

Hawkesbury River County Council



75th Anniversary

Volume 3 2009-2023



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Forward

With the successful creation of Volume 1 celebrating HRCC 50th anniversary and Volume 2 60th anniversary it is my pleasure to present Volume 3 75th anniversary book.

The recent year has seen major unprecedented flooding occur along our Hawkesbury Nepean River spilling its contents across our floodplains and backing up water within the catchment.

Our county has rapidly changed with the need for housing in Sydney. This is changing our catchment with the introduction of hard surfaces from residential areas allowing more water ending up in smaller creek lines and catchments.

Despite the physical and emotional toll these recent flood events have had on our community we are resilient. Our river too has suffered with the destruction of its banks and vegetation and ever-changing depth. Aquatic weeds were decimated and replaced with early colonisers upon the banks. For now, it is like a lull before a storm. A storm that is coming with the increasing forecast for our weather pattern to fall back into a El Nino cycle to bring dry conditions and drought. With the drought brings increased nutrients into the catchment with added warmer conditions creates the perfect set up for an explosion of weeds. We at HRCC are bracing for this with our current capacity and efforts but fear that without proper water management during drought conditions will allow for major decline in the health of our river and open the door to new weed infestations.

Not one body manages the river, but its survival is of interest to all.

Natalie James

Weed Control Coordinator, Hawkesbury River County Council

Acknowledgement of Country

The Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land we are meeting on are the Darug and Darkinjung people. We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging and acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First People of this country.

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements to Weed Control Coordinator Miss Natalie James, General Manger Mr Chris Dewhurst and Administration Officer, Penny Ramsay for the production of this 75 year anniversary book.

About HRCC

The County Council came into existence in 1948 (Government Gazette of 24/9/1948), and is a single-purpose Council for the control of Priority Weeds. The proposal started with Colo Shire Council in 1945, inviting all members of district Councils to attend a conference to be held at the Richmond Council Chambers on July 30, 1945 at 8:00pm. This conference was held to discuss the “Proposed Formation of The Hawkesbury River County Council For Eradication And Control Of Water Hyacinth”. The meeting was attended by Windsor, Richmond, Castlereagh and Baulkham Hills Councils. The Hawkesbury River County Council was finally formed and proclaimed in the Government Gazette No. 114 of September 24, 1948.

The present member Councils are : Hills Shire Council, Blacktown City Council, Hawkesbury City Council and Penrith City Council.



Hawkesbury River County Council (HRCC) has been serving the community since 1948. We are a single purpose Council, with our goal being to administer the Biosecurity Act 2015 throughout our Council areas of Blacktown, Hawkesbury, Penrith and the Hills Shire. This involves our organisation taking a nil-tenure, landscape approach to weed management across the entire region. We focus on early detection of new incursions and containment of high-risk plant species that impact on biodiversity, agriculture, and property.



Map of the Hawkesbury River County Council area that compromises the current four member councils.

Introduction

The following speech was delivered by Clr. Karen McKeown OAM, HRCC Chair and Member for Penrith on 26 August 2023 at the HRCC 75 Year Anniversary Celebrations:



As the current Chair of Hawkesbury River County Council, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you here today to celebrate this great milestone of 75 years unbroken service to the people and the environment of this region.

I would like to start by gratefully acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, the Darug and Darkinjung people. I pay my respects to their elders, past and present.

The County Council model has been used extensively in the historical development of Sydney. It was employed to address regional issues and established the bedrock of society we take for granted today. County Councils were used to build the first roads, and to supply water and electricity to homes. All the while they were led by people elected democratically by the surrounding citizens. The size and growth of Sydney meant that many of these early models supplying essential utilities were later absorbed into State government, or even privatised.

Hawkesbury River County Council also has a long historical past. It had its genesis when the Colo Shire called a meeting in 1945 of surrounding councils to address the issue of Water Hyacinth weed on the Hawkesbury River. Its growth rate was so high it would completely block access to navigation and irrigation. It was well understood at the time that weeds would not stay within the boundary of a single council but move in relation to the power of tides and wind. This precursor led to the formal establishment of Hawkesbury River County Council in September 1948, and its original members were the shires of Blacktown, Baulkham Hills, Colo, Windsor, and Penrith.

The County Council of today still maintains a very similar geographical area, and its modern members are Blacktown, Penrith, Hawkesbury, and the Hills Shire. It has endured amalgamations, government reviews, floods, bushfires and most recently a pandemic. The fact it has existed for so long is testimony to local government shared services and its inherent economic value proposition. Councils working in cooperation have multiple benefits, and ideally suit the challenge of weeds management. As weeds still have no boundaries, they much more effectively managed in a coordinated way across four Councils then they could be done alone. This is especially so when the issue at hand far outstrips the available resources required to manage it.

Yet Hawkesbury River County Council is not stuck in the past. It is a modern organisation who is staffed with some of the best weeds experts in the industry. The organisation employs up to date technology by taking advantage of advances in the science of biocontrol, satellite imaging and drones. The County Council has built strong links with the community by partnering with the Landcare program and helping to expand this model across the region. We provide good governance of the funds we utilise by providing regular transparent reporting to the community from our meetings and website.

I'm so glad you could join us today to celebrate this significant milestone. I will be soon planting a native tree to commemorate this moment, and I hope you all join me in sharing morning tea. The staff are also on hand to answer and weedy questions and will be handing out free native plants.

So, on behalf of all the current and former Councillors that have served on Hawkesbury River County Council, former and current staff. I would like to lead a round of applause on making this outstanding milestone of 75 years of service.

Newspaper Articles and Photos Through the Years 2009 - 2023



OUR COMMUNITIES —



Farmer Bill Pearce hopes to get rid of the Apple of Sodom (pictured) and Fireweed invading his property.

Farmer fights the Fireweed

by Cerise Burgess

WHILE the Australian government is delivering on a 2007 election promise by investing in new on-ground research into the impact of Fireweed on biodiversity and productivity in Australia, one Hawkesbury farmer has said it's important all farmers do their bit too.

Vineyard farmer Bill Pearce started his farm in 1962 and said he has constantly battled weeds including fireweed.

He said the most important thing is to remember to spray each year and that will not only kill off the weed but will stop it from spreading on your property or to others.

"Even though it may be hard to find the time to spray with everything else you have to do on the farm it's still one of the most important things and must be done," Mr Pearce said.

He said one of the "most successful



Fireweed (Senecio madagascariensis) is a highly invasive weed.

sprays" he has come across is Bromocide 200.

"It works quickly and is very effective," Mr Pearce said.

"The Fireweed and most weeds are very reactive to the Bromocide and it has really made a difference.

"I have hardly any weed left on my farm now". He said if you use the right spray and the right equipment you can "beat the weed".

But while he's winning battles against the Fireweed Mr Pearce said one of his biggest concerns is the Apple of Sodom weed — which he said "is popping up all over the place".

"It is an extremely poisonous weed and must be dealt with."

Mr Pearce said he is planning to spray the Apple of Sodom when he kills off the rest of the Fireweed on his property.

"Don't let either of these weeds get the best of you," he said.

"Get them before they flower, before the spread, it will save you money and time in the long run".

For details on the government program, visit www.daff.gov.au/naturalresources/invasive/national_weeds_productivity_research_program.

NEWS

Weeds to watch out for

by Tony Bosworth

THE Hawkesbury's weather over the last few weeks — high rainfall and humidity coupled with periods of hot sunshine — has proved ideal for the spread of noxious weeds, some of which can easily kill livestock.

Now farmers and landholders are being urged to do something about the growing problem.

Jenny Fawbert organically farms five acres at Oakville and keeps cows and horses. She said the main culprits were St John's wort, green cestrum, mother-of-millions, and scotch thistle.

"While some landholders are trying hard to control these weeds, most seem oblivious to the fact that their neglect of the plants on their land not only devalues their own property but affects the livelihood and value of neighbouring properties," she said.

Vet Ian Henry of Kurmond Veterinary Clinic echoed these views. "To me the biggest problem in this district is green cestrum," he said. "It grows right along the river at Ebenezer, and in Richmond it's also profuse. What people don't seem to realise is that one good mouthful can kill a cow."

"Most of the fair dinkum farmers know of the risk but those I'd call Pitt Street farmers don't seem to know about it at all."

Mrs Fawbert has farmed the same property for 17 years, and believes landowners need to get to grips with what's growing on their properties.

"This is the first year I have had to resort to using herbicide; normally I simply hoe them out."

The problem, said Mrs Fawbert, is that when landowners leave the weeds for too long they simply start to take over.

"St John's wort is a good example. It can easily take over pasture and while it is an ingredient in natural herbal remedies, if an animal brushes against it it can cause terrible ulcers and even kill them. I have seen expensive competition horses grazing in fields where St John's is growing.

"The point is, these plants put the lives and



Photo: Kylie Pitt

Jenny Fawbert keeps on top of weeds at her Oakville farm.

well being of grazing and native animals at great risk."

Frank Kava from Farm Services in South Windsor said his company had seen an upswing in demand for herbicides during the past few months.

"All plants are growing strongly and some of the weeds springing up have not been seen before, or not for years. When we get a lot of rain, if it's the summer or winter, you always get a spread of weeds."

Mr Kava explained that today's weedkillers were very effective and although they obviously needed to be handled with care, they didn't leave too much residue.

"What farmers need to do with most of the sprays is to take their stock out of the field that's being sprayed, sometimes for up to a fortnight. With some sprays, when the weed is dying it

gives off sugars and starches which animals find attractive, so they might eat them, and then they can also become ill."

Responsibility for weeds and their eradication lies with Hawkesbury Council and Hawkesbury River County Council, whose senior weeds inspector, Keith Rossiter, said this time of year was always bad for weeds.

"Landowners really need to be aware of what they have growing on their properties," he said. "Your Pitt Street farmers usually have plenty of money but are often unaware of their responsibilities. They think we automatically come along and kill weeds for them."

Mr Rossiter said the first step landowners should take is to contact Hawkesbury River County Council to arrange a time for an inspector to come along and identify what's native and what's weed on their properties.

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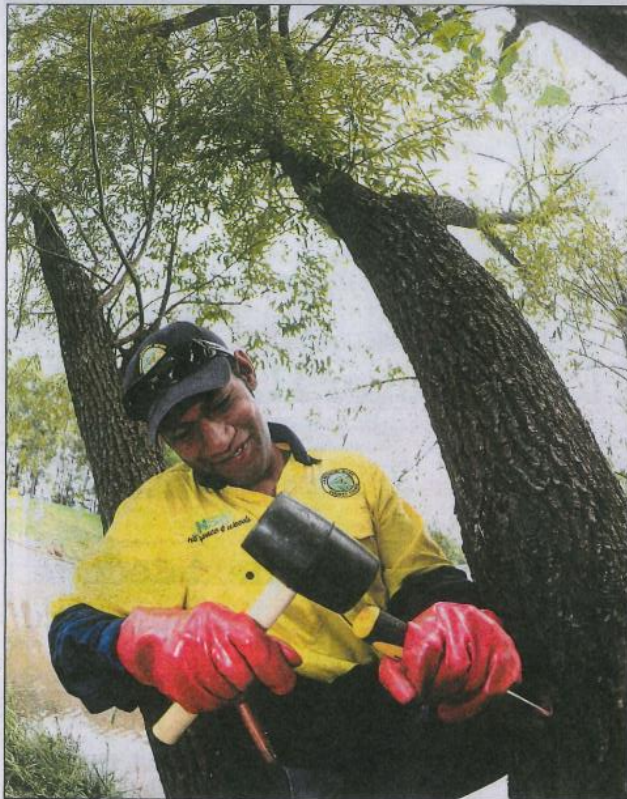
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See The Gazette's Australia Day co

8/2/2012 Hawkesbury Gazette



Hawkesbury River County Council trainee weeds officer Eddie Lesuma at the frontline of the black willow war.
Photo: Kylie Pitt

War against the weed gets ugly

by Cerise Burgess

HAWKESBURY environment groups have joined forces and aim to win the fight against black willow on our river and waterways.

Described by Hawkesbury River County Council general manager, Chris Dewhurst, as a "fast growing woody weed that infests the creeks and rivers of the Hawkesbury/Nepean system" he said black willow has the "ability to displace native trees and form a root mass that encourages silt build-up and reduced flows".

"It also soaks up enormous amounts of water, reducing river flows even further," Mr Dewhurst said.

The county council is assisting with the war on willows by targeting the weed in a 40 kilometre stretch of river from Penrith to the junction of Cattai Creek.

The project is funded by the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Authority, with funds from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country program and matching funds provided in-kind by the county council.

Mr Dewhurst said "the only way we are going to stop weeds like this is if we get co-operation from a range of stakeholders".

He said "HRCC is in a fortunate position of being able to co-ordinate our four member councils – Hawkesbury, Penrith, Blacktown and the Hills Shire – to achieve specific weed control aims".

Mr Dewhurst said they were also working closely with the Willow Warriors volunteer program to ensure the funding was spent in the most efficient manner possible.

"So far HRCC staff have killed more than 200 willows along the river, and with the project running until 2013 it aims to have killed all mature seeding trees by that time."

He said they are also taking care to use control techniques that minimise dead willows from entering waterways, such as the direct stem inject method.

If you are interested in learning more about this project call Hawkesbury River County Council on 4587 0230.

Hawkesbury Gazette 1/02/ 2012

Weevil to chomp through salvinia

by Cerise Burgess

A TINY weevil has become a powerful ally for Hawkesbury weeders, chewing its way through one of the worst offenders.

Hawkesbury River County Council general manager, Chris Dewhurst, said the floating aquatic fern, salvinia, was widespread in the waterways of the Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment and at the right time of year it can be a "menace".

"When this weed gets out of control it has the potential to totally shut down the river...as it did in 2004," he said.

But it's not a case of just removing the weed. Mr Dewhurst explained that "tackling problem aquatic weeds is a complex business".

"Attempts to remove plants from the river must take into account the need to protect water quality and river ecosystems," he said.

Mr Dewhurst said County Council staff have been working with the Department of Primary Industries to trial the salvinia weevil as a biological control.

"The weevil has a very specific diet," he said. "It eats new growth tips of salvinia but is not interested in any other plant. When the salvinia dies back, so does the weevil."

He said success in field trials over the past five years is leading to its widespread release this summer.

"This project is saving thousands of litres of chemical from being used and preventing salvinia building up large populations."

While the weevil takes care of the salvinia, the County Council, as the weed authority for Hawkesbury, Penrith, The Hills and Blacktown councils, will have plenty of other offenders to arrest. Water hyacinth, alligator weed and egeria are also on the target list.

Mr Dewhurst said the work done by the salvinia weevil will allow them to focus on these other weeds, "all of which are very widespread in the river and impact negatively on agricultural producers and river users".

For more information on salvinia visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds/profiles/salvinia.



Above: The salvinia weevil is helping to get rid of salvinia on the Hawkesbury River. Below: Salvinia carpets the river in 2004.



RIVER

Weeds be gone

by Cerise Burgess

IT'S GREEN, thick and found underwater and if you've been out on the river lately, then chances are you've come across it.

During the past two weeks the Hawkesbury River County Council's harvester has been working daily to remove hundreds of tonnes of egeria and other aquatic weeds near the bridge at Windsor.

Abundant in the summer months, plants growing under the water's surface can be a nuisance to swimmers and boat owners.

The weeds can also fill nets of fishermen and clog up irrigators' pipes.

General manager of the county council, Chris Dewhurst, said "in a natural environment, native aquatic plants have a good effect on the river, providing homes for fish, food for water birds and keeping the riverbed stable".

"In the right conditions, however, such as when high levels of nutrients and high temperatures combine, even native plants can become overgrown and turn into weeds".

He said harvesting was only part of the solution though, and that a number of government programs aimed at reducing nutrients and managing other conditions that encourage and sustain weed growth are on track to deliver results in the long term.

"Even if all nutrients could be stopped right now, it may take many years for aquatic plants to be brought back to a manageable level, so we will still need to do some harvesting," Mr Dewhurst said.

He said the mechanical harvester is capable of removing hundreds of tonnes of aquatic plant material, giving temporary relief to river users.

"Our main aim is to make the river safer and more accessible," Mr Dewhurst said.

He said over the two-week operation they



Hawkesbury River County Council worker Andrew Scott works to remove hundreds of tonnes of river weeds.

should remove around 200 tonnes of weed. The current aquatic weed harvesting project has been assisted by the Office of the Hawkesbury-Nepean. "As well as a co-ordinated government effort, ultimately it will require a much greater awareness and active co-operation from local communities to control contributors like stormwater runoff, so we're all responsible," Mr Dewhurst said.

Deluge washes weeds into river

by Cerise Burgess

IF YOU'VE been driving along Freemans Reach Road recently near the Breakaway and have noticed a large amount of weed in the river, rest assured it's all under control.

General manager of the Hawkesbury River County Council Chris Dewhurst said the weeds, mostly water hyacinth and salvinia, have all been washed down by the big rains and mild flooding

experienced in the river over the past month. "Luckily, they have been caught by our council boom attached on the river at the Breakaway specifically for this purpose," he said.

Mr Dewhurst said the County Council's operational staff are in the process of harvesting the weeds from this area.

So far, they have removed 115 cubic metres of weed, but unfortunately their harvesting efforts are "being ham-

pered by further rain events". "The harvester can't work once the river flow rates or river height increase," he said.

Mr Dewhurst said they expect the area to be cleaned up in two to three weeks depending on weather conditions.

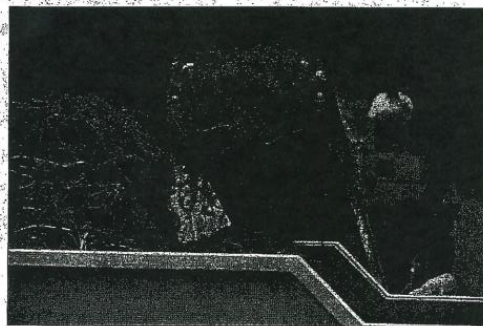
To be kept up to date with all the latest weed operations you can follow the Hawkesbury River County Council on Twitter - @HawkesburyRCC.



A large amount of weed, caught in a boom, is currently being harvested out of the river at the Breakaway, Freemans Reach.

Penrith Press 2/3/2011

NEWS



A previous weed harvesting operation on the Nepean.

River weeds targeted

THE health of the Nepean River will improve in the coming weeks as aquatic weeds are removed between the M4 and Victoria Bridge.

A joint effort of the Office of the Hawkesbury-Nepean and the Hawkesbury River County Council, the council will operate the harvester with Penrith Council providing safe disposal of the tonnes of plant material.

In summer, plants that grow under water can be a nuisance and, in extreme cases, can block the river completely. Native aquatic plants provide habitat for

fish, food for water birds and stabilise sandy riverbeds.

But even native plants can overgrow.

"Cutting back excessive plants gives temporary relief to river users but it's only part of the solution," county council general manager Chris Dewhurst said.

The conditions causing rapid growth also need to change.

A range of government programs are under way aimed at reducing weed-feeding nutrients and

changing those weed-friendly conditions in the long term.

Projects for improved river health include more water released from dams for environmental flows and reducing nutrients entering the river system from stormwater, wastewater and agricultural runoff.

"Even if all nutrients could be stopped right now, it could take many years for aquatic plants to be brought back to a manageable level, so harvesting will need to remain a part of the overall strategy," Mr Dewhurst said.

River boom break adds to problems

by Cerise Burgess

FLOODING, vandals, poorly controlled urban runoff, lack of resourcing for river management authorities and new developments - could this spell disaster for the Hawkesbury River?

With two large river booms breaking recently, sending thousands of square metres of weed downstream, combined with the lack of funding allocated to river management authorities and the approval of new developments, some seem to think so.

The containment boom in the lower sections of the Nepean River, managed by Hawkesbury River County Council, were holding approximately 3000sqm of noxious water hyacinth and salvinia.

On Sunday, February 12, witnesses saw several men in two aluminium boats vandalising the weed boom above Yarramundi, causing the boom to detach from one anchor point which allowed the entire weed mass to escape downstream.

The Breakaway weed boom above Windsor had been preventing the aquatic weed from impacting this highly used stretch of river, however torrential rain entering the river upstream last week increased the water pressure against the boom, and it broke.

The large mix of weed and debris is reportedly seen flowing under Windsor Bridge in the evening of Tuesday, February 21 by the local canoe club.

General manager of Hawkesbury River County Council, Chris Dewhurst, said weed booms were used in strategic locations along the river to contain weed, so it could be treated with biological agents

effectively into the saltwater reaches of the river with the floodwaters.

"Unfortunately, as the weed travels with the current, the weed mats break up and the smaller rafts of weed are pushed to the edge of the current and end up being trapped in backwaters and lagoons, perpetuating the infestation cycle," Mr Dewhurst said.

He is warning river users to take "great care at present as there is a great deal of debris being moved along the waterway" and said county council staff were currently involved in treating escaped aquatic weed and repairing weed containment booms to reduce the impact on river users.

Last week, Greens activist Susie Wright met with local river users, environmentalists and concerned residents about the boom breakages.

Members of the North Richmond and Districts Community Action Association, Willow Warriors, Friends of the Colo, Hawkesbury Environment Network, Hawkesbury Rainforest Network, and Streamwatch met on the riverbank.

The groups expressed support for the booms because they help control the movement of noxious weeds in the river, but were clear that the booms "are not going to save the river".

She said the boom gave way because it was "overloaded with rubbish and noxious weeds but the real problem is inappropriate development, poorly controlled urban runoff and lack of resourcing for river management authorities".

"Planning now underway by the O'Farrell government for Greater Western Sydney will see an esti-

mate of \$100 million in new money to the river communities in western Sydney".

She said local government, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Authority, Hawkesbury River County Council and all local governments along the Nepean/Hawkesbury River and major tributaries need "clear, consistent regulations and money to enforce them".

One of the group members also said she had met with someone who has been living on the river for 64 years and had told her they were "deeply concerned about recent developments approved in the Hawkesbury".

Another issue for the group is the highly toxic chemical spill into South Creek in St Marys which happened five weeks ago.

The spill, one of many, attracted a paltry fine of \$450 from the EPA and resulted in a cease-to-pump order for more than two weeks for all river users from South Creek to Windsor.

Ms Wright said since then "no information has been forthcoming about what chemicals were spilt into the river and/or the impact on fish in the river - is it OK to eat the fish?"

One resident who kayaked up South Creek recently said it looked "dead" and had regular outbreaks of poisonous blue green algae.

He also warned that if the funding and management of the river didn't take priority for this government, the South Creek disaster would extend all the way to Windsor.

The group has now called on Londonderry MP Bart Bassett to increase funding to the Hawkes-



Before: The boom in action back in November 2011.



Clean up: Hawkesbury River County Council operations manager, Chris Stanfield, with the broken boom. Photo: Mike Sea



FUNDING FOR WEED CONTROL ON NEPEAN RIVER NEEDS A BOOST

Call for Council help

Council supports plea for more weed control funding

EMILY CRANE

Penrith City Council will write to the State Government in a bid to reinstate funding for noxious weed control on Nepean River.

The Hawkesbury River County Council (HRCC) is responsible for controlling weeds in the Penrith Local Government Area and has asked for Council's support to boost funding arrangements.

In 2009, the State Government amended

the funding process for weed control, which amalgamated four Regional Weed Committees - including the HRCC - into a single committee. As a result, HRCC has had its funding cut by \$68,000 each year.

General Manager of HRCC, Chris Dewhurst, said the change has had a huge impact on the services HRCC provides.

"The less funding we get from the State Government, the more we need to draw from the local community," he said.

"It has meant we have had to reduce the number of weed officers... and therefore we can't complete as much weed control."

In addition to government funding, HRCC receives funding from four local councils each year including Penrith.

On Monday, Councillors resolved to support the HRCC's request for government funding on the basis that the cut to funding has meant less services for Penrith, especially in regards to its aquatic weed harvester.

Mr Dewhurst said the harvester was an additional expense.

"We've got increasing operating costs and decreasing revenue - we're trying to turn that around," he said.

Penrith Western Weekender
10 March 2012

2/5/2012 HCU

NEWS



Karen Anderson at McKenzie Creek where flooding has seen weeds debris take hold of the land. Photo: Kylie Pitt

Deluge takes away land

by Anna Yeo

RESIDENTS on land near McKenzie Creek along Pitt Town Road are desperate for action, after recent flooding in the area has seen them lose land under water, to weeds and pollution.

Eight residents living near McKenzie's Creek gathered at the bridge last week to voice their anger at Hawkesbury Council's failure to clear the waterway of rubbish and weed, which has now seen nearby land inundated with water.

Cheryl Waters has five acres of her land under water, has lost fencing, a horse arena and weed has covered a number of fences making them almost unrecognisable.

She said her fight with council to have her land drained and cleaned has been "hopeless", and she has pleaded for help.

"We have lost our fences, we have nowhere to put our horses it's costing us \$350 a week to have our horses on agistment," Ms Waters said. "No-one will help us."

Across the road, Lorraine and Reg Smith said after heavy rain the water around the area rises quickly with little warning, which has residents in the area frightened.

Director of Infrastructure Services Jeff Organ said council was aware of the issues and officers have inspected the affected areas.

"Whilst the land is privately owned and is principally the responsibility of the owners to maintain, an investigation will be carried out to assist the affected owners," Mr Organ said.

"In addition, council has requested the

RMS to investigate improvements to the area surrounding their bridge at McKenzie's Creek to mitigate the effects of any blockage of the waterway by weed or debris.

"With regard to the issue of weed management, the creek has been affected by growth of the weed salvinia.

"Council has referred this issue to the Hawkesbury River County Council as the agency responsible for weed management.

"Further enquiries in relation to the weed should be directed to the Hawkesbury River County Council."

Mr Organ said council officers would be in further contact with the landowners in an attempt to assist them in managing their properties.


HERITAGE THEATRE

Wednesday, June 13, 2012


A good friend in the Hawkesbury since 1888

\$1.60


riverview
HAWKESBURY CENTRE




PAGE 4
Fire destroys gym



PAGE 6
Crusade to track vandals



PAGE 7
Our worst roads



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2011 E.C. Sommerlad Award for Newspaper of the Year – Country Press Awards

Budget bonus?

by Anna Yeo and Justine Geake

THE most significant item in yesterday's State Budget for Hawkesbury residents is the funding for the North West Rail Link and upgrades to Schofields Road.

In a budget described by the NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell as a "significant investment in transport", Western Sydney and the north-west sector have received more than \$1 billion in funding for a range of infrastructure projects.

Included in that funding is \$360 million for the North West Rail Link, and \$25 million to continue the upgrade of Schofields Road between Windsor Road and Tallawong Road.

Despite the federal government rejecting the state government's requests for more than \$2 billion to help fund the \$8.5 billion

NWRL project earlier this year, the NSW government assures residents the project will still go ahead.

The \$360 million set aside for the rail line in this year's budget will be used for the preparation of major construction sites, property acquisition and the second Environmental Impact Statement.

Just outside the Hawkesbury, the NSW government has set aside \$70 million for ongoing upgrades to the Great Western Highway and money to build two new schools in the recently developed Ponds district.

While a total of \$5 billion has been allocated for roads and maritime needs statewide, only \$341 million has been earmarked for upgrading roads in western Sydney. It has not been revealed yet whether any of this money will reach the Hawkesbury.

An extra \$1 billion has been allocated for NSW health this year, with Nepean Hospital named as one which will share with three other hospitals a kitty of \$5.6 million for additional adult intensive care services. Nepean was also named as one of three hospitals which will get a carpark upgrade.

While Windsor police station wasn't named as receiving any funds, Riverstone police station will receive a share of \$34 million for continuing refurbishments (which it will share with six other police stations.)

Environmentally, our river has scored, as Hawkesbury River County Council, which controls land and aquatic weeds over four local government areas – Hawkesbury, Penrith, Blacktown and the Hills – has received \$100,000 per year for the next four years to maintain the weed harvest which

relieved the Hawkesbury River of hundreds of tonnes of aquatic weed in recent years. Londonderry MP Bart Bassett said he has been working on this issue for 12 months "and is thrilled the government has listened and acted".

While the management of national parks and protection of native fauna will get a \$419 million boost in the Budget, it's not known yet if Hawkesbury national parks will benefit.

First-home buyers in the Hawkesbury will be thrilled that the First Home Owner Grant will more than double to \$15,000 and those buying subsequent new homes will be very pleased with the New Home Grant - \$5000 to non-first home buyers of new properties.

■ The Gazette will have more on local implications of the State Budget next week.

Our river at risk?

"THE Office of the Hawkesbury-Nepean is a one-stop shop for the communities, industries and landholders who rely on the Nepean River," said the Public Service Association's industrial officer, Geo Papas.

The office was established in 2009 and includes representatives of Sydney Water, the departments of Environment, Primary Industries and Planning and the Hawkesbury-Nepean and Sydney catchment authorities.

A spokeswoman for the NSW Office of Water said the organisation was planning to out staff and relocate services throughout the state. "As part of these changes, the closure of the Office of Hawkesbury-Nepean has been proposed, with the transfer of staff from the Office of Hawkesbury-Nepean back to the NSW

■ The proposed closure of Penrith's Office of the Hawkesbury-Nepean could have serious consequences, Roderick Shaw reports.

Office of Water," she said.

"This action is a proposed option only at this stage."

Mr Papas said such a decision would be short-sighted. "By getting rid of the Hawkesbury-Nepean office, all the workers will return to their different agencies and there'll be no co-ordinated management of the river," he said.

However, some of the river's regular users were divided about the office's usefulness.

Nepean River Tours operator Steve Defina said he did not

believe the office had achieved anything. "When it opened I thought, you beauty, but they never followed anything up," he said. "They'd say they'd get back to us but they never did."

He said he once spoke to the office about a new weir causing water levels to drop in the river. "But they told me I didn't know what I was talking about. I think it'd be better to spend the money on the river instead of more bureaucrats."

But the Nepean Belle owner, John Wakeling, saw things differently. "I wouldn't like to see the office leave Penrith because it might weaken our access to vital information," he said.

"When heavy rains fall we might get some sort of flood, so we need to know what's happening to keep our vessels safe."

He said it was better to have people monitoring the river from nearby, than from an office in Sydney. "The closer you are to the action the more precise your action is."

Mr Papas hoped the government would reject any moves to close the office. "It seems at odds with the government talking about increasing services to the public," he said.

The Star contacted Penrith state MP Stuart Ayles for comment but got no response before press time.



■ "All the workers will return to their different agencies and there'll be no co-ordinated management of the river."

Geo Papas, Industrial officer,
Public Service Association

Katie Mui SA

Deluge takes away McKenzie Creek Land

By Anna Yeo **Updated** November 1 2012 - 3:06pm, first published May 3 2012 - 12:34am



Charlie Courtney, Reg Smith, Karen Anderson, Lorraine Smith, Cheryl Waters, Pam Johnson, Annette Wallace and Joanne Wein. Photo: Kylie Pitt

RESIDENTS on land near McKenzie Creek along Pitt Town Road are desperate for action, after recent flooding in the area has seen them lose land under water, to weeds and pollution.

Eight residents living near McKenzie's Creek gathered at the bridge last week to voice their anger at Hawkesbury Council's failure to clear the waterway of rubbish and weed, which has now seen nearby land inundated with water.

Cheryl Waters has five acres of her land under water, has lost fencing, a horse arena and weed has covered a number of fences making them almost unrecognisable.

She said her fight with council to have her land drained and cleaned has been "hopeless", and she has pleaded for help.

"We have lost our fences, we have nowhere to put our horses it's costing us \$350 a week to have our horses on agistment," Ms Waters said. "No-one will help us."

Across the road, Lorraine and Reg Smith said after heavy rain the water around the area rises quickly with little warning, which has residents in the area frightened.

Director of Infrastructure Services Jeff Organ said council was aware of the issues and officers have inspected the affected areas.

"Whilst the land is privately owned and

is principally the responsibility of the owners to maintain, an investigation will be carried out to assist the affected owners," Mr Organ said.

"In addition, council has requested the RMS to investigate improvements to the area surrounding their bridge at McKenzie's Creek to mitigate the effects of any blockage of the waterway by weed or debris.

"With regard to the issue of weed management, the creek has been affected by growth of the weed salvinia.

"Council has referred this issue to the Hawkesbury River County Council as the agency responsible for weed management.

"Further enquiries in relation to the weed should be directed to the Hawkesbury River County Council."

Mr Organ said council officers would be in further contact with the landowners in an attempt to assist them in managing their properties.

[Deluge takes away McKenzie Creek land | Hawkesbury Gazette | Richmond, NSW](#)

November 9th 2012 HRCC Staff out at the Farming Small Areas field day at Richmond.



Winning the weed battle

STORY and PICTURE
Kim Chappell

SUMMER IS THE TOUGHEST time for weed officers fighting salvinia – with the weed able to double in size in just two days during the hot months.

Hawkesbury River County Council noxious weeds inspector Karen Jenkins (pictured right with noxious weed inspector Steve Russell) said the team had been working hard in the Long Neck Lagoon region, educating residents with dams about the weed.

She said this was because the dams flowed into the Nepean and Yarramundi rivers.

"There is no viable seed here (for salvinia) so it spreads by birds and boats and people and canoes, all water craft if people don't wash down properly," Ms Jenkins said. "We've also had a problem with it being sold for aquariums."

She said the *Cyrtobagous Salviniae* beetle was proving effective as a method of biocontrol.

The beetle ate the salvinia, and



because they were still on a trial basis the weeds team chose where they went and monitored their progress.

"We don't sell them to the landowners, we put them in the dams."

Ms Jenkins said if anybody found salvinia in their dam they should contact their local weeds officer.

"While it is against the law to have it on your property, we aren't

the weed police; we want to help you control it."

She said weeds officers would create a plan to tackle the weed which could involve glyphosate, biocontrol or even a pool scoop.

"If it's a small dam, some people use a pool scoop and pull it out."

It could be safely left to dry on the side of the dam and used for mulch without risk of spreading as the weed is totally aquatic and can not

survive outside of water, Ms Jenkins said.

The weed also posed a threat to livestock as they could walk into a weed-covered dam, thinking it was more paddock, and become tangled.

If thick across the dam surface nothing underneath could survive either, while it would also clog irrigation systems linked to the dam.

Weeds

Fighting noxious plants in the water



SALVINIA (*SALVINIA MOLESTA*) is a serious aquatic weed that is declared noxious throughout Australia.

It was first recorded at Luddenham near Sydney in 1952 and near Brisbane in 1953.

The Brazil native was thought to have been introduced originally as an aquarium plant.

It is listed as a weed of national significance in Australia.

Salvinia infestations are found in coastal streams from Cairns in North Queensland to the South Coast of NSW, as well as near Perth, Darwin, Melbourne and Adelaide.

To date, only isolated infestations have been recorded on inland waterways.

In NSW, salvinia (pictured) is common in the Tweed, Richmond, Clarence and Macleay catchments, the Central Coast and metropolitan areas.

Salvinia is still found in aquarium and rockery ponds as an illegally-propagated aquatic plant.

It is a weed of still and slow-flowing fresh water, and is adaptable, surviving in many climates.

Although low temperatures will reduce its growth rate it can withstand an occasional frost.

While persistent low temperatures and frosts will kill exposed portions of plants, when it is presented as a thick mat of weed there is enough protection from frosts for regeneration to occur.

Salvinia can grow over a wide range of water-nutrient levels, with great growth rates generally recorded in warm water with high nutrient levels.

Under these conditions,

salvinia can double its mass in as little as two days.

This ability of the plant to grow rapidly makes it difficult to control.

Salvinia has the potential to spread to much of Australia and is



regarded as a serious threat to waterways and irrigation areas because it: ● disrupts aquatic ecosystems, seriously affecting native animals

and plant life;

● decreases the quality of water by causing odours, accumulation of organic matter and stagnation of streams;

● degrades the aesthetic value of waterways;

● reduces or prevents the use of waterways for recreation and transport;

● interferes with the functioning

of river control structures, especially during flooding.

Salvinia is capable of vegetative spread in two main ways:

● by breaking into daughter plants;

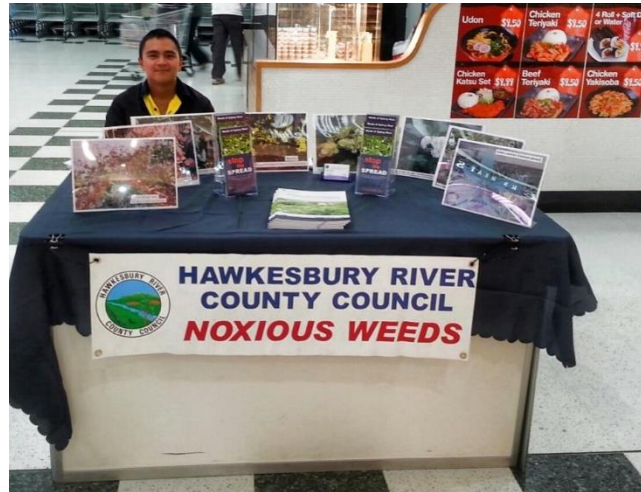
● by the separation of young growth through death or damage of the parent material connecting these sections.

Daughter plants grow when an abscission layer (where the leaf stem joins the plant stem) develops at each node following stem branching.

This process occurs very quickly in uncrowded, favourable growing conditions. A number of branches can develop at each node and give rise to individual plants following the separation from the parent plant at the abscission layer.

Damaged or dead plant material stimulates the development of buds into branches, and the process continues.

■ Visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/weeds
Article courtesy of NSW Department of Primary Industries.



May 2021 2013 A HRCC Weed Officer spreading the word on high priority weeds in Plumpton Mall.

A Day in the Life of a Weed Warrior

17/09/2013 by Chris Dewhurst

The HRCC Aquatic Weed Harvesting System Explained

With credit to Far North Coast Weeds. <http://youtu.be/qjEy0eSaCHw>



November 2nd 2013 HRCC are at the Small Farms Field Day at Hawkesbury Showground all weekend.
We have some new giveaways too.

HRCC Concept for a “Biosecurity County Council”

02/01/2014 by [Chris Dewhurst](#)

April 2013. Local Land Services (LLS) are the new NSW Government regional service delivery organisations that will replace Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs), Livestock Health & Pest Authorities (LHPAs) and incorporate agricultural advisory services currently provided by Agriculture NSW (DPI). The [HRCC proposal](#) utilises existing structures of local government to deliver the operational aspects of the LLS. A short one page brief can be found [here](#).

Proposed LLS “Biosecurity County Council” Delivery Model for Greater Sydney Chris Dewhurst, GM, HRCC, 6 December 2013, gm@hrcc.nsw.gov.au, @HawkesburyRCC

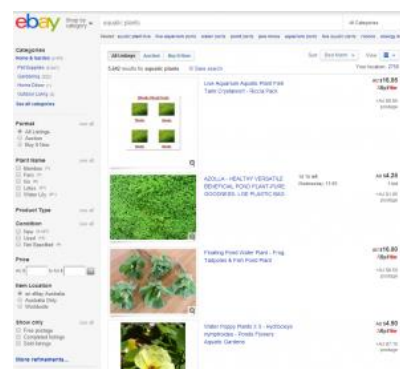
The Concept: LLS “State” and LLS “Greater Sydney” remain key planning / strategic / policy development agencies – creating a mix of legislative and incentive frameworks to deliver on their plans at their respective levels. Under this proposed model, LLS “Local” is local government (as County Councils), who function under an intergovernmental contract (defined via “Vertical Shared Services” Dollery et al, 2012) to engage and deliver the services on-the-ground. This could be delivered in Sydney via four “Council Clusters”, similar in jurisdiction to the current Sydney Weeds Committees boundaries (see Fig 1) and established under the *Local Government Act 1993* (S383). The services provided include pest plant and animal control, regulation and education activities. A council driven LLS delivery model will have the following advantages: Ease at which LLS State strategy can be implemented by “single” organisations across a wide variety of landscapes and tenures utilising the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework to plan and deliver. Utilising local government “shared services” economies of scale benefits – especially in plant provision, IT and specialist knowledge. (there are excellent examples of Council’s already doing this effectively, ie: WSROC, SWC, HRCC) – further evidence in Dollery et al (2012) Employing more people (long term) under the Local Government (State) Award = more people on-the-ground where the community want them. State government employees focus on strategy, policy, support material and legislation. Local government employees focus on operational works, community engagement, network development and education. The Landcarer and/or Farmer only needs to establish a relationship with one government agency - LLS “Local Government” - for all of their biosecurity and NRM services. Can easily expand to include current Weed Control (LCA) and/or other roles. In conclusion we believe we have a rare opportunity to coordinate the delivery of biosecurity and NRM roles in a greatly simplified model. A model the community is more likely to understand and therefore engage with and support. A model that will be far more responsive to new biosecurity threats. It would eliminate duplication (especially in the strategic areas) and foster cost-effective use of public funding leading to more operational jobs in the sector. It will produce a bottom-line result of engaged land managers, more on-ground results, enhanced biosecurity and a productive and healthier environment. Ref: Dollery B, Grant B, Kortt M (2012) Councils in Cooperation – Shared Services and Australian Local Government. The Federation Press. <http://www.federationpress.com.au/> Comments gratefully accepted via: gm@hrcc.nsw.gov.au.

[the above proposal was rejected by NSW Government]

HRCC Media Release – Weed Authority Tackles e-Weeds

27/02/2014 by [Chris Dewhurst](#)

Hawkesbury River County Council (HRCC) has moved its battle against noxious weeds on-line. The Weed Authority's inspectors have noticed a number of people setting up business selling plants over the internet using services such as eBay. HRCC Operations Manager, Mr Chris Stanfield says "We routinely inspect traditional plant outlets such as nurseries and aquariums, but we now have to keep watch on the sale of live plants over the internet". "These plants can cause devastating impact on our agriculture and natural environment", Mr Stanfield said. "Noxious species such as Salvinia and Water Hyacinth can be sealed in plastic and shipped to the buyer within two days. However, Weed Authority inspectors have found good will amongst plant retailers, in both traditional and online forms. "Most are small business people only too happy to do the right thing if provided with good advice", Mr Stanfield said. "The small number of people selling illegal weed species has stopped immediately once they have been contacted by our staff, and in most cases it appears to be a case of mistaken identity. HRCC Chairman, Clr. Bob Porter said "This is an example of how our weed authority is adapting to the modern market place." "The County Council is continually on the lookout for new weed incursions, so if you think you have spotted one, please report it immediately." Hawkesbury River County Council (HRCC) is the local weed authority for the Council areas of Blacktown, Hawkesbury, Penrith and The Hills Shire. HRCC has a list of all Noxious Weeds on its website at www.hrcc.nsw.gov.au, or call 4574 9600 to report a weed. For media enquiries please contact: Mr Chris Dewhurst, General Manager T: 4574 9603 E: gm@hrcc.nsw.gov.au



NSW Weed Management Review

28/02/2014 by [Chris Dewhurst](#)

Kudzu infestation at Boundary Creek, Penrith
Final NRC Report now released. ["Weeds-Time to get Serious" – a review of weed management in NSW.](#)



The Minister for Primary Industries, The Hon.

Katrina Hodgkinson MP has requested the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to undertake an independent evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of weed management arrangements in NSW with a view to inform the further development of the proposed NSW Biosecurity Act, and other relevant strategies under the NSW Biosecurity Strategy. As an initial step in the review the NRC has prepared an [issues paper](#) now available for public comment based on initial consultation and research. The purpose of this paper is to:

- clarify priority issues
- get stakeholder and community views about barriers and opportunities for more effective weed management
- seek to identify any additional issues
- identify relevant evidence to inform the review.

[Hawkesbury River County Council made a submission during the review.](#)



July 25th 2014 Trainees build the HRCC depo gardens on the corner of Dowling Place



July 31st 2014 HRCC Weed Officer Trainee removing the weed "Bridal Creeper" from Narragingy Reserve in Blacktown.



8th August 2014 HRCC Weed Officer distributing bio-control weevils into Salvinia weed on Shaw's Island, Castlereagh. These weevils have been used to keep Salvinia under control on the Hawkesbury River for the past three years.

H-Gaz 9/7/2014

News

Workshop targets noxious weed

By Rita Rizk

A WORKSHOP on one of the worst weeds in the area, known as 'Cat's Claw Creeper', could help hundreds of landowners in the Grose-Vale Kurrajong area learn how to manage it effectively.

To be held on Friday, July 18, the workshop will feature weed management experts demonstrating how to treat the weed.

There will also be a bus trip where participants can see before and after examples of treatment.

The invasive weed can have a major economic and environmental impact on properties, bushland and native animal habitat with its ability to grow over and smother native vegetation and tall trees.

The Hawkesbury Environment Network and Hawkesbury Rainforest Network started an eradication program last year to map and target the weed around the region, with the aim of eradicating it completely.

A team of officers from Hawkesbury River County Council have been placing yellow ribbons on the vine wherever it can be seen on roadsides and are urging people to do the same.

The vine only flowers in summer which makes it difficult for people to know it is lurking on their property, where it can form a thick carpet of stems and leaves, damaging and preventing growth of desired plants.



Above: A cat's claw eradication team at Roxana Road, Kurrajong assess how to free a tree covered with the creeper. Right: the creeper's distinctive flower.



Supported by Greater Sydney species. To register for the workshop contact Robin Woods on Local Land Services, the federal robin@hen.org.au or phone government has funded the project 0414 672 014. You need to register because many bushland areas in Australia are infested by the before July 11.

Heritage plaques for historic sites

FUNDING will be allocated for the installation of heritage plaques around the Hawkesbury in Council's 2015/16 Operational Plan.

Councillor Bob Porter said at the moment the entire area is drastically missing out on what can be done for significant heritage items.

"Tizzana Road cemetery at Sackville has first settlers buried down there and it's nothing but a disgrace at the moment," he said. "We seem to concentrate on areas where people can just walk around, like Windsor."

"There's a lot of other places down through Colo that we should be promoting and looking after."

Funding allocation for it will mean descriptive plaques will be erected on all Hawkesbury heritage sites and numbering or codes on plaques will be added to enable a Heritage Walk or similar concept to be developed.

— by Stephanie Bates

War on weeds given boost

PENRITH Council and the Hawkesbury River County Council will share more than \$45,000 in State Government funding to conduct rehabilitation, revegetation and weed control.

Penrith will get \$10,000 for rehabilitation and revegetation of the endangered Cooks River/Castlereagh Ironbark Forest and the vulnerable Castlereagh Scribbly Gum Woodland.

Hawkesbury River County Council will get \$35,026 to control high-risk weeds across nine crown reserves and the Sydney Weeds Committee jurisdiction.

Londonderry state Liberal MP Bart Bassett said the Government had allocated more than \$5 million for showground maintenance, and weed and pest control.

He said some public reserves had become infested with noxious weeds, and councils and agencies needed help to fund their rehabilitation, maintenance and protection.

"This funding will allow new work to be done to minimise the risk of spreading high-risk noxious weeds to new areas around the region," he said.

Hawkesbury River Coun-



Hawkesbury River County Council team leader Clenn Laver frills a woody weed on Shaw's Island in Castlereagh.

ty Council general manager Chris Dewhurst said the money would pay for more than 1000 hours of weed control work in reserves such as Shaw's Island, Emu Plains and Leonay Reserves.

He said the work was expected to start this month.

"These reserves are on pathways, such as roads and waterways, we know to be significant avenues for weed

spread," he said. "By focusing our resources in these locations we have the best chance of protecting our important environmental and agricultural areas from further weed impacts.

"The funds will be used to target both aquatic weeds such as salvinia and water hyacinth, but also woody weeds such as African olive and green cestrum."

Hawkesbury creates Green Army

By Rita Rizk

Updated August 20 2014 - 9:28am, first published 9:27am

Hawkesbury creates Green Army



The Hawkesbury Environment Network has been given two federal government grants to fund Green Army projects for conservation work in the Hawkesbury region.

With \$525 million budgeted over four years for projects across Australia, the Green Army is one of the government's major environmental initiatives.

The program will provide Hawkesbury residents aged 17-24 with full-time employment and training on environmental conservation tasks which will increase their skills and qualifications in well-supervised and safe training environments.

Chairman John Street said he was excited to be able to combine conservation training for young people with the opportunity to give them experience in protecting bushland areas.

"These projects will help raise community awareness of bushland connectivity, environmental weeds, people impacts on natural areas, conflicting land uses, threatened species and communities, indigenous cultural heritage, and holistic land management," Mr Street said.

The two teams of nine people will have six Green Army sites which will expand and enhance existing local land and bushcare programs including the Hawkesbury Rainforest Network Landcare group, Yellomundee Aboriginal Bushcare Group, MacMahons Park Bushcare group, the University of Western Sydney's Earthcare Centre, Redbank Creek Recovery Program and the Grose Vale-Kurrajong Cats Claw Creeper Project.

The teams will work with these groups to implement staged bush regeneration programs to enhance bushland, protect fauna habitat and preserve sites of cultural significance.

Designed by the Hawkesbury Environment Network, the projects will be implemented in partnership with the Local Land Services Regional Landcare Facilitator, Hawkesbury Council, Hawkesbury River County Council, Western Sydney Institute of TAFE, University of Western Sydney and bushcare groups.

[Hawkesbury creates Green Army | Hawkesbury Gazette | Richmond, NSW](#)

One of the world's worst weeds removed from site at Penrith

13/11/2014 by Chris Dewhurst



Before: Kudzu infestation. Boundary Creek, Penrith (2010) After: Kudzu removal

Chris Dewhurst (HRCC), Martin Snowball (Virbac Animal Health) and Andrew McGahey (Total Earth Care) at Boundary Creek, Penrith

Environmental contractors Total Earth Care have completed a project to remove the invasive weed Kudzu from a site in Penrith, Hawkesbury River County Council (HRCC) General Manager, Chris Dewhurst announced today. "Costing nearly \$70,000 the project was funded from a number of sources including the NSW Government's Weeds Action Program," Mr Dewhurst said. "Kudzu is one of the world's worst weeds because it can grow up to 30cm per day and has the ability to completely smother houses, buildings as well as all other vegetation "Kudzu has been present at Boundary Creek, Penrith, between Castlereagh Rd and the Nepean River, for more than 10 years. "Unless controlled it has the potential to spread into the main river and establish in other areas," Mr Dewhurst said. Total Earth Care Director Andrew McGahey said controlling the plant has been difficult due to severe bank instability compounded by continuous discharges from the upstream sewage treatment plant. "Controlling the weed required a combination of herbicide applications and physical removal. "We have also revegetated the site with native plants and undertaken additional works to stabilise the banks. "After two years of intensive works the site at Boundary Creek is largely free of Kudzu, Mr McGahey said. Mr Dewhurst praised the co-operation amongst the three landowners which has been critical to the success of the project. "I would especially like to thank Virbac Animal Health who have demonstrated a long-term commitment to managing the Kudzu under challenging circumstances. "Virbac also showed real community leadership by agreeing to act on behalf of all three landowners and avoid the need for three separate projects. Mr Dewhurst said HRCC will need to monitor this site and sites downstream in the Nepean River for many years to come before we can be sure the Kudzu has been completely eradicated. "Any new plants or new growth must be immediately controlled to ensure this weed does not re-establish or spread to other areas," Mr Dewhurst said.

Weed war being won as invasive kudzu is banished from Boundary Creek

SUPER weed, kudzu, is banished from local area after a \$70,000 weeds action program was enforced. The “choking” weed will have to be monitored long term.

Pranesh Nageshwar November 17, 2014 - 3:04PM **Penrith Press**



Paul Marynissen inspected new noxious weed Kudzu found at Wyong Creek.

ABLE to smother houses, buildings and trees, kudzu, the unstoppable “super” weed which grows up to 30cm a day and could climb up your leg while you sleep, has finally met its match. After intensive work, environmental contractor Total Earth Care has removed the invasive weed from a site at Boundary Creek, Penrith. “Costing nearly \$70,000, the project was funded from a number of sources including the NSW Government’s Weeds Action Program,” Hawkesbury River County Council general manager Chris Dewhurst said. “Kudzu is one of the world’s worst weeds because it can grow up to 30cm per day — I’ve never seen anything like kudzu — it would climb up your leg if you fell asleep near it.”



The kudzu weed was removed from Boundary Creek, Penrith.

The super weed has been at the Penrith site, located between Castlereagh Rd and the Nepean River, for more than 10 years. The site and others downstream will now need to be monitored to ensure the weed does not return. With the kudzu was so entrenched along the riverbank one of the major concerns with its removal was the collapse of the riverbank.



Noxious Weeds and Pest Species Officer Paul Marynissen is having success at controlling the growth of Kudzu at Wyong Creek.

"This was a really good example of public and private partnership coming together for a good cause," Mr Dewhurst said. "The private landowners put in close to \$350,000 themselves to stabilise the banks, which was fantastic because there was a real concern with the banks. Virbac Animal Health, Heartland Holden and JK Williams were really supportive." With the Penrith site the only place the weed has known to take hold in Sydney the success of this removal operation was vital Mr Dewhurst said. "We will continue to conduct surveillance operations to make sure it doesn't pop up anywhere," he said. "We are moving our attention on to controlling the salvinia and the water hyacinth weeds." He said these weeds were particularly hard to control as they were almost impossible to eradicate as they are so widespread in the system.

The kudzu weed takes over Boundary Creek, Penrith, in 2010.

KUD WHO?

- Kudzu smothers vegetation
- Its dense canopy blocks light to other plants
- Native to Japan and China
- The vine is a major weed in parts of the US, where it is known as "the plant that ate the South."



Weed war being won as invasive kudzu is banished from Boundary Creek | Daily Telegraph



Paul Marynissen inspected new noxious weed Kudzu found at Wyong Creek.



12th December 2014 What a great way to start the day. This email (with a photo!) from a resident sitting in my inbox: "Your team turned up today and did a 5 Gold Star job attacking the privet and lantana on the corner near the lights at Kurrajong."



February 10th 2015 Removing Ribbon weed from lake in Nurragingy Reserve Blacktown with the Truxor and conveyor belt.



February 19th 2015 Inspector providing weed advice to a landowner in a residential area



March 19th 2015 The HRCC Weed Education Vehicle.



March 27th 2015 HRCC Weed Officers this week discovered a high risk weed creeping into our region. Ming Asparagus fern (*Asparagus macowanii* var. *zuluensis*).



June 5th 2015 The wall of Gloves



July 30th 2015 The weed control team got themselves in a bit of trouble in Oakville today.



August 26th 2015 HRCC staff treating an infestation of class 1 noxious weed, Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*), along the 'T - Way' at Glenwood.

Hawkesbury having bad weed season

By Justine Doherty October 16 2015 - 4:07pm



Mother of millions which has been treated by Hawkesbury River Country Council with blue herbicide.

IF YOUR lawn is a seething bed of weeds this spring, you're not alone. The Gazette has noticed both lawns and paddocks throughout the district are particularly infested this season, and Chris Stanfield from Hawkesbury River County Council agrees the perception is real. 'Weather-wise we've had just the right conditions for weeds — after Christmas we had timely rain when the weeds were setting seed,' he said.

"We also had a short, sharp winter which meant the weed populations escaped much of the damage brought on by long winters. Some weeds like green cestrum go into a sort of torpor if the winter is long. 'Weeds also often come in cycles — there'll be standard population numbers for a few years, then a combination of factors like rain at the right time and air temperatures can increase the seedbank on a property.' Fireweed, a class 4 noxious weed, has made a massive showing round the district this year, with paddocks at Marsden Park near South Creek and Western Sydney University on Richmond/Blacktown Road, and near Colo High particularly bad. Mr Stanfield said with fireweed you can't just target one property in an area, as the seeds travel so effectively on the wind. 'You can treat it with grazing sheep and goats on it but the alkaloids in it destroy their livers and they eventually die. On a small holding, physical removal is the best option.'"



Fireweed near St Albans in early October.

You then bag it up and put it in the bin, but a very hot compost bin will also destroy the seeds. He said the old herbicide used on fireweed in the past was bromicide but many people were reluctant to use it as it is very expensive and quite toxic but that there were other options available now. 'Give

us a call if you want ideas and we'll work on it with you," he said. HRCC staff have also been battling mother of millions over recent weeks as well, as it grows even during winter. They hit it with a herbicide AF300 which doesn't affect other vegetation but he said herbicides are only a small part of their weed management arsenal. He said other weeds creating problems are boneseed, a class 3 noxious weed, and aquatic species water hyacinth (class 3) and Senegal tea plant. He said they were currently working with Windsor Polo Club at Richmond on water hyacinth due to herbicides not being an option due to the horses there. In the right conditions water hyacinth can cover a dam in seven days. He said pampas grass was a problem at Agnes Banks and Londonderry, and salvinia and black willow were rampant in dams and waterways. He said there has been a reluctance of landholders to approach HRCC for help but he said it was a service setup for landholders. They offer free weed inspections and will formulate free plans for weed control.

What about your lawn? If your lawn is the patchwork of burr medic, bindis, thistles, winter grass, paspalum, clover and milk thistles that this reporter's is, Mr Stanfield said you need to aerate it, feed and water it, and cut the grass on a high setting so it's long enough to overshadow the weeds. "The vast majority of lawns in the Hawkesbury are couch, buffalo and kikuyu — all warm season grasses. In cool weather they're in hibernation and the weeds take advantage of this. If you keep the grass a couple of inches tall it can outcompete the weeds. You can buy lawn aerators on a roller with a handle or pads you tie to your shoes." Contact HRCC for free help with weed management on 4574 9600 or om@hrcc.nsw.gov.au.

Hawkesbury having bad weed season | Hawkesbury Gazette | Richmond, NSW



November 2nd 2015 Trainees
graduating with their Tafe
certificates

Hawkesbury River County Council

December 18, 2015 ·

Hawkesbury River County Council Chairman Mark Taylor and General Manager, Chris Dewhurst today welcomed Council's successful application to the Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative.

Mark Taylor said the initiative would provide locally based Coordinators to work with local Landcare groups and networks to build capacity and connections within communities.

"This will build a network at the regional and state level to support Landcare groups," Mr Taylor said.

"This is a great win for Hawkesbury River County Council and the local environment."

Mr Dewhurst said the position would be overseen in collaboration with the Hawkesbury Landcare Network.

"As outlined in our partnership bid, the position will be employed, managed and housed by our Council on behalf of the Landcare network, with the network providing the strategic direction and HRCC the delivery." Mr Dewhurst said.

"This is a fantastic outcome for the community, and I look forward to working with Local Land Services through in the NSW Governments Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative."



Merry Christmas 2015



February 10th 2016 staff removing Water hyacinth

Online retailers remove products after action by county council

By Krystyna Pollard

Updated February 18 2016 - 12:37pm, first published 12:30pm



WEED WARRIORS: Cr Kevin Crameri with some Lantana, Hawkesbury River County Council general manager Chris Dewhurst holding African Olive, and Cr Marcus Cornish with a Small Leaf Privet.

Seven online retailers have removed their products for sale after being advised they were in fact advertising noxious weeds. The Hawkesbury River County Council's (HCCC) annual report to Penrith council stated the traders posted ads on websites including eBay and Gumtree, putting the health of the Nepean River and local environment at risk. "The main source of weed trade came from online retailers," the report stated. "Seven online sellers were contacted in regards to the sale of noxious plant material on sites such as eBay and Gumtree. "All of these sellers removed their products from these sites once they had been made aware of the NSW Noxious Weeds Act 1993."



An African olive.

The HRCC represents four local government areas, including Penrith, and is the single purpose authority for the control of declared noxious weeds. In 2014/15, the HRCC controlled 194 hectares of weeds across Penrith, Blacktown, Hawkesbury and The Hills Shire, and undertook more than 2,400 private property inspections.

Councillor Kevin Crameri, who represents Penrith council on HRCC alongside Cr Marcus Cornish, had both his property and his workplace inspected.



Narrow leaf privet

"We had [inspectors] out to Wallacia school to do a private spray and they found privet, and also there was some things there which were African olives," he said.

The weeds can be very hard to identify, and HRCC experts can help property owners eradicate problem plants.

"We don't go in and bash people around the head, we go out there and work with them," he said.

"We point out what [a plant] is, the best way to handle it, and help out where we can."

The program has been a huge success, with annual results far outstripping their targets. In Penrith alone, the 561 properties inspected significantly exceeded the 325 target, and 53.6 hectares of weed control was nearly 20 hectares over the 34 hectare target. Cr Crameri said HRCC wanted to get other councils such as Blue Mountains and Liverpool on board, as many weeds from surrounding areas ended up in the Nepean River.



NOXIOUS: An Asparagus species.

“The river now is the best it’s been in 30 years because we do have the [river weed] harvester and because we are controlling it and finding where it’s coming from,” he said.



TREE: African olive fully grown.

[Online retailers remove products after action by county council | Hawkesbury Gazette | Richmond, NSW](#)

Shaw's Island given \$100K by Louise Markus

Updated March 14 2016 - 5:26pm, first published 5:08pm



Macquarie MP Louise Markus, general manager of Hawkesbury River County Council, Chris Dewhurst; Green Army team supervisor Eric Zarella and volunteers.

AN ISLAND in the river at Yarramundi has scored nearly a hundred grand in federal funding to reforest it. As part of the 20 Million Trees project, the Shaw's Island revegetation project has been granted \$98,314 to establish 18,000 local native plants and undertake extensive weed control, which will be carried out over the next few months by Green Army volunteers. Hosted by Hawkesbury River County Council (HRCC), the project will involve the isolated pockets of casuarina woodland being bolstered by the huge mass plantings. This will help to reverse the impacts of land clearing, grazing and weed invasion. Macquarie MP Louise Markus visited Shaw's Island at Yarramundi last week to meet the Green Army team and announce the grant. HRCC general manager Chris Dewhurst said the Green Army project on Shaw's Island was a big step to improving the biodiversity at the site. "Hawkesbury River County Council is assisting as project sponsors due to our long association with the island," he said.

[Shaw's Island given \\$100K by Louise Markus](#) | [Hawkesbury Gazette](#) | [Richmond, NSW](#)



07/07/2016 Staff photo

Weed Management Demonstration Day August, 2016



NEW SOUTH WALES WEEDS ACTION PROGRAM

Having a “great selection of speakers and displays that were very targeted and relevant to the audience” is a big part of what made the Weed Management Demonstration Day - held on Tuesday 23rd August – so enjoyable for one satisfied attendee. These were certainly the objectives of Hawkesbury River County Council when designing the program for the event, which was delivered as part of the Greater Sydney Weeds Action Program 2015-2020 capacity building project.

160 people attended the event which showcased and demonstrated a variety of emerging and less often utilised tools, tricks and techniques used to detect, control and educate about weeds. Parramatta Park provided the perfect location for this type of program due its central Sydney location and position on the Parramatta River. This meant that the capabilities of a Truxor – an amphibious vehicle that harvests and removes aquatic weeds from waterways – could be readily presented to the crowd as they looked on from the riverbank. Other exhibits on the riverbank included a flame weeder (Willoughby Council), a steam weeder (Weed Technics), a spider and forest mulcher (Spider Contracting), and some tools and equipment recently released by Arborgreen. Northwest Recycling Centre had a green waste bin on site full of treated weedy waste that had been upcycled into mulch and compost products. The Yamaha R-Max unmanned aerial vehicle display by Skyline Aviation Group and the demonstration of the weed detector dogs by Hillary Cherry of OEH-NPWS were the highlights of the day.



Central Coast Council was a big contributor to the event, with staff providing demonstrations on how to make and use sponge tongs and how to use a hypo-hatchet. Paul Marynissen, the council’s Noxious Weeds Officer, gave a presentation about Snipper, a product that is commercially available in the United States that prevents weedy heritage trees from flowering and therefore from producing weed seed. He is hoping to secure grant funding to implement a trial around the Greater Sydney region in the coming year. There was also an indoor presentation from Den Barber, an Aboriginal cultural burning knowledge holder and practitioner with Blue Mountains, Yellomundee, Gunni Thakun and Koori Country Firesticks Community groups. He shared his experience using cultural burning practices to care for country. Jim Shields, Director of Local Environmental Solutions, shared the ins and outs of goat rental in urban and rural weed management scenarios. Karen Jenkin and Nicola Dixon from HRCC showed the group how easy it is to use Sydney WeedsAPP, the free online weed mapping application developed by Greater Sydney Local Land Services with Weeds Action Program funding.



Hawkesbury River County Council staff were delighted to have brought together representatives from 20 different local councils, 7 bush regeneration contractors/consultants, 4 community groups, various state government agencies, the Green Army, non-government organisations and private landholders. While attendees identified with roles ranging from bush regeneration professionals to weeds/biosecurity officers to parks/garden/landscape managers to volunteers, all shared the passion of wanting to manage weeds more effectively and the event provided “a good chance to catch up with others in the industry and to get up to date with current tools and practices”. Participants were asked for their evaluation and the following feedback from one guest perhaps best summarises the day : “You brought together practitioners, vendors, and service providers in a pleasant venue, with plenty of time for both presentation and mingling interactions”. Thanks to all of the contributors and to the NSW Department of Primary Industries Weeds Action Program for supporting the event. More information about the Weeds Action Program (Greater Sydney project) is available at <http://hrcc.nsw.gov.au/latest-newssydney-wap/> Additional training and events will be delivered as part of the program and will be promoted through that website. Please contact Nicola Dixon, Greater Sydney WAP project officer, for more information on 02 4574 9601 or at wapadmin@hrcc.nsw.gov.au

Thanks to all of the contributors and to the NSW Department of Primary Industries Weeds Action Program for supporting the event. More information about the Weeds Action Program (Greater Sydney project) is available at <http://hrcc.nsw.gov.au/latest-newssydney-wap/>



Merry Christmas 2016



May 16th 2017 The HRCC "Weedosaurus" Aquatic Weed Harvester was working in the vicinity of Victoria Bridge, Penrith today. It was controlling submerged aquatic weeds to improve the area for boating and fishing.

No unicorns, but plenty of creatures and plants that needed Landcare's help

By [Justine Doherty](#)

Updated July 19 2017 - 12:14pm, first published July 18 2017 - 4:30pm



Peter Ridgeway, Max Krensell, Dana Pank, Richie Benson, Clr Danielle Wheeler, Gill Tutton, Xuela Sledge and Archie Glass, Kirsty Reynolds, Steve Body and Victoria Selem.

THERE'S a rare, magical place down behind Hawkesbury High and Freemans Reach Public School. While its custodians can't promise bunyips or unicorns, this pocket of critically endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland can boast goannas, birds, mammals and endangered plants.

The site has had many changes since its use by local Darug people as a retreat from floods and summer heat. Its creatures and forest would have supplied their camp with meat and eggs, fruits, tubers and flowers.

The bushland has had some grazing of cattle and sheep over the years, and a cross country course from the schools went through it. The combined effect of these has been to almost destroy about 80 species of plants, most of which were in ground layer, including a rare orchid.

Recognising the huge significance of this pocket, the Greater Sydney Landcare Network's Cumberland Plain Landcare Program sent a merry band of weeders in on Saturday, July 15 to work on restoring the forest to a form the Darug people would have known. Hawkesbury Councillor Danielle Wheeler joined the team for the morning to walk the site and join in on discussions about its management and sustainability as a living record of historical changes. Local Landcare coordinator Xuela Sledge, Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) team leader Gill Tutton and volunteers including former Hawkesbury High teacher Steve Body and ex-pupils Victoria Selem and Richie Benson, ripped into the noxious weed green cestrum, and lantana, which were both overtaking the bushland. Hawkesbury River County Council are pitching in as well, working on the larger plumes of weeds in the woodland over coming weeks. The group had hoped to see goannas, a sure sign of a resilient ecosystem, but did not on the day. However they weren't too fazed as goannas are shy creatures, slinking away when humans enter their territory, but also winter is when they retreat into their hollows and lay low until spring. Hawkesbury Environment Network's Robin Woods said the goannas that used to live in the old ironbark trees and scavenge scraps from the adjoining playgrounds were Lace Monitors so that was the variety they had hoped to spot. Lace monitors usually lay their eggs in termite mounds, which offer protection and heat for incubation. The termites themselves then provide a meal for the young goannas as they hatch.

When the young goannas reach adulthood they enjoy a diet of nestling birds, eggs, snakes, some ground fruiting plants and carrion. The Landcare group will return for more work closer to spring, and may spot the goannas then.

No unicorns, but plenty of creatures and plants that needed Landcare's help | Hawkesbury Gazette | Richmond, NSW



26/07/2017 Engaging a local school as part of the 20 millions trees grant

HRCC Community Event

03/09/2017 by [Chris Dewhurst](#)



Weeds Legislation Has Changed



The new *Biosecurity Act 2015* now regulates weed management in NSW.

You are welcome to attend a free community information evening at Hawkesbury River County Council. You will learn about the new legislation, how it will affect you and your property and, have your say on addressing our area's worst weeds.

Wednesday 20 September 2017

4pm to 6pm

6 Walker St (enter via Dowling St), South Windsor

Refreshments will be provided.

Spraying on Hawkesbury River set to start October 30 to target river weeds

By [Justine Doherty](#)

Updated October 24 2017 - 10:37am, first published 10:11am



A dense mat of Senegal tea plant on the Hacking River. Picture: John Tann

SIGNS will go up riverside at North Richmond next Monday to notify the public when weed spraying starts in a bid to arrest the spread of Senegal tea plant.

Hawkesbury River County Council's manager of weed operations Chris Stanfield said weather permitting, they would begin a campaign of three spraying programs over eight months. Next week's blitz will focus on the Senegal tea, but the officers will also be going after alligator weed, water hyacinth and salvinia.

"Senegal tea is floating – it forms dense mats and has flowers like little white pom poms, like clover flowers. It will be flowering very shortly," Mr Stanfield said. "It's heaviest at North Richmond and its main infestation area is between there and Windsor bridge though there are minor infestations down to Sackville.

"It's attached to the bank and has dense root mats so it's not possible to just pull it all out on the bank." He said they will spotspray with metsulfuron methyl. "We're using it at very low concentration and low pressure." He said little would get into the water as the weed mats were so dense. "We'll also be doing some restricted spraying on alligator weed, at waterfront reserves and parks." He said this was because they wanted to minimise human interaction with the weed, as it is brittle and breaks off easily when disturbed – it's main method of spreading. They will use the same chemical as on the Senegal tea. He said water hyacinth and salvinia weren't big problems this year and would just get a spotspray with glyphosate bioactive, which breaks down.

[Spraying on Hawkesbury River set to start October 30 to target river weeds | Hawkesbury Gazette | Richmond, NSW](#)



02/11/2017 Workshop hosted at Hawkesbury Nursery for weed and native plant identification

Teenager's wish to recreate bush wonderland for creatures and plants recognised

By [Justine Doherty](#)

Updated December 21 2017 - 12:58pm, first published 12:00pm

RICHIE Benson of Cumberland Reach, who grew up on the river, is the Hawkesbury's Environmental Volunteer of the Year for 2017.

Mr Benson, 19, said he didn't know where he got his passion for getting in there and restoring the environment along the river, but he's always had that drive. "Because I live on the river I want to care for it and keep it as healthy as I can," he said. "There is a high level of land clearing in the Hawkesbury. I want to get in and create habitat for endangered species such as koalas and platypus and long-nosed bandicoots."

He has seen bandicoots at Yarramundi while doing his Certificate III in Natural Area Restoration with TAFE, but not down where he lives at Cumberland Reach. "I've seen tracks though," he said.

He is quite excited about the revegetation work he's done down on the river near his home, planting eucalyptus deanei, a huge eucalypt which white bellied sea eagles and wedge-tailed eagles build their big messy nests in. He's seen both birds there. He's also helped form the Cumberland Reach Landcare group, is a Hawkesbury Environment Network Committee member, and has been actively raising awareness of sites in need of urgent attention. His passion got him a great job too – at Hawkesbury River County Council in the Priority Plants section (formerly Noxious Weeds).

He said it was "definitely a shock" to get the award. "It's driven me to get out there and do a lot more!" he said with a smile. The award was presented at Hawkesbury Council's 20th Annual Bushcare and Landcare Awards, held in partnership with Hawkesbury River County Council, Hawkesbury Environment Network, Hawkesbury Landcare Network and Greater Sydney Landcare Network. Eleven other awards were presented by Councillor Danielle Wheeler to hardworking groups and individuals who were all congratulated heartily by Mayor Mary Lyons-Buckett who also praised the 1800 hours of volunteer work done by the 20 Hawkesbury Community Nursery Volunteer Group members.

Environmental Group of the Year was won by Wetland Warriors for their efforts in promoting the preservation and improvement of the wetlands throughout the Hawkesbury via working bees, open days and community newsletters. The group have been going strong now for more than three years.

Hawkesbury Community Nursery Green Thumb Award - Rosemary Otten

20 Years Long Service to Bushcare and Landcare - Eric Brocken and Peter Mobbs

21 Years Long Service to Bushcare and Landcare - Robin Woods

The Super Scriber Scripting Award - Viniana Vereua, Dana Pank, John Jose, Jeff, Cottrell and Robin Woods

Rookie of the Year - Phil's Forest Bushcare

Landcare Buddies - Prue Gargano; Janet Fox.

[Teenager's wish to recreate bush wonderland for creatures and plants recognised | Hawkesbury Gazette | Richmond, NSW](#)





December 2nd 2017 Congratulations to Richie Benson, the Hawkesbury Environmental Volunteer of the Year!!!



22/04/2018 HRCC display at the Hawkesbury Show



June 6th 2018 Councillors tour around the county being shown Tiger pear and Boneseed.



June 6th 2018 Councillors tour around the county and visiting staff in the field despite the wet weather.

Correctional centre gets a handle on weeds

07/08/2018 by Chris Dewhurst

The Emu Plains Correctional Centre has pulled off a big win in the fight against weeds. In cooperation with Hawkesbury River County Council, centre management has enlisted the help of minimum-security inmates and contractors to improve the management of the site located along Old Bathurst Rd. A large section of the site, which was once used by Corrective Services NSW as a dairy production facility, had become overgrown since the plans for a large-scale development were taken off the table. As a result, various weed species such as Apple of Sodom, Fireweed and Green Cestrum began to take over the site. The job of weed control was made particularly more problematic by the amount of broken wire and fencing that was scattered across the property. This has been taken care of, and after three months of consistent effort the site is now in a sustainable weed management state. The Chair of HRCC, Clr. Brad Bunting has said: "We are very keen to work with any land holder in the area that needs assistance with weed management. HRCC can develop sustainable weed control plans for any property, and will consider all related issues such as costs, weed risk, legislation and environmental impact." Hawkesbury River County Council is the local weed authority for the Council areas of Penrith, Blacktown, Hawkesbury and The Hills Shire. HRCC has a list of all Priority Weeds on its website at www.hrcc.nsw.gov.au or if you would like to report a weed, please do so by calling 4574 9600.



Cat's Claw Creeper Biological Control Workshop

04/10/2018 by Chris Dewhurst



Department of
Primary Industries



Cat's claw creeper biological control workshop and field demonstration

Date: Thursday 25 October 2018

Time: 9:30am till 1:00pm

Locations: 1) Start at 9:30 am at the Hawkesbury City Council Nursery Mulgrave Road, Mulgrave.
2) At 11:30 am meet in the Car park behind Arndell Cottage Arndells Trail, Cattai National Park, CATTAI.

Trainer: Troy Brown Technical Officer NSW Department of Primary Industries

Who to attend: Bushcarers, landcarers, property owners, weeds professionals all welcome



HRCC staff in attendance watching the release of Biocontrol agents.

Aquatic Weed Control Program – Summer 2018/19

27/11/2018 by Chris Dewhurst

Hawkesbury River County Council will be conducting aquatic weed control along the Hawkesbury/Nepean River from Wallacia – downstream to Wisemans ferry and including the tributaries of; Cattai Creek, South Creek, Rickabys Creek and Redbank Creek. Weed control will be via spot spraying of registered herbicides, approved for use in aquatic situations by registration or by the APVMA under off label permit. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service will also be conducting aquatic weed control as part of this program within Cattai Creek and in the vicinity of Cattai National Park as part of this program. The control program will be inclusive from 30 November 2018 through to 1 June 2019. For further information call (02)4574 9600 during office hours. Chris Stanfield Manager, Weed Operations



While undertaking spraying program staff snapped this photo of the Old Windsor Bridge while the barge is in place constructing the new bridge. 07/12/2018



07/12/2018 Truxor used to spray aquatic weeds



25/01/2019 Staff member Toby with a Boneseed plant

Environmental volunteers recognised at Hawkesbury Bushcare Landcare Awards 2018

January 19 2019 - 8:00am

GREEN thumb volunteers across the Hawkesbury were awarded for their environmental efforts at a special awards ceremony hosted by Hawkesbury Council last month.

The 21st annual Bushcare and Landcare Awards held at McMahons Park, Kurrajong - in partnership with Hawkesbury River County Council, Hawkesbury Bushcare and the Hawkesbury Landcare Network - recognised nine individuals and teams for their work in the region throughout 2018.



GREEN THUMBS: L-R: Martin Gauci, Richie Benson, Wendy Lawson, Rosemary Otten, Janet Fox, Patricia O'Toole, John Parmenter, Charlie Medo, Charlotte, Cathryn and Jack Miller, Councillor Kotlash, Melissa Medo and Gilleen Miller. Picture: Supplied

The highest honour, Environmental Volunteer of the Year, was awarded to Patricia O'Toole for her commitment to the restoration of natural areas in the Kurrajong area, through the techniques of bushland regeneration. Mrs O'Toole's has been working hard to restore these areas for more than 14 years, and has been involved with Mill Road Bushcare (Singletons Reserve) and Matheson Park Bushcare. The Environmental Group of the Year award went to Charles Kemp Reserve Bushcare for their efforts in promoting the preservation and improvement of the Charles Kemp Reserve, with specific on-target weed removal of Mother of Millions and the innovation of Geocaching through Bushland Regeneration. Volunteer numbers have ranged from 9 to 26 people each month, with a

major focus on education in bushland regeneration. Other awards presented at the ceremony were: The Hawkesbury Community Nursery Green Thumb Award – Laurie Camilleri; 10 Years Long Service to Bushcare – Merv Sharkie; 10 Years Long Service to Bushcare and Landcare – Janet Fox; The Super Scriber Scripting Award – Wendy Lawson and Richie Benson; Rookie of the Year – Windsor Wharfies Bushcare; Certificate of Appreciation for Koala Fest @ Kurrajong, Saturday, 15 September 2018 – Hawkesbury Koala Working Group. Hawkesbury Mayor Barry Calvert praised all the winners and their work. “It is important that Bushcare and Landcare groups continue to be recognised as vital for the Hawkesbury,” he said. “The Hawkesbury Community Nursery Volunteer Group has 20 active volunteers who have grown over 40,000 plants over the past year. “They have also contributed over 1800 hours of voluntary work at the nursery and they all provide valuable services by protecting and enhancing our natural environment.” Members of the community can visit their local Bushcare or Landcare group as well as the Hawkesbury Community Nursery and lend a hand. To get involved, contact Martin Gauci, Council’s Community Bushcare Officer on 4560 4525 or mgauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au, or Xuela Sledge, Local Landcare Coordinator for the Hawkesbury Landcare Network on 0410 616 139 or landcare@hrcc.nsw.gov.au. The Community Nursery Group meets every Wednesday at 10 Mulgrave Road, Mulgrave (next to the Hawkesbury Companion Animal Shelter) from 9am to 1pm. To find out about joining, email jutta.hamilton@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au or call 4560 4651.

[Environmental volunteers recognised at Hawkesbury Bushcare Landcare Awards 2018 | Hawkesbury Gazette | Richmond, NSW](#)

Friday, March 8, 2019 • the western weekend

New grant will help remove weeds from Nepean River



Prime Minister Scott Morrison with local rowers. Photo: Melinda Jane

NICOLA BARTON

The Federal Government have set out to clean up the Nepean River as part of a \$22 million investment in environmental projects.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison joined Senator for Western Sydney Marise Payne, Minister for the Environment Melissa Price and Liberal Candidate for Lindsay Melissa McIntosh at the Nepean Rowing Club to announce the funding.

The Nepean River has had to bear the brunt of a weed plague over summer, which poses a serious threat to both recreational users and sports people.

“Whether you are an elite sports person or a family, the river is the heart of our city and that means that the quality of our river is absolutely important to everyone that lives here,” Ms McIntosh said.

The Communities Environment Program will provide up to \$150,000 to each Federal electorate in 2019-20 for community-led projects that deliver real environmental benefits.

“We are harnessing local communities and local knowledge to protect our environment,” Mr Morrison said.

The program will fund small-scale projects that deliver outcomes for priorities such as restoring coasts, wetlands, riverbanks and waterways.



March 5th 2019 Congratulations to our recently graduated Biosecurity Weed Officers on completing their Tafe certificate.



March 20th 2019 **#weedswednesday** we find some of the crew out on the edge of Windsor Downs Reserve, doing some delicate follow up of Boneseed by hand.

Opuntiod cacti in the Greater Sydney region

by Nicola Dixon 27/05/2019

Head to gumtree, facebook marketplace, wish, etsy or ebay on any given day and search for ‘cactus’ or “succulents” and you will find dozens of ads offering a huge range of species. The plants available for sale are rarely correctly labelled and it is often difficult to know exactly which species are being traded just by perusing the photos. But many of the species on offer are invasive weeds that have the potential to adversely impact our environment, economy and community. With online trade of plants on the rise, local council weed officers are increasingly required to have an active online presence and must be readily able to identify species that are not permitted to be sold under the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015. So in May 2019, 44 people representing 22 different government and non-government organisations from across the Greater Sydney region met at the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute in southwest Sydney to learn how to identify and manage Opuntiod cacti. The training was supported through the [Greater Sydney Weeds Action Program](#) and delivered by Matt Sheehan, co-author of the [Managing Opuntiod cacti in Australia : best practice control manual](#), and Director of [Wild Matters](#).



Workshop participants learning the key identifying features of different Opuntiod cacti species.



05/06/2019 Staff treating Mother of Millions at a roadside location



31/07/2019 Boneseed stages of growth

Elected Chair of the Hawkesbury River County Council

OCTOBER 10, 2019 | BY CLR. NATHAN ZAMPROGNO



With HRCC General Manager, Chris Dewhurst, Hawkesbury MP Robyn Preston, and outgoing chair, Clr. Karen McKeown from Penrith Council.

Tonight I was elected as the new Chair of the Hawkesbury River County Council, after serving for the last 12 months as Deputy Chair. This is a great honour. I am the first Hawkesbury Liberal Councillor ever to be elected to this role. The HRCC covers 3,823sq.km over four municipalities (Hills, Blacktown, Penrith and Hawkesbury). It has responsibility for waterway health through the control of weeds, and increasingly takes a role in terrestrial weed control as well under the Biosecurity Act. In this last year alone it conducted 2,014 property inspections. With its specialised assets like weed harvesters, and using new and innovative techniques like biological control (Salvinia eating Weevils, anyone?), it plays a major role in caring for our local environment. Robyn Preston MP – Member for Hawkesbury was elected as my Deputy! Considering she's my boss in another context, this was regarded with great mirth. I'd like to thank the outgoing Chair, Councillor Karen McKeown for her steady hand over the last year, and our indefatigable General Manager, Chris Dewhurst



11/12/2019 Effort required to transport the machine in and out of depo.



12/12/2019 Before the sinking the harvester was used to cut Ribbon weed on the Nepean River at Penrith for a short period of time.

The Sinking of the Weedosauros

26/02/2020 by Chris Dewhurst

On Sunday 8 February 2020, after over 200mm of rain in 24 hours, our Aquatic Weed Harvester “The Weedosauros” was sunk by rapidly rising floodwaters. It was berthed at Nepean Rowing Club in Penrith, having been in action just before Xmas removing aquatic weeds from the rowing course. It was berthed by two steel chains attached to concrete and metal bollards onshore. The floodwaters lifted the machine off one of the bollards. This caused the machine to tilt at an angle, water began to enter the hull, and the sinking began. It all happened very quickly. Even though the SES responded to the scene, there was very little that could be done. Luckily one remaining chain kept the machine anchored onshore, preventing it being washed further downstream and possibly over the weir itself. HRCC is currently in the process of planning a salvage operation and considering its options around future aquatic weed harvesting operations.



Harvester was well underwater and secured with only one chain and the drum wedged on a tree.

Funding to clean up river

By **Emily Feszczuk** February 19, 2020, 8:58



Mayor Ross Fowler, Melissa McIntosh and Sussan Ley with representatives from Nepean Rowers Club, Council and Muru Mittigar. Photo: Megan Dunn.

Nepean River is set to have improved health and water quality with \$511,000 of funding from the Federal Government. Minister for the Environment, Sussan Ley and Member for Lindsay,

Melissa McIntosh visited the banks of the river on Monday to finalise the investment, initially mooted during last year's election campaign. The projects involved include the upgrade of weed management infrastructure such as weed booms, weed removal, and the revegetation of native riverbanks working with Indigenous rangers. Ms McIntosh was pleased the project for a healthier waterway and improved native vegetation is finally underway. "We were here during the election in this very spot with the Prime Minister to announce the funding which has been a passion of mine and our community and now it is coming to fruition," she said. "It is at the heart of our city and every day families and groups like the Nepean Rowing Club use it for health and enjoyment, so Council along with Muru Mittigar will be on the ground delivering this important infrastructure."

Melissa McIntosh with Sussan Ley on Monday. Photo: Megan Dunn.



Ms Ley said that local environmental actions such as these play a key role in highlighting the importance of protecting landscapes and waterways. "The environment is not something that is 'out there', it is all around us and our local river systems, along with the vegetation and wildlife they support, are a major focus," she said. "This funding will make sure that we get all the weeds out and other things necessary to protect and restore it to a healthy state for the families who run, walk and live along the river." But Harry Burkitt, a Give A Dam campaigner, said the investment is not nearly enough to protect our waterways. "You'd be hard pressed to buy a house in Kingswood for \$500,000 these days – this announcement is a drop in the ocean compared to what is needed," Mr Burkitt said. "If governments are serious about protecting our river, they need to stop allowing greedy developers from building urban sprawl across our parklands and put in a dam in the national parks upriver."

[Funding to clean up river – The Western Weekender](#)



15/01/2020 outbreak of Water hyacinth in Rickaby Creek. This was high volumed sprayed before plants could escape into the Hawkesbury River.



Boneseed seedlings the first to emerge after the 2019 Gaspers Mountain fire fires along Bells Line of Road at Kurrajong Heights 28/02/2020



What saved Kurrajong Heights from the Gospers Mountain fire?

By Vernon Graham

Updated March 24 2020 - 3:21pm, first published 3:00pm

Residents of Kurrajong Heights have been told the reason their village wasn't engulfed by the devastating Gospers Mountain bushfire was hazard reduction burning.

Speaking at a community debrief, Kurrajong Heights Rural Fire Service Brigade captain, Brian Williams, said his RFS bosses had expected the mountain village would be overrun by the mega blaze on a blistering-hot December 21 last year.



BRAVE FIREFIGHTERS: Members of NSW Rural Fire Service and NSW Fire and Rescue were the heroes of the Gospers Mountain fire.

The fire had raged for 56 days and had already devastated a number of villages and settlements along the Bells Line of Road including Bell, Dargan and Bilpin.

But Mr Williams, one of the most experienced firefighters in the Blue Mountains, was still confident the village would escape.

His confidence was based around the hazard reduction burning program his brigade had doggedly stuck with during its 68 years of existence, despite having to overcome more and more bureaucratic hurdles and green tape.

Kurrajong Heights is perched on a ridge and is surrounded by thick eucalypt timber which makes it a prime target for the bushfires which regularly escape from the Blue Mountains and Wollemi National Parks to the west and north west.

For this reason the brigade long ago divided the country around the village into 18 blocks and hazard reduces them in a 12-year rotation in a mosaic pattern so in an extreme bushfire one or two of the more recently burnt zones will check the fire's advance.

Late in the afternoon of December 21 the fire roared towards the village on both sides of Bells Line of Road from the west after devastating landmarks like the Bilpin Fruit Bowl's famous orchards and the Tutti Fruitti cafe.

But suddenly it was knocked sideways by a strong southerly change.

The fire had the potential to burn around the Heights Bowling Club and slam into the village through Cut Rock but it ran into an area that had been hazard-reduction burned three years earlier and self-extinguished.

The cool southerly change gave firefighters the chance to begin a 20km backburn around the western edge of the village, then along Burrallow Road all the way south to the Grose River which made Kurrajong Heights, and, to a lesser extent, Bowen Mountain, relatively safe.

Mr Williams said the backburn had been successful because previous hazard-reduction burning in the area meant the fire moved quietly through light fuel loads.



A TALE OF TWO VILLAGES: Bilpin was hit hard by the Gospers Mountain fire but Kurrajong Heights escaped largely unscathed.

Mr Williams said fuels loads in the Australian bush typical of the country around Kurrajong Heights increased by two tonnes per hectare a year.

After 10 years the unmanaged fuel load reached 20 tonnes which would produce a fire intensity of 4000 kilowatts per square metre, double what can be tackled by a fire brigade tanker.

Mr Williams said the Gospers Mountain fire couldn't be controlled right from its ignition by a lightning strike on October 26 because of high fuel loads.

As for the impact of climate change on the fire, Mr Williams said cooling the earth by one or two degrees C before the fire started would have had no impact on stopping its spread across 515,000ha. He said NSW National Parks on average was hazard-reduction burning 1.9 per cent of its seven million ha of land each year which was just a drop in the bucket.

In the audience was long-time local resident and Hawkesbury Mayor, Barry Calvert, who said he and a majority of his council endorsed and supported Mr Williams' views on hazard-reduction burning.



13/03/2020 Salvage of the Harvester which was brought back to HRCC depo for inspection for repair.



22/04/2020 *Salvinia molesta* removal at Heritage park





13/05/2020 Launching the Polycraft at Windsor boat ramp for a day of river surveillance.



June 17th 2020 Sizing up the Velvety tree pear in Llandilo before control



August 26th 2020 Not a bad spot beside the river threatening Green Cestrum

Second term as chair of HRCC for Councillor Nathan

Zamprogno By [Finn Coleman](#) Updated October 27 2020 - 2:39pm, first published 2:30pm

Unanimous support: Hawkesbury City Councillor Nathan Zamprogno has been elected chair of Hawkesbury River County Council for a second term. Hawkesbury City Councillor Nathan Zamprogno has been elected as Chairman of Hawkesbury River County Council (HRCC) for an unprecedented second one-year term.

HRCC encompasses the Hawkesbury, Hills, Penrith and Blacktown council areas, with two councillors put forward by each to form the board.

Formed in 1984, HRCC covers 3,823 square kilometres and has approximately 828,000 people living within its boundaries.

The council headquarters is located at South Windsor and it is a statutory council in its own right under the Local Government Act, but is referred to as a "special purpose Council", responsible for weed management and ensuring waterway health.

Its governing instrument used to be the Noxious Weeds Act, but was updated in 2015 and is now the Biosecurity Act. This prompted HRCC to evolve and expand to include terrestrial weed management (weeds not specifically in waterways), land management, education and other biosecurity matters.

In 2020, the council has been working hard to repair and recommission the 'Weedocaurus' harvester, which pulled its mooring and sank near Penrith weir during the January/February floods.

It has also completed 3,949 property inspections to check and clear major invasive weed species.

HRCC weed officers have been checking on the regeneration of the bush, post-bushfires, often sighting wildlife like echidnas and platypuses in and around the district's waterways.

Councillors sit on the HRCC board for 4 years, the length of their local council term, with an informal agreement that sees each area take a turn to be chair for one year.

With all local government elections delayed by one year, HRCC will sit a five-year term.

Cr Zamprogno was the first Hawkesbury Liberal Councillor elected to the chair in October 2019 and this year was unanimously selected for a second one-year term. "I'm very honoured by the support of all four member councils to permit me to remain as the chairman for a second year," said Cr Zamprogno. "The HRCC does wonderful work in protecting the local environment. "[HRCC] has used its skills and resources since 1948 to keep our waterways clean, conduct education campaigns, inspect properties for damaging weed species and evolve within the Biosecurity domain. "Hills Shire Cr Samuel Uno was elected as deputy, replacing outgoing councillor and Hawkesbury MP Robyn Preston.

[Second term as chair of HRCC for Councillor Nathan Zamprogno | Hawkesbury Gazette | Richmond, NSW](#)





06/11/2020 Final inspection of the Weed harvester after repairs in Newcastle. Prior to coming home.



27/11/2020 Staff photo of the Weed Control team at capacity with trainees. We had record numbers apply during recruiting during to the COVID 19 pandemic.

Hawkesbury River County Council to focus on Bilpin Shale Cap Forest preservation

Updated November 25 2020 - 10:31am, first published 10:18am

Hawkesbury River County Council (HRCC) has launched the Blue Mountains Shale Cap Forest (BMSCF) Bilpin Project, which seeks to preserve and rehabilitate key habitat supporting endangered species such as the glossy black cockatoo.

Chairman for the County Council, and Councillor on Hawkesbury City Council, Nathan Zamprogno, said the initiative was funded over multiple years to identify and map the remaining Blue Mountains Shale Cap Forest, educate and incentivise landowners, provide on-the-ground help to assist in bush regeneration, conduct weed control, and track progress.



Conservation crew: Members of the HRCC and member for Hawkesbury Robyn Preston meet for the launch of the Bilpin Shale Cap Forest preservation project. Picture: Supplied

"The project also aims to found a dedicated Bilpin Landcare group to carry the work forward. The grant is the first-time a private property engagement that focuses on conservation and land management has been done on this scale. Over 400 private properties have been contacted covering over 2,835 hectares in Hawkesbury, I encourage residents to get involved," Cr Zamprogno said.

The aim of the project is to engage landholders and provide an assessment of the BMSCF, which is currently listed as a threatened ecological community. Due to ongoing external pressure from land clearing, fragmentation, and weed invasion, the original BMSCF remains in small remnants, primarily on private land. The Bilpin BMSCF Project aims to address the circumstances and factors threatening BMSCF survival and bring hope back for the species that rely on it.

The project seeks to engage in longer-term partnerships with landholders to improve the viability of the threatened endangered community by mitigating critical threats.

The forest community is found on Wianamatta shale in the Blue Mountains and Wollemi areas and supports a greater diversity of fauna, including threatened species such as the powerful owl.

Surveys of the vegetation on properties for the presence of BMSCF will be undertaken by Dragonfly Environmental - a private contractor who has over 18 years' experience in environmental assessment and restoration. Stage one of the project is expected to commence in late November 2020 and will focus on the area extending east to west from Kurrajong heights to Berambing, northeast to Mountain Lagoon, and north to Mt Tootie. Member for Hawkesbury, Robyn Preston, was present at the launch to support the initiative. HRCC has been serving the community since 1948. It is a single purpose Council, with its goal being to administer the Biosecurity Act 2015 throughout its Council areas of Blacktown, Hawkesbury, Penrith, and The Hills Shire. This involves the organisation taking a nil-tenure, landscape approach to weed management across the region. It focuses on early detection and containment of high-risk plant species that impact biodiversity, agriculture, and property.

[Hawkesbury River County Council to focus on Bilpin Shale Cap Forest preservation | Hawkesbury Gazette | Richmond, NSW](#)



December 23rd 2020 Getting up close and personal with Frog bit which was seized from a private property by our weeds inspector.



February 4th 2021 Another day another Frog bit seizure from a backyard.

River shutdown “inevitable” as weed issue grows

By Alena Higgins February 17, 2021, 12:30



Nathan Zamprogno and Chris Dewhurst with the weed harvester. Photo: Melinda Jane.

The organisation responsible for weed control along the Hawkesbury-Nepean River has lashed out at State Government funding cuts preventing it from operating its harvester. Hawkesbury River County Council's (HRCC) giant weed harvester is normally in high rotation at this time of year, but it currently sits dormant in a dry dock. It comes after Local Land Services (LLS) withdrew \$238,000 worth of funding for the remainder of the financial year, leaving HRCC unable to pay staff to drive the specialised machine. "We were notified in November in the lead up to Christmas which is really the time when our harvester, and the weeds, are most active," HRCC Chairman and Hawkesbury City Councillor Nathan Zamprogno said. "We've immediately appealed to them, saying 'this is going to have massive ramifications for the local community and Olympic training and safety of the river users', and they have essentially refused to communicate with us any further." Cr Zamprogno said the HRCC Board is in "disbelief" at the situation and has made representations to local State MPs.

But a resolution can't come soon enough. Last month, a rowing crew's boat capsized at Penrith when one of their oars got caught in weeds. Cr Zamprogno said there was also a "real risk" to multiple world champion and local Paralympian, Erik Horrie. "Due to his impairment and boat class, he is strapped into the boat and if he capsized it would be really difficult to get him out of the boat and water," he said. Several areas along the riverbank where young children swim are becoming clogged, and boat users could also become entangled, Cr Zamprogno said. He predicted a complete river shutdown, similar to what happened in 2004, was almost inevitable in the future if the weeds were allowed to run wild. Greater Sydney LLS General Manager Sharon Elliott said HRCC was the subject of an audit. "Greater Sydney LLS has commissioned an audit on a number of local control authorities as part of good governance practices," she said. "Greater Sydney LLS Senior Management are currently reviewing the findings and as such it is not appropriate to comment further." HRCC General Manager Chris Dewhurst said they were informed by auditors that there were no issues of misconduct, poor performance or fraud at HRCC. Established in 1948, the HRCC provides waterway health, environmental protection, landowner education, and weed control (both terrestrial and aquatic) along the Hawkesbury-Nepean River and many of its feed-rivers and tributaries. The HRCC covers the Penrith, Blacktown, Hills Shire and Hawkesbury City Councils, with each of the four member Councils sending delegates to sit on the HRCC Board.

River shutdown "inevitable" as weed issue grows – The Western Weekender

Concern from HRCC over funding cut from state government

By [Finn Coleman](#)

Updated March 7 2021 - 8:21pm, first published February 26 2021 - 8:00am

De-funded: HRCC Chairman, Clr Nathan Zamprogno, and General Manager Chris Dewhurst in front of the repaired, but de-funded 'Weedosaurus' weed harvester.

Picture: Supplied.



Concern has been raised about a State Government funding cut that will have consequences for aquatic weed control on the Hawkesbury Nepean River, including a potential river lockdown.

In November 2020, \$238,000 State funding was withdrawn according to Hawkesbury River County Council (HRCC) Chairman and Hawkesbury City Councillor Nathan Zamprogno, who said has traditionally been the lead agency for weed control on the river.

"This means we will be losing front-line capacity, losing staff, and possibly facing the sale of our unique capital assets ('Weedosaurus' harvester), just after they were repaired at some cost," he said. "I believe the funding allocation mechanism, through mid-level bureaucrats at Local Land Services (LLS), has failed."

The 'Weedosaurus' harvester was repaired, with assistance from the Federal Government, following damages sustained in January 2020.

"We were ... preparing to resume on-water operations - especially as there are rowers training on the river at Penrith in preparation for the Tokyo Olympics," he said.

Cr Zamprogno said the Board is concerned about rower and community safety, following a recent capsizing of a schoolgirl rowing crew whose oars were caught in weeds.

"The excessive weed could also prevent safety boats from accessing the river, as they also get caught in the weed," he said.

"There is a real risk to our multiple world champion and Paralympian, Erik Horrie capsizing.

"Due to his impairment and boat class, he is strapped into the boat and if he capsized it would really be difficult to get him out of the boat and water.

"There are several areas along with riverbank where young children swim - these areas are now becoming clogged with weed in which they could become entangled."

Cr Zamprogno said that HRCC had State Government operational funding for about 10 years.

"Now that's gone," he said. "We feel that it makes a mockery of the Federal Government providing such generous funding, if the State Government then drops the ball."

Cr Zamprogno predicted a complete river shutdown, like what happened in 2004, was almost inevitable if the weeds were allowed to run wild.

"It probably won't happen this year, but it definitely will happen - it's like any natural event. It's just a matter of time," he said.

"And without the pre-emptive management which we were doing, it's almost guaranteed to happen again in the future."

[Concern from HRCC over funding cut from state government](#) | [Hawkesbury Gazette](#) | [Richmond, NSW](#)



20/05/2021 Aquatic weed spraying in the tinny with the small spray unit

The Pandemic Management Plan is Hawkesbury River County Council's personalized response to the Covid 19 Pandemic.

Update 29 July 2021

General Response

An initial Covid19 Toolbox style Staff Meeting to advise all staff of HRCC plan to manage was held on 16 March 2020.

Implemented Australian Government Health directives

- Stay at home if you are sick
- Social distancing (including stop handshaking as greeting)
- Use of hand sanitisers & provided these in workplace & vehicles
- Signs in bathrooms advocating www.health.gov.au hand washing guidelines

Cancelled/deferred all face to face meetings and implemented video meeting protocol

Developed & implemented work from home policy for appropriate staff (19 March 2020)

- General Manager to work from home with one day in office per week for essential meetings
- Landcare and Weeds Inspection coordinator occasional work from home

All regular operational monthly staff meetings held in shed & Covid19 updates incorporated into agenda

Spoke directly to staff deemed to be "at risk" or living with an "at risk" person and advised ability to access sick leave/carers leave in order to stay home from work to minimize risk.

Issued Staff Notices in relation to updates

- 16 March 2020 – Essential Information
- 19 March 2020 - High Risk Staff
- 25 March 2020 – Update – Depot access closed to public, gate closed at all times, reminder of Employee Assistance Program access to Counselling service if needed
- 30 June 2021 via All Staff Meeting – reminder of Covid test requirements to self isolate until result received; & to provide the result as your "medical certificate" and clearance to return to work

Issued Public Information Notice (depot gate, website & Facebook)

- 24 March 2020 – Public Information Update

From 12 July QR Code sign in mandatory per NSW Health Public Order for all staff and essential visitors

Closed HRCC compound to public access with exception of essential visitors (tradespeople etc) (24 March 2020)

Implemented Operational response as per below

Operational Response

Covid 19 staff noticeboard on break room door & additional operational directions and reminders posted on whiteboards as required.

First person to open the depot for the day must wipe down surfaces including the door handles and light switches which are used by multiple staff

Disinfectant, wipes and hand sanitizers provided in all HRCC working locations

Removal of dishwasher monitor, staff to place own dishes into dishwasher

Before vehicles leave the depot all must be subjected to cleaning of hard surfaces including the dash and steering wheel, controls and arm rests.

All HRCC staff to be issued with three (3) re-useable face masks. Masks must be worn at all times whilst travelling in vehicles with one or more passengers. Face masks are to be treated as staff uniform and must be laundered regularly by the individual staff members.

All field staff must distance themselves out in the field and only be in groups of two at a safe distance of 2 meters apart.

If approached by a member of the public interaction must be at a safe distance of 2 meters apart.

When working in the depot staff must adhere to 2 people per room take it in turns to access an area. This includes the chemical shed and the break room areas. From Monday 29 June, 2021 all staff (and any essential visitors) must wear a mask in all areas within the confines of the depot including the office and shed spaces until further advised.

From Monday 29 July face to face inspections on hold. No operation work to be undertaken in hotspot LGAs.

From Monday 12 July Inspection appointments only to be made if likelihood of presence of priority weeds. Prescreening questions to be asked prior to inspection. Inspections performed along street frontage with minimum contact with landholders adhering to all NSW Health Covid measures.

2 staff per vehicle until further notice; masks must be worn in vehicles where more than 1 staff member travelling together.

Stay away from known Covid sites during breaks

For any essential visitors to the office/compound– the following questions asked prior to access – and access denied if YES answered to any of the questions.

1. Have you returned from overseas or interstate in the last 14 days?
2. Have you come into close contact (within 1.5 meters) with someone who has a laboratory confirmed Covid19 diagnoses in the past 14 days?
3. Do you have a fever or symptoms of lower respiratory illness such as cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing or sore throat?

When non-staff members come into the office ask them to use the hand sanitizer available when they sign in get them to wipe the pen down etc.

Inspections and extension activities to adhere to social distancing rules

If a face to face inspection/extension activity booked ask Covid19 health question as above prior to making booking.

Impact

To date no HRCC staff member has contracted or informed their supervisor that they have come into contact with any person has contracted Covid 19.

The General Manager has opted into the work from home offer and attended the HRCC office one day per week for essential meetings. Other applicable staff will work from home where possible.

Two at risk staff members have accessed annual and sick (carer's) leave at the height of the Covid 19 infection period. These staff have now returned to work.

The depot remains closed to members of the public.

Meetings have been successfully held using the Zoom meeting platform.

Microsoft Office 365 has been installed on all HRCC desktops and laptops, including Microsoft Teams. HRCC now has a fully functional remote working option.



September 26th 2021 High Volume spraying of Pampas grass



October 14th 2021 Hand removal of Water hyacinth



November 2021 Staff outing on the Nepean Belle at Penrith



February 16th 2022 Biosecurity Weeds Inspectors were tipped-off to the sale of Water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*). Water lettuce is an invasive, floating aquatic plant, that can quickly multiply and smother waterways. Listed as a Regional Prevention Priority Weed in Greater Sydney, it should not be sold, bought, grown, carried, or released into the environment. We all have a duty to prevent this plant from becoming established in our region.



20/05/2022 Hand removal of Water hyacinth



05/05/2022 Installing Aquatic weed boom at Lake Woodcroft prior to *Salvinia molesta* control



04/06/2022 HRCC Strategic meeting with the board and General Managers from our member councils to help guide future strategic goals of HRCC.

2022 New South Wales floods

Heavy flooding broke out in the Central Coast and Sydney areas of New South Wales, Australia, beginning in early July 2022.^{[2][3]} Around 85,000 people were displaced by the flooding or requested to leave their homes by authorities.^{[4][5]} The floods' damage was significant because rain fell on land that was already saturated after months of previous heavy rainfall. It was the third major flood in 2022 for some areas in the eastern seaboard.^[6]

Impact

The LGAs that were declared a natural disaster were: Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden Council, Canterbury-Bankstown, Campbelltown, Central Coast, Cessnock, Fairfield, Georges River, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Kiama, Lithgow, Northern Beaches, Penrith, Shellharbour, Shoalhaven, Sutherland, The Hills, Wingecarribee, Wollondilly and Wollongong, with Bayside, Dungog, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Singleton and Upper Lachlan being later included in the list as the scope of the disaster expanded

Sydney

On 3 July, after prolonged rainfall in the Sydney area and the wettest start to the year on record, the Hawkesbury River at Windsor peaked at 14 metres, the highest in decades. More than 150 evacuation orders and warnings were given in the area, in addition to over 140 rescues and 19,000 homes losing power. Warragamba dam also had a major spillage with 515 gigalitres of water flowing down its walls.^[8] Some regions, such as Lansvale and Camden in Western Sydney experienced their worst flooding disasters in four decades, with floodwaters in Windsor reaching their highest point since 1978. Around 4,000 houses and businesses in the Hawkesbury region were out of power.^[9]

Hundreds of homes were submerged in western Sydney, causing trouble for 50,000 people, with tens of thousands being displaced.^[10] New South Wales Premier Dominic Perrottet urged people to "not be complacent" in the fourth flood emergency in 16 months.^{[11][12]} A cargo ship called *The Portland Bay* went missing for two days straight and was on the verge of shipwreck before it was finally rescued and eventually towed to Sydney.^{[4][5]} The total damage of the storms is still unclear.^[13] At least one person, a male resident of Sydney, was killed by the floods.^[14]

On 8 July, wooden and plastic debris, in addition to leaked oil containers, a spa and refrigerators were among the rubble drifting 100 kilometres down the Hawkesbury River, which turned up on beaches in Sydney's north, disrupting ferry services.^[15]

Hunter Region^[edit]

On 5 July, as the low moved north, residents of Broke, as well as 6,000 other people in the Hunter Region, were ordered to evacuate.^[16] Wollombi, Bulga and Broke were cut off and isolated by the floodwaters.^[17] The Hunter River in Singleton had peaked at 13.71m on 7 July, surpassing the flood levels of March 2022.^[18]

Meteorology

Some areas of the Illawarra, near Wollongong, received more than 700 mm (27.56 in) in three days and others in Sydney received around eight months of rain in four days.^[19] Camden, in Sydney's southwest, received 197.4 mm (7.77 in) of rain between July 2 and 3, with Sydney CBD accumulating 148.6 mm (5.85 in) over the span of four days.^[20] The July flood event was the fourth major flood to strike Western Sydney in less than two years, with the weekend (July 2–3) receiving as much rainfall as Melbourne, Canberra or London generally receive in a year. The heaviest amount had fallen in Brogers Creek, where 933 mm (36.73 in) of rain fell in four days.^[21] Taree recorded its wettest day

on record, registering 305 mm (12.01 in) on the gauge from the 24 hours to 9am July 7, with records dating back to 1881.^{[22][23]}

The rain bomb was caused by a tropical moisture (or an atmospheric river) that arrived from northern Australia which interacted with a low pressure trough on the New South Wales coast and later became an east coast low. Global warming and the consequential ocean heating was a contributing factor to this event.^[24]

Social media, such as TikTok, saw the rise of conspiracy theories claiming that the floods were caused by "weather manipulation" and "cloud seeding" to "weaponise the weather against its own people".^[25] Conspiracy theorists shared a 2016 news story from Seven News which reported Tasmanian residents fearing that the state's worst floods in 40 years could have been linked to cloud seeding operated by Hydro Tasmania. However, these claims were quickly dismissed by experts.^[26]

Aftermath^[edit]

Disaster payments were made available from 6 July as the state declared natural disaster funding for 29 local government areas across Greater Sydney, the Hawkesbury, Hunter Valley, Central Coast and Illawarra.^{[7][27]} Prime minister Anthony Albanese and NSW premier Dominic Perrottet both visited flood-ravaged sites in northwest Sydney.^[28] A study in 2021 initiated by the government stated that raising the Warragamba Dam wall was the best choice for minimising risk to life, property damage and cost.^[6]

[2022 New South Wales floods - Wikipedia](#)

More than 3 feet of rain triggers evacuation warnings in Australia's largest city

Updated July 4, 2022 11:25 AM ET By The Associated Press



A New South Wales State Emergency Service (SES) crew is seen in a rescue boat as roads are submerged under floodwater from the swollen Hawkesbury River in Windsor, northwest of Sydney, Monday, July 4, 2022.

Bianca De Marchi/AP

SYDNEY — More than 30,000 residents of Sydney and its surrounds were told to evacuate or prepare to abandon their homes Monday as Australia's largest city faces its fourth, and possibly worst, round of flooding in less than a year and a half.

Days of torrential rain caused dams to overflow and waterways to break their banks, bringing a new flood emergency to parts of the city of 5 million people.

"The latest information we have is that there's a very good chance that the flooding will be worse than any of the other three floods that those areas had in the last 18 months," Emergency Management Minister Murray Watt said.

The current flooding might affect areas that were spared during the previous floods in March last year, March this year and April, Watt added.

New South Wales state Premier Dominic Perrottet said 32,000 people were impacted by evacuation orders and warnings.

"You'd probably expect to see that number increase over the course of the week," Perrottet said.

Emergency services made numerous flood rescues Sunday and early Monday and were getting hundreds more calls for help.

Australia's Bureau of Meteorology manager, Jane Golding, said some areas between Newcastle, north of Sydney, and Wollongong, south of Sydney had received more than a meter (39 inches) of rain in the previous 24 hours. Some has received more than 1.5 meters (59 inches).

Those totals are near the average annual rainfall for coastal areas of New South Wales.



Residential properties and roads are submerged under floodwater from the swollen Hawkesbury River in Windsor, northwest of Sydney, Australia Monday, July 4, 2022.

Bianca De Marchi/AP

"The system that has been generating this weather does show signs that it will ease tomorrow, but throughout today, expect more rain," Golding said.

Rain was forecast across New South Wales's coast, including Sydney, all week, she said.

The Bureau of Meteorology says up to 12 centimeters (4.7 inches) of rain could fall in Sydney on Monday.

The flooding danger was highest along the Hawkesbury River, in northwest Sydney, and the Nepean River in Sydney's west.

The bureau Monday afternoon reported major flooding at the Nepean communities of Menangle and Wallacia on Sydney's southwest fringe.

Major flooding also occurred on the Hawkesbury at North Richmond on Sydney's northwest edge. The Hawkesbury communities of Windsor and Lower Portland were expected to be flooded Monday afternoon and Wisemans Ferry on Tuesday, a bureau statement said.



An emergency vehicle blocks access to the flooded Windsor Bridge on the outskirts of Sydney, Australia, Monday, July 4, 2022. More than 30,000 residents of Sydney and its surrounds have been told to evacuate or prepare to abandon their homes on Monday as Australia's largest city braces for what could be its worst flooding in 18 months.

Mark Baker/AP

State Emergency Services Commissioner Carlene York said strong winds had toppled trees, damaging rooves and blocking roads. She advised against unnecessary travel.

Off the New South Wales coast, a cargo ship with 21 crew members lost power after leaving port in Wollongong on Monday morning. It was anchored near the coast and tugboats were preparing to tug it into safer, open waters.

The ship has engineers on board capable of repairing the engine, port official John Finch told reporters. "Unfortunately, we just happen to be in some atrocious conditions at the moment," he said, describing 8-meter (26-foot) swells and winds blowing at 30 knots (34 mph).

An earlier plan to airlift the ship's crew to safety was abandoned because of bad weather.

Repeated flooding was taking a toll on members of a riverside community southwest of Sydney, said Mayor Theresa Fedeli of the Camden municipality where homes and businesses were inundated by the Nepean River over Sunday night.

"It's just devastating. They just keep on saying 'devastating, not again,'" Fedeli said.

"I just keep on saying ... 'We've got to be strong, we will get through this.' But you know deep down it's really hitting home hard to a lot of people," she added.

Perrottet said government and communities needed to adapt to major flooding becoming more common across Australia's most populous state.

"To see what we're seeing right across Sydney, there's no doubt these events are becoming more common. And governments need to adjust and make sure that we respond to the changing environment that we find ourselves in," Perrottet said.

Flood Update for the Hawkesbury, Colo & Macdonald Rivers

Update: 16:30 Tuesday 5th July 2022 Hills to Hawkesbury Community News

The BOM has issued flooding warning no. 31 (3.59pm) with significant river level rises have been observed along the Mcdonald river at St Albans, with river levels currently above the March 2022 flood level (8.33 metres). Significant river level rises have been observed along the Colo River upstream of Putty Road, with river levels currently slightly below the March 2022 flood level (16.66 metres). Major flooding is occurring along the Hawkesbury River at North Richmond where river levels peaked at 14.18 metres early Monday morning. Renewed rises resulted in a second similar peak of 14.19 metres Monday evening. The peaks observed are slightly below the March 2021 flood level (14.38 metres) and higher than the March 2022 flood peak (14.08 metres). Major flooding is occurring along the Hawkesbury River at Windsor, where river levels peaked at 13.93 metres around midday Tuesday, exceeding the March 2022 flood event (13.80 metres). Major flooding is occurring along the Hawkesbury River at Sackville, Lower Portland and Wisemans Ferry with levels above the March 2022 flood levels.

Yarramundi bridge is CLOSED

****There is no river gauge currently operating.**

North Richmond Bridge

North Richmond bridge is CLOSED

The Hawkesbury River at North Richmond (WPS) peaked at 14.18 metres around 03:15 am Monday. Renewed rises were observed overnight Monday with a second peak of 14.19 metres around midnight Monday. North Richmond is currently at 13.95 metres and falling very slowly, with major flooding. The Hawkesbury River at North Richmond (WPS) is likely to remain above the major flood level (10.50 m) for the remainder of Tuesday and into Wednesday.

The river is currently 13.77 m and steady at North Richmond (4.06pm)

Windsor bridge is CLOSED

The Hawkesbury River at Windsor peaked at 13.93 metres midday Tuesday, with Major flooding, higher than the March 2022 flood level (13.80 metres). Windsor remains steady around its major flood peak and is expected to start falling very from Tuesday evening.

The river is currently 13.90 m and steady at Windsor (3.45pm)

The Hawkesbury River at Wisemans Ferry is expected to reach around 5.60 metres 06:00 pm Tuesday, with major flooding. Further rises are likely.



A view of North Richmond (top left), from the Richmond side of the river, on Sunday, July 3. Picture: PolAir - NSW Police Force Aviation Command/Facebook



July 27th 2022 *Salvinia molesta* hiding under a bridge at Ropes Crossing.

Frogbit: weed's a big menace to local environment

December 29, 2020

A two day, multi agency operation has recently uncovered six new frogbit infestations in the Camden Council local government area following detection of the invasive, smothering waterweed at three Rossmore sites earlier this year. NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) State Priority Weeds coordinator, Nicola Dixon, said

a total of nine infestations of the weed, which poses a serious threat to our environment, have now been found in Rossmore, Bringelly, Leppington and Catherine Field. "Teams from NSW DPI, Greater Sydney Local Land Services (LLS), Hawkesbury River County, Camden, Liverpool, Campbelltown, Lane Cove, Strathfield, Illawarra and Wingecaribee Councils worked together to survey 438 properties," Ms Dixon said. "Surveillance is continuing in South Creek as we work with Camden Council and Greater Sydney LLS to eradicate all frogbit infestations from streams, dams, wetlands and water features. "It's likely an upstream frog bit infestation was flushed into the area during heavy summer rain events in early 2020 and we urge everyone to be on the



lookout for frog bit in local waterbodies. "Frog bit, or Amazon frogbit, is native to Central and South America and it is illegal to have or move the plant in NSW as it poses a serious biosecurity risk and must not be kept or sold here. "Illegally traded as a pond and aquarium plant, frog bit has spread into our waterways where it forms large dense mats, prevents native water plants from growing, reduces light, food and shelter for fish and other aquatic animals and can block waterways and irrigation channels," Ms Dixon said.

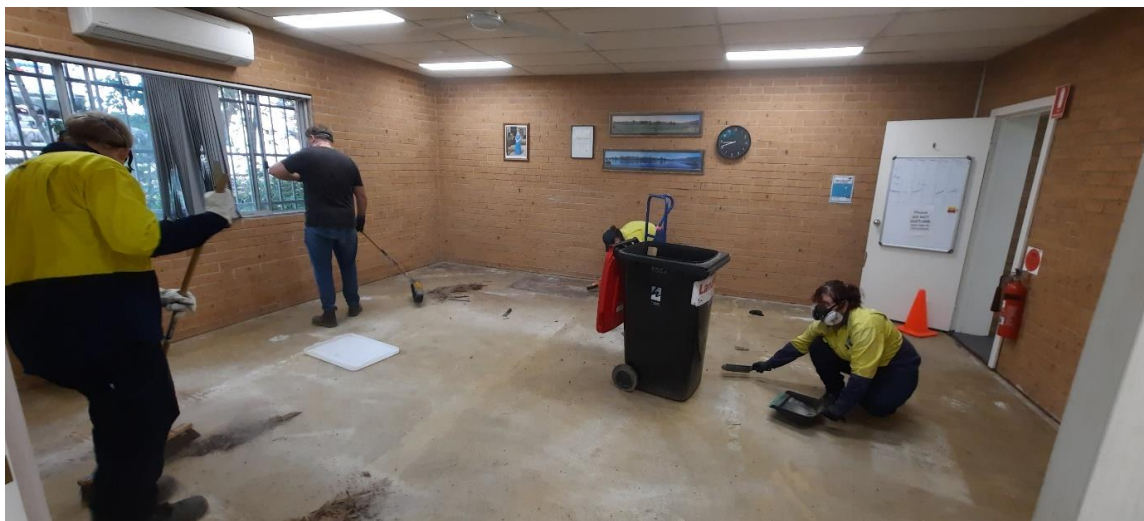
Frogbit found in this Rossmore dam. Picture by KATHRYN ASHTON.

The first known incursion of frogbit in NSW waterways was found at Green Point in 2017 and infestations have since been detected in the Georges River, Prospect Creek, Fairfield, Smithfield, Greystanes, Plumpton, Bulahdelah, Cowra, Forster and Lismore. All known infestations of frogbit in NSW have been treated to eradicate the devastating weed. Ms Dixon said frogbit has been found in aquariums and backyard ponds and for sale in aquarium shops, at markets and online. "If you suspect a plant in your yard or our waterways or for sale at a market, shop or online is frogbit, please call the NSW DPI Biosecurity Helpline 1800 680 244 or your local council, who can assist in identification and eradication," she said.

[Frogbit: weed's a big menace to local environment \(southwestvoice.com.au\)](https://southwestvoice.com.au)



February 24th 2022 HRCC depo hit by La Nina conditions with water seeping into the building



March 31st 2022 The HRCC depo was inundated with water after puddles seeped through the walls of the building throughout the officer area. A working bee was held to remove the furniture and old carpet prior to repair.



May 5th 2022 Salvinia explosion at Lake Woodcroft thanks to our wet than average summer.



May 11th 2022 HRCC staff attending Sydney Weeds Big Day Out



May 12th 2022 Lessons were learned that day.



June 3rd 2022 Up and early for weed removal out on the Hawkesbury River



June 29th 2022 Second high volume spraying of a dam infested with Frogbit with thanks to WAP Emergency funding.



October 10th 2022 Penrith City Council sign posted High Conservation Value roadside vegetation. Under our RVMP plan prohibits high volume spraying in these areas in favour of low volume pump packs.



October 25th 2022 staff hand removing Frogbit that had washed out of a dam on private property and was growing along the roadside in Oakville. With the constant rain the Frogbit was submerged under puddles of water and hand removal was the only option.



Material was brought back to the depo to dry out and material buried to destroy any potential seeds.

Infestation of invasive water weed, frogbit, detected at Oakville and Scheyville

By [Finn Coleman](#)

Updated November 18 2022 - 1:29pm, first published November 15 2022 - 4:30pm

An infestation of frogbit, an invasive, smothering water weed which poses a serious threat to the environment, has been detected at Oakville.

This month, NSW biosecurity specialists have orchestrated an eradication operation across close to 8000 hectares in Sydney to help rid the state of frogbit, *Limnobium laevigatum*.



Main image, Frogbit infestation at a property in Oakville (supplied), inset, frogbit weed. Picture supplied.

From November 15 to 17, NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is working with Hawkesbury River County Council (HRCC), NSW National Parks and 10 NSW Councils - including Hawkesbury - to eradicate the weed in a five-kilometre radius of the first infestation found at Oakville.

DPI State Priority Weeds coordinator, Charles Mifsud, said in late August this year a call from a member of the public alerted HRCC to the Oakville frogbit infestation.

"Surveillance has revealed 21 infestations with tens of thousands of frogbit plants in the Oakville and Scheyville area," he said.

"We plan to target around 620 residential properties and a significant part of Scheyville National Park.

"These infestations could have been spread by floodwaters, wildlife or human activity." HRCC general manager, Chris Dewhurst, said because frogbit is a floating weed, it has the ability to move quite quickly through the waterways and to cover entire surfaces. "The biggest impact that could potentially happen is that it could get into the main river system and then effectively shut the river down," he said.

"Similar to *Salvinia*, which shut the river down for many months back in 2004, it means you'd have a carpet of frogbit, and no one would effectively be able to use the river for the for that period of time." That would be an extremely expensive task to control. So, what we're trying to do is get it before it's established and it's within our reach to eradicate." Mr Dewhurst said the exercise was building on the known locations of frogbit, to check if there was anymore or if it had spread any further.

He added that any low lying areas, communities connected to Oakville and Scheyville, and areas downstream are potential locations where the weed might have been moved to by the last floods. Frogbit is native to Central and South America and is Prohibited Matter in NSW.

Mr Mifsud said it is illegal to have, move or sell the plant in NSW and eradication of frogbit is a priority. "Illegally traded as a pond and aquarium plant, frogbit has spread into our waterways where it forms large dense mats, prevents native water plants from growing and limits light, food and shelter for fish and aquatic animals," he said. "Frogbit can block waterways and irrigation channels,

create dangerous conditions by hiding the water surface and making it appear like firm ground and can limit recreational activities such as fishing, swimming or boating."



Frogbit, *Limnobiium laevigatum*. Picture supplied.

Frogbit has been detected in aquariums and backyard ponds, and for sale in aquarium shops, at markets and online.

It is asked that if a member of the public suspects a plant they see in their yard or waterways, or for sale at a market, shop or online is frogbit, to call the NSW DPI Biosecurity Helpline - 1800 680 244 - or their local council, who can assist in identification and eradication.

The first known incursion of frogbit in NSW waterways was at Green Point in 2017, with infestation since being detected and successfully eradicated in Greater Sydney, Hunter, South East, North Coast, Northern Tablelands, Central Tablelands and Western LLS regions.

More information and photographs of frogbit are available

at weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/Frogbit.

Infestation of invasive water weed, frogbit, detected at Oakville and Scheyville | Hawkesbury Gazette | Richmond, NSW



November 17th 2022 Frog bit Emergency Response Oakville. Our largest weeds operation to date.



November 17th 2022 Weeds Inspector mapping Frog bit in a dam on private property during the emergency response



November 30th 2022 Historic Howe House in Windsor with the shed out the back covered in Cats Claw Creeper. This heritage listed council building was saved just in time for HRCC weed control staff to cut and paint this plant.

HRCC Annual Report 2021/22

08/12/2022 by Chris Dewhurst



Hawkesbury River County Council 2021/22 Annual Report



Blacktown
City Council



Hawkesbury
City Council

PENRITH
CITY COUNCIL



HRCC have published their Annual Report for works completed in the past year. The reports summarise our activities carried out in weeds inspection, control, surveillance, and education. We have also included lots of photos collected by our own field staff.



February 11th 2023 Both HRCC and Hawkesbury Nepean Landcare Network attending the Carp Fish out event at Lake Woodcroft organised by Blacktown City Council.

HRCC release biological controls to contain plant species along the river

By [Finn Coleman](#)

Updated March 27 2023 - 3:16pm, first published February 10 2023 - 8:30am

Biological control along the Hawkesbury River is important to keep weeds, pests and unwanted species contained and easier to remove.

Hawkesbury River County Council (HRCC) is a single purpose council, with the goal of administering the Biosecurity Act 2015 throughout its council areas of Blacktown, Hawkesbury, Penrith and the Hills Shire.



At the end of 2022 and into this year, HRCC has been releasing biological control species throughout the county, to protect the region's waterways, as part of its Biological Control Program.

HRCC staff collected adults of the biological control flea beetle (*Agasicles hygrophila*) from a nursery site and have released it into areas where existing populations were killed during the floods and alligator weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*) has reemerged. "The floods killed off all of the populations in most of the sites along the river, from what we could see," said HRCC Biosecurity Weeds Coordinator Philip Price. "Or if not killed off, significantly reduced." The flea beetles populations, where we collect from in Yarramundi seems to be the only one that kept a strong population, even though it did go underwater as well ... whereas other sites we visited, have been vacant of the biological control or the beetles have been very, very fleetingly there.

"The aim is to collect from a viable population. So we go out there and we hand collect - with the use of entomological sweep nets, and also tweezers at times - and put them into containers, and then we transport them to sites that we know, and we release them."

The population will have to go through a few life cycles before it will be known if the release has been successful. Mr Price said with the current season being the way it is, he hopes the released flea beetles will have already gone through one breeding life cycle. "We will be revisiting the sites this week, if not next week, just to have a quick look at them. Especially the primary site we released in December." "We did a secondary release there just when we got back from Christmas holidays. They were still present. However, we hadn't seen any evidence of young," he said. "It takes a few weeks for them to do their business. Get acclimatised and the thing with biological control, ... [people] think they can just dump them in one spot and leave and go. You need to do multiple releases to establish a population." HRCC are also trying to control wandering trad (*Tradescantia fluminensis*) and obtained the biological control leaf-smut fungus (*Kordyana brasiliensis*) from the CSIRO. They released it at seven sites throughout the county and once the fungus is established, staff will be able to harvest it from these locations for release at further sites. A long with its selected member

council's sites, HRCC also release the fungus at a few community outreach sites that had put their hand up to receive it, and Mr Price is now hopeful that the recent wet weather will help it to take off. Biological control along the Hawkesbury River adds and extra stress upon the target species. Mr Price said there are very few biological controls and they're not a silver bullet, but they do add extra control." Especially for large, widespread species, like alligator weed and wandering trad ... we don't have the resources or the financial resources to tackle them," he said. "So, these biological controls are developed for such widespread species that they're always continually adding a stress on the species." Some of the control species used by the HRCC - including that for alligator weed - keep the target species contained to water bodies and specific sites. "It goes through a boom and bust population," said Mr Price. "That's the kind of best that we can hope for is that it acts as a knock down, but it also keeps it contained to an area." It's just that without these biological controls, these spaces, they don't have any other predator. "So, we're introducing a predator to put them under stress with the hope that when we do, or if we do, get in the area to control this, the biological controls have already done a bit of the work for us." On Wednesday, February 8, HRCC staff undertook further releases of biological control species. For the first time in the region the leaf-feeding beetle, *Plectonocha correntina*, was released for the Madeira vine (*Anredera cordifolia*).

The beetle has been released at one site in the county to establish a nursery population for further releases in the future. Western Sydney University, in partnership with the council, has also begun a breeding program for this species to investigate new bulk-rearing methods. Also, a secondary release site for the jewel beetle (*Hedwigiella jureceki*) has been established for cat's claw creeper (*Dolichandra unguis-cati*).

And HRCC staff continues to establish the nursery site for the biological control species salvinia weevil (*Cyrtobagous salviniae*) for salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*).

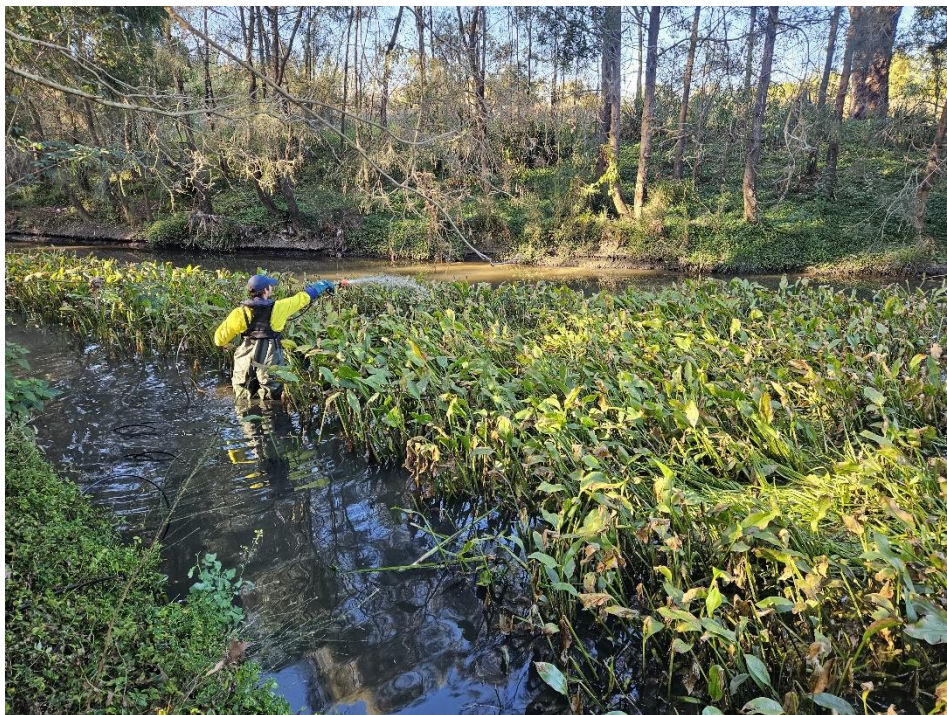
HRCC release biological controls to contain plant species along the river | Hawkesbury Gazette | Richmond, NSW



April 14th 2023 Inspecting the Collectors Plant Fair hosted at Clarendon Racecourse before plants are sold the following day.



June 1st 2023 HRCC staff treated Mother of Millions in Oakville last week. That is in fact a roundabout and they are growing in leaf material on concrete. Now is the time to be on the lookout and treat plants before they flower.



July 25th 2023 Sagittaria growing in a shallow creek in Seven Hills with water depth at knee height allowing staff to gain access with waders and the spray unit.

22nd NSW Weed Conference August 2023



HRCC were invited to present three different presentations at the conference held in Dubbo. Natalie James spoke on the Perennial soybean *Neonotonia wightii*. Phil Price and Katherine Clare spoke of the relationship between a Local Control Authority and Local Landcare Network. The third talk was also by Phil Price about the relationship between the Local Control Authority and a University. These talks were well received by attendees.





Social dinner with thanks to Dark eye Photography with staff and General manager



At the 2023 NSW Weeds Conference in Dubbo our very own Biosecurity Weeds Coordinator Phil Price was awarded the prestigious NSW Stephenson Local Government Weed Professional Award for "outstanding contribution to planning and coordinating weed management programs in New South Wales" presented by Ingrid Stephenson on behalf of the The Weed Society of NSW.

Landcare History

What is Landcare?

Landcare is a term that can mean different things to different people, however at HRCC we have adopted the approach from the Australian Framework for Landcare (2010).

‘Landcare’ is an Approach that comprises:

Ethic – a philosophy, influencing the way people live and work in the landscape while caring for the land (soil, water and biota).

Movement – local community action founded on stewardship and volunteerism, putting the philosophy into practice.

Model – a range of knowledge generation, sharing and support mechanisms including groups, networks (from district to national levels), facilitators and coordinators, government and non-government policies, structures, programs and partnerships influencing broad-scale community participation in sustainable resource management.

Background

Landcare began in Australia as a community initiative when a local group of farmers in Central Victoria in 1986 decided to solve a shared environmental problem together. This nucleus of a community tackling a shared issue, across land tenures is still one of the core tenants of the movement.

Government support for Landcare began with the Hawke’s Government “Decade of Landcare” and has since morphed through several phases of differing structures and funding models.

Landcare at Hawkesbury River County Council

Landcare has been active in the community of the Hawkesbury District since the early 1990’s. Several successes were achieved including tree planting and bush regeneration projects in the areas of endangered ecological communities.

In 2015, the General Manager, Mr. Chris Dewhurst was approached by members of the Hawkesbury Environment Network to discuss the upcoming funding being provided by Landcare NSW. A meeting held at University of Western Sydney in Richmond was well attended by many community members. There was clearly a passion and ground swell within the locality for Landcare. Much discussion centred around the potential for growth and expansion of Landcare in the Hawkesbury area, but also being limited by administration burden that comes with receiving funds.

Following the meeting the General Manager offered a model that would involve Hawkesbury River County Council. The Council, already being a body that administers many grants from a variety of sources could “host” the Local Landcare Coordinator. At the same time a community led “Steering Community” would be formed to provide the strategic decision making, later to become the Hawkesbury Nepean Landcare Network (HNLN). This model was endorsed unanimously by the elected Councillors.

This approach ensures that the recruitment, management and governance could be undertaken by HRCC, yet all the decision making would still be community led by HNLN. This was documented as a “Memorandum of Understanding” (MOU) between HRCC and HNLN.

HRCC further endorsed its support of Landcare when the Council allocated \$40K of internal funds annually to expand the position to full time in 2020.

This was a unique partnership in the Landcare space, but it had a variety of advantages which included:

- Volunteers were not burdened with administrative tasks and kept focused on achieving practical environmental outcomes.
- Governance of the Landcare funding was at the same standard applicable to broader NSW local government (under the auspices of the *NSW Local Government Act, 1993*).
- HRCC developed meaningful and practical partnerships with the local community, creating more “eyes on the ground” that could identify priority weeds.
- Additional support allowed Landcare to grow both in participation but also to geographical areas outside of the Hawkesbury area. This included The Hills Shire, Penrith and Blacktown

HRCC’s longest serving Local Landcare Coordinator was Katherine Clare, who worked from 2019 to 2023. Katherine was instrumental at developing existing and new networks across the County that allowed the growth of Landcare practices in the Hills Shire, Penrith and Blacktown areas. Additional funding of over \$1 million was brought into the region via project grants in the Landcare space during her tenure.



July 30th 2016 Come and visit the Hawkesbury Landcare Network stall and pick up some free plants. 10 Mulgrave Rd, Mulgrave. There until 12pm. **#nationaltreeday**



June 8th 2021 Celebrating Conservation On Private Property. It was wonderful to get together to share and celebrate the work that our landholders have achieved and demonstrate what we can accomplish when we work individually on a common cause. A big highlight was giving our Little Wheeny Creek landholders their Koala Habitat signs.



November 3rd 2021 A few weeks ago we had a planting day at Colo as part of our 'Recovering Our Bushland Together, Upper Hawkesbury' funded by Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal. The landholder and his family happily joined us and our staff and together we planted just under 500 trees and tall shrubs. This will provide refuge and increase habitat for wildlife in the area, especially in future fires.



06/05/2022 Weed control staff assisting in-kind hours on a private property that was able to obtain grant funding for Koala habitat restoration.



May 17th 2023 Wallacia Public School community event supported by Hawkesbury Nepean Landcare Network.

Hawkesbury River County Council
Open Day Saturday 26th August 2023
10:00am-12:00pm

Come celebrate our 75 year anniversary

- Come speak to our staff for weed advice
- See our weeds display
- Native plant giveaways

Location- 6 Walker Street South Windsor



Current staff at Hawkesbury River County Council 2023

General Manager Chris Dewhurst

Weed Control Coordinator and 2IC Natalie James

Biosecurity Weeds Coordinator Phil Price

Senior Administrator Office Penny Ramsay

Senior Corporate Advisor Barry Smith

Local Landcare Coordinator Katherine Clare

Biosecurity Weeds Inspector Toby Walker

Biosecurity Weeds Inspector Maxx Liong

Biosecurity Weeds Officer James Francis

Biosecurity Weeds Officer James Bergamin