy) | \$133,400          | \$137,400          | \$141,500          | \$145,800          | \$150,200          |
| 4. Dredging & Boating Improvements            | 1%<br>(20% of levy)   | \$266,800          | \$274,800          | \$283,000          | \$291,500          | \$300,300          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                  | <b>5%</b>             | <b>\$1,334,000</b> | <b>\$1,374,000</b> | <b>\$1,415,200</b> | <b>\$1,457,700</b> | <b>\$1,501,400</b> |

# Impacts on Rates

- 5% Environmental Levy

|                    | Residential | Farm   | Business |
|--------------------|-------------|--------|----------|
| Weekly increase 5% | \$0.91      | \$1.52 | \$3.14   |

# In Conclusion

1. Support and comment on draft Environmental Action Plan now sought:
  - **written submissions by 23 August 2013**
  - **survey responses by 14 October 2013**
2. Support and comment on the proposal to introduce an Environmental Levy also sought
  - **Written and survey responses as above**