



# Bellinghen Shire Council

## Environmental Levy

### Projects 2013-2014

#### **Introduction**

Bellinghen Shire Council applied to the Minister for Local Government in May 2005 for a special variation to General Income for environmental projects. On the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2005 Council received notice that an increase of 4% was approved. In 2013-14 this equates to a fund of \$235,000. Council's intention is to apply for external grants on an ongoing basis to match, and therefore maximise the funds, and these have been outlined in this report.

This report is an introduction to each of the projects in sufficient detail for the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC) to understand. The majority of the projects are the implementation of already adopted Council management plans.

The report does not include all projects the Sustainability and Natural Resources Unit are working on as some do not require a Bellinghen Shire Council Environment Levy (BSC EL) contribution. The ESAC will be made aware of these projects by the relevant Officers presenting to the Committee over the 2013/14 financial year.

#### **Projects 2013-2014**

##### **Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP)**

The PAMP project will extend the Hungry Head Cycleway south of Pipe Clay Creek Bridge by approximately 450 metres in the 2013/14 financial year. The total project cost for this extension is \$128,950. Council has resolved to allocate \$30,000 per year from the BSC EL to the PAMP.

The funds to be allocated to this program are \$30,000 for the 2013/2014 financial year.

##### **Community Fund**

The BSE EL community fund is available for community groups working on public land and sustainability projects through a competitive process, to gain additional funds to complete projects. This fund has supported over 15 community groups over recent years. It is recommended that this community funding process continue.

In the 2011/12 financial year the BSC EL community fund application and grant process has underwent significant review in consultation with the former Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC).

The funds to be allocated to this program are \$35,000 for the 2013/14 financial year.



## **Weeds Action Program**

Council in alliance with the NSW North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee have applied under the new Weeds Action Program for funds to implement the NSW Invasive Species Plan. In order for Council to maintain current operational staffing and to implement invasive plant removal projects to levels an allocation to the weeds operational budget will be required.

The total project value is \$144,000 per year with the Department of Primary Industries providing \$48,000, Council general funds providing \$48,000 and a contribution from the BSC EL of \$48,000 is required.

The funds to be allocated to this program are \$48,000 for the 2013/14 financial year.

## **Dangar Falls Pathway Upgrade**

This project was identified within Council's application for the BSC EL in 2004 and therefore improvements to the pathway from the top of the falls to the lower viewing platform within the reserve are long overdue.

In the 2012/13 financial year the existing Dangar Falls Plan of Management (written in 1999) was updated in consultation with the community and endorsed by Council in May 2013. As the Dangar Falls Reserve is owned by the Crown, the draft Dangar Falls Plan of Management will now be presented to Crown Lands for review and approval by the Minister and put on public exhibition for at least 28 days. It will then be presented to Council for endorsement and finally back to Crown Lands to be adopted by the Minister.

Since 2005, the current approved budget available to implement actions is:

- \$75,000 for construction of upgrades to the lower falls path and installation of the Labyrinth project;
- \$10,000 – provided from Employment Training Company (ETC) to help construct the Labyrinth.

Preliminary cost estimates to upgrade the path are approximately \$150,000.

Council has applied for project funding sources via external grants to assist in funding the proposed upgrade works however these have been unsuccessful to date.

The funds to be allocated to deliver the staged path upgrade are \$16,000 for the 2013/14 financial year to continue the project.



### **Dangar Falls Biodiversity Improvement**

This project continues the excellent works already undertaken at Dangar Falls Reserve. The minimal investment has resulted in an excellent response from the Antarctic Beech and Port Jackson Pine Groves forest. The project will be the continuation of that already reported to the committee and will focus on the weed removal and revegetation at the top of the Dangar Falls recreation area.

The funds to be allocated to this program are \$7,000 for the 2013/14 financial year.

### **Bellinger & Kalang River Ecosystem Projects**

The following list of projects outlines the priority river ecosystem improvement projects to be funded by the BSC EL. This allocation will assist in funding the River and Biodiversity Project Officer role to allow for adequate staffing levels.

It is important to note, Council approved the total allocation of \$86,000 in advance from the BSC EL for the 2013/14 financial year and \$16,000 for the 2014/15 Financial Year to fund the these projects and to allow for the River and Biodiversity Project Officer position to continue for the next 2 years.

### **River Connect with Your River**

Council has been successful in securing an Environmental Trust grant of \$100,000 over the next 3 years to deliver the above titled project. The total project value is \$165,628 over 3 years.

Currently in the third year of the project, it will see the implementation of 8 best practice on-ground riparian zone rehabilitation projects on the Bellinger and Kalang Rivers and fund the River Health. This project will assist in funding the River and Biodiversity Project Officer position for 2 days per week until 1 July 2013.

The funds to be allocated to this program are \$7,000 for the 2013/14 financial year.

### **Rock Fillets for Fish Fillets**

Council has applied for a NSW Environment Trust grant of \$100,000 for the installation of rock fillet (groynes) and artificial reef structures in the Bellinger River estuary adjacent to Mylestom Drive. The Department of Primary Industries has also committed to providing \$160,000 towards this project and the NSW Recreational Fishing Trust has committed to providing \$40,000 towards this project which will mitigate erosion, protect infrastructure (boat ramps), revegetate along adjacent river banks and provide habitat for mangroves, fish and marine invertebrates. Other grants will provide a contribution of \$11,000 to assist in revegetation works.



The project value is \$350,000 over three years and the environment levy contribution is of \$26,000 from the 2013/14 financial year, \$6,000 from the 2014/15 financial year and \$6,000 from the 2015/16 financial year is required. This project will assist in funding the River and Biodiversity Project Officer position for two days per week from 1 July 2013.

The funds to be allocated to this program are \$26,000 for the 2013/14 financial year.

### **Bellinger & Kalang Rivers Estuary Action Plan Stage 2 Project**

This project will conduct riparian condition assessments and prepare property-scale Site Action Plans with recommendations for river bank rehabilitation on the Kalang estuary and lower Bellinger estuary. These Site Action Plans can then be used to apply for external grant funding for implementation. The project will also to deliver a series of community capacity building events.

The total project value is \$63,000 over two years. The required BSC contribution is \$31,000 from the BSC EL for the 2013/14 financial year with the other \$32,000 being funded by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (Estuary Management Program). This project will assist in funding the River and Biodiversity Project Officer position for two days per week from 1 January 2013.

### **Bellinger Riverbank Rehabilitation at Fernmount Project**

This project will implement riparian weed control and revegetation in the upper Bellinger estuary adjacent to Waterfall Way/Bell Street/Baker Street at Fernmount.

The total project value is \$22,000 over one year. The required BSC contribution is \$12,000 from the BSC EL fund for the 2013/14 financial year with the other \$10,000 being funded by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (Estuary Management Program). This project will fund the River and Biodiversity Project Officer position up to a total of 12 days from 1 July 2013.

The funds to be allocated to this program are \$12,000 for the 2013/14 financial year.

### **River & Biodiversity Project Officer General Community Consultation**

The River & Biodiversity Project Officer role will incorporate river restoration and biodiversity education and engagement workshops as well as providing a service for customer enquiries. The project value is \$10,000 per year for two years allowing for up to four hours per week of Project Officer time.

The funds to be allocated to this program are \$10,000 for the 2013/14 financial year.



## **Improving the Water Quality of the Bellinger River Effluent Assessment and Planning Project**

This project will assist in the implementation of the findings of the Bellinger River Effluent Assessment and Planning Project. The initial project was completed in 2012 and engaged farmers to develop management plans for their effluent management systems. The project was a partnership with Council, Norco Milk Supply, Bellinger Landcare and the local dairy farmers.

The pilot project will trial innovative erosion control techniques with local dairy farmers to minimise runoff and sedimentation into the Bellinger River. The pilot project will be run in partnership with Landcare and will result in a 50:50 funding arrangement with Council and the dairy farmers willing to participate in the pilot program.

The funds to be allocated to this program are \$10,000 for the 2013/14 financial year.

### **Administration Expenses**

The BSC EL administration expenses budget will be used to pay for the required media and advertisements to promote and inform the community on projects outlined in this document.

The funds to be allocated to this program are \$3,000 for the 2013/14 financial year.

### **Summary**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan	\$30,000
Environmental Levy Community Fund	\$35,000
Weeds Action Program	\$48,000
Dangar Falls Pathway Upgrade	\$16,000
Dangar Falls Biodiversity Improvement	\$7,000
Connect with your River Project	\$7,000
Rock Fillets for Fish Fillets Project	\$26,000
Bellinger & Kalang Rivers Estuary Action Plan Stage 2 Project	\$31,000
Bellinger Riverbank Rehabilitation at Fernmount Project	\$12,000
River & Biodiversity Project Officer General Community Consultation	\$10,000
Bellinger River Effluent Assessment and Planning Project	\$10,000
Administration expenses	\$3,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$235,000</b>

This report is for the information and comment of the ESAC.