
GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

ITEM 9.9 SF688 260418 INTERIM DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL LEVY BUDGET 2018/19

AUTHOR/ENQUIRIES: Grant Nelson, Coordinator Strategic Planning & Natural Resources**SUMMARY:**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the draft Environmental Levy Budget 2018/19. The draft budget is to be publicly exhibited and forwarded to relevant committees for comment/suggestions.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council note the draft budget proposed for the Environmental Levy for 2018/19 financial year.

OPTIONS:

Nil

DISCUSSION:

Each year Council exhibits the proposed Environmental Levy Budget and the requests the community and relevant committees comment on the draft budget and also suggest potential projects for implementation. The following information is to be exhibited with the draft budget:

The first Environmental Levy for Nambucca Shire was approved for a two year period covering the budgets of 2003 - 2005. IPART has since approved the Environmental Levy as permanent component of Council's income. Increasing annually since its commencement the income from the Environmental Levy is presently \$413,000.

Since its inception the Environmental Levy has contributed to a significant number of important initiatives that could not have been supported through general funds. These initiatives have spanned a number of core themes contributing to both environmental and social wellbeing. Examples of some core studies and plans completed over the last decade include:

- Nambucca River Estuary Study and Management Plans;
- Nambucca River, Warrell Creek and Deep Creek Flood Program;
- Nambucca Coastal Zone Management Plan;
- Vegetation and Koala Habitat Mapping; and
- Nambucca River Masterplan

The direction provided by these studies and plans are now being implemented through the environmental levy and other grant programs. In 2017/18 the program is contributing to a broad range of projects including:

- The Ecohealth Monitoring Program to establish creek and river health;
- Restoration and Revegetation of Council Reserves;
- Investigations and Management of Dawkins Park;
- Planning and Design for Street Tree Installations in Macksville CBD;
- Bank stabilisation and Riparian Revegetation projects;
- Flying-fox Management Plan preparation for Gordon Park;
- Investigations to support sustainability initiatives across the shire;

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Information on many of the completed and progressing environmental projects can be found on Council's website.

Council is committed to leveraging the income from the Environmental Levy revenue through various State and Federal Government agencies in the form of grant funding. Council has used the Environmental Levy funding to attract \$ for \$ funds to support projects. Between the 2014/15 to 2017/18 period the environmental Levy has been successful at acquiring subsidies to support the program in excess of \$800,000.

It is important to note that many of the projects undertaken with funds from the Environmental Levy span multiple years. Also, the Environmental Levy may also only form part of a financial contribution to a project as funds may be contributed from the General Budget or Section 94 funds.

Council has resolved to seek annually community comment on the Environmental Levy program and identify potential future projects. In this respect the proposed Environmental Levy budget for 2018/19 is **attached**.

It should be noted that the majority of the projects listed in the attachment have the potential to be leveraged through grant funding and Council will pursue these opportunities as appropriate. Some of the allocations are self-explanatory. A brief description of other projects is provided as follows:

Water Quality and River Health Monitoring - \$10,000

This is an annual allocation that is used to support as needed water quality monitoring. In the past it has contributed to water quality monitoring at Deep Creek during closed conditions, Dawkins Park, Stormwater outlets at public locations and other similar areas indications of environmental issues; suspect on site sewerage management systems as an example. It is typically used to guide management of environmental issues. \$10,000 has been allocated this year which will incorporate monitoring at Gumma Swamp where Council recently completed works to assist in the management of and Acid Sulphate Soils in the area.

Myna Bird Eradication – \$ 4,000

The Indian Myna Bird Program has been ongoing for several years. The project is being coordinated by Nambucca Valley Landcare and volunteer coordinators, who supply traps to individuals. The allocation this year has been increased to \$4000 to provide additional resources for the program.

Control of Noxious Weeds – \$66,200

This supports Councils Coordinator of Green Spaces to ensure that Council is meeting our legislative obligations in respect to weeds in the shire. Community engagement, education and training, monitoring evaluation; high risk species identification and management typically addressed through this budget.

Servicing Dog Bin Bags – \$1,000

This allowance supports the provision and servicing of dog bags at many of our beaches and reserves.

Riverbank Erosion Program – \$13,000

Council has been progressing with a number of Riverbank erosion projects in various parts of the Nambucca River and other areas. This year the program contributed to works at Stuart Island and Deep Creek. The image below shows some mangrove recruitment at a site in Wirrimbi.



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Heritage Program – \$6,000

For the past four (4) years Council has successfully implemented a heritage program. In 2017/18 period Council was successful a gaining supporting funding for a two (2) year program (\$6000 each year). An allocation has been made for this financial year to match allocations made by the State Government.

Dawkins Park Reserve (Macksville) – \$16,000

This budget supports the implementation water quality improvements, fauna management actions and other initiatives at Dawkins Park. Council significantly progressed with investigations and works on site are imminent. Staff are presently awaiting the result of a grant applications made to support the implementation of the Water Sensitive Urban Design treatments in the pond.

This year’s budget will support water quality monitoring and IBIS Management in the reserve. It will also contribute to the delivery of interpretive information in park that addresses local biodiversity water quality and other environmental attributes of the area. A full copy of the plan is available at Council offices.

Concept Design: Option 2

- 1 Off-leash dog exercise area
- 2 Central facility incorporating possible interpretive / educational facilities, cafe and public amenities
- 3 Outdoor dining or picnic facilities
- 4 Bioretention basins in formalised arrangement to create thematic setting
- 5 Connection to library
- 6 Nature play space
- 7 Main open space catering to family and group passive recreation activities
- 8 Reprofiled and realigned shoreline with low wetland vegetation to maintain upper level water views
- 9 Boardwalk access to islands
- 10 New off-street car park to facilitate greater use of park to passing visitors
- 11 New bridge to improve pedestrian circulation around eastern side of lake
- 12 Relocated road crossing to provide a more direct pedestrian connection between parks
- 13 Ornamental garden provides a highly attractive destination for quiet contemplation
- 14 Improved access to encourage park use from adjacent aged care facility
- 15 Bush tucker garden with sculptured landforms creates a visually rich, natural setting
- 16 Informal bush tracks with central interpretation facility
- 17 Bioretention basins
- 18 New path with boardwalks and bridge to enhance water engagement and visual experience for visitors
- 19 Existing islands retained and lake profile and shape partly modified to enhance water quality management
- 20 Informal passive recreation areas



Dawkins Park, Macksville LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT
CONCEPT DESIGN OPTIONS



Environmental Management Fund - \$ 5,000

This fund assists in the implementation of all levy projects and associated sundry expenses. It provides for specialist assistance as necessary, permit costs and approval fees, heritage search fees and similar activities.

Restoration and Rehabilitation Fund - \$20,000

This is an allowance to continue with Council’s program of revegetation of parts of Council reserves. This has been a successful program implemented by Council’s Engineering Department and results in increased habitat and wildlife refuges for fauna traversing the urban landscape. It also reduces management and maintenance cost and has a number of other environmental benefits. During 2017/18 period this fund has contributed to the purchase and planting of approximately 100 mature native trees and 3500 mid/ lower stratum species within our reserve system.

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**Climate Change Adaptation Projects – \$50,000**

This allocation will support the implementation of Councils Climate Risk Adaptation Strategy – follow this link to the full document:

http://www.nambucca.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/default/page.asp?p=DOC-MJR-73-67-48

It is intended to investigate the feasibility of a number of projects such as installation of solar panels on Council buildings. Councils Clean Energy Committee is tasked with providing recommendations to Council in respect to the implementation of actions related to this fund. This year the funds will be used to support the installation of solar panels on at least one Council building among other things. It is expected that Council will seek external grant funding to leverage this budget.

Camphor Laurel Management and Riparian Improvements at Bowraville - \$20,000

Council commenced some management activities adjoining Hennessy Tape Reserve at Bowraville. This funding will be used to support this program, particularly the management of the riparian area and the Camphor Laurels along the Creek.

Coastal Management Plan Actions - \$65,000

Council has applied for funding to address a number of actions in our coastal reserve which would be supported by this fund. These include:

- Coastal Reserves Management (three (3) year program). Management of Council Coastal reserves has been supported by the Clean Energy Fund for the last 4 years. This funding is now complete and additional funding is required to provide ongoing support to the program which will also support the Scotts Head Crown Reserve where Council is presently managing the only endangered population in the shire.
- The Nambucca River Masterplan Cultural Way – Council has applied for funding to the prepare the detail for Cultural Way from Bellwood to the V-wall. This supports an action in the Nambucca River Masterplan and will provide places of interest along the foreshore to share stories, history and the environment of the Nambucca River in a contemporary and creative manner.
- Other funding available in this program will be used to support applications for grant funding or projects identified in the available plans and strategies.

Gordon Park Flying Fox Management Plan - \$10,000

This funding will be used to support actions in the Gordon Park Flying Fox Management Plan.

Biodiversity Conservation Act (Biobanking Assessment of Council Reserves) - \$30,000

The project will involve an overview of Council's owned and managed natural reserve system as they relate to the Biodiversity Conservation Act. The project will assess the feasibility and priority of each Council reserve as potential stewardship sites under the NSW legislation.

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At the completion of the feasibility assessment it is anticipated the budget will allow for up to two (2) Biodiversity Stewardship Site Assessment Reports (BSSAR) for selected Council reserves. The aim of this program is to assist Council with future management of our reserve system.

Smart Farm Grant – Upper Buckrabendinni - \$10,000

The draft Ecohealth reporting identified some water quality issues in the Upper Buckrabendinni locality. With the support of Council, Nambucca Valley Landcare has applied for over \$400,000 over four years to address the area. This project will investigate and implement actions in the area if successful.

Environmental Trust - Connecting Coastal Habitats Mt Yarrahapinni to Warrell Creek - \$10,000

Macleay Valley LandCare partnering with Nambucca Valley Landcare, Kempsey Council and Nambucca Council targeted grant funds to establish improved connectivity to Mt Yarrahapinni near Scotts Head. Council has committed funds to the program to support improvements in the Council Managed Reserve at Warrell Creek. This area provides known habitat for threatened species and endangered ecological communities and forms part of an important landscape link to natural reserve systems.

Implementation of Flood Risk Management Plan (Flood Planning Maps For Rural Areas) - \$10,000

Council has applied for a grant under the OEH Flood Management Program to support this project. The project will use simple surface modelling to create mapping of flood prone areas not included in our existing flood models. This information will be used to support flood planning decisions for private and public works. It will also assist in agricultural land management and emergency management activities.

CONSULTATION:

The draft budget will be:

- exhibited for public comment;
- forwarded to the Clean Energy Committee for Comment;
- forwarded to the Nambucca Rivers Creeks Estuaries and Coastline Management Committee for Comment

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT:**Environment**

The environmental levy contributes to projects with positive environmental/ social outcomes.

Social

The environmental levy contributes to projects with positive environmental/ social outcomes.

Economic

Many of the environmental levy projects and programs result in positive economic outcomes.

Risk

Nil. The program is being exhibited and referred for comment at this time. There will be future opportunities to amend the program prior to adoption.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**Direct and indirect impact on current and future budgets**

The purpose of this report is to gain input into the Environmental Levy budget.

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Source of fund and any variance to working funds

Nil

Service level changes and resourcing/staff implications

Nil

ATTACHMENTS:

1 13638/2018 - Draft Environmental Levy Budget 2018-2019