



# Bellingen Shire Council

## Environmental Levy

### Projects 2012-2013

#### **Introduction**

Bellingen 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 2012-13 this equates to a fund of \$227K. Council's intention was to apply for external grants on ongoing basis to match and therefore maximise the funds.

For the 2012-13 financial year, the following grants will assist in the outlined environmental projects in this paper;

- Dangar Falls Vegetation Management and Path Upgrading (\$70K) . application of grant still to be approved by NSW Office of Communities Sport & Recreation
- Noxious and Environmental Weed Management Programs (\$50K)
- Connect with Your River (\$100K)
- Rock Fillets for Fish Fillets (\$195K)
- Our Living Coast Regional Sustainability Initiative (\$305K)

This report is an introduction to each of the projects in sufficient detail for the Environmental Advisory committee to understand their strategic relevance. The majority of the projects are the implementation of already adopted Council management plans. The report does not indicate operational or financial detail.

#### **Projects 2012-2013**

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

Council resolved to allocate \$30,000 per year from the Environmental Levy to the PAMP.

The funds to be allocated to this program are \$30,000 for the 2012-2013 financial year.

##### **Community Fund**

Council has made available from the Levy a fund 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 and most recently supported 5 projects in the 2011-12 financial year. It is recommended that this community funding process continue.

The fund application and grant process project will be reviewed in the 2012-13 financial year.



The funds to be allocated to this program are \$28,000 for the 2012-13 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 levels an allocation to the weeds operational budget will be required.

The funds to be allocated to this program are \$48,000 for the 2012-13 financial year.

### **Dangar Falls Pathway Upgrade Stage 2**

As a project that was identified within Council's application for the Environmental Levy the improvements to the pathway from the top of the falls to the lower viewing platform within the reserve are long overdue.

The actions to be implemented for the 2012-13 financial year are to update the existing Dangar Falls Plan of Management (written in 1999) in consultation with the community. Through this process it is expected that a clearer direction of what work is required based on resources and stakeholder expectations will be provided. This will include reviewing the current cost estimate and design plan to upgrade the entire path and to start construction.

Council has also applied for a Grant from the NSW Office of Communities . Sport & Recreation for \$70K to assist in this project.

The funds to be allocated to upgrade for Stage 2 is \$50,000 for the 2012-13 financial year.

### **Dangar Falls Biodiversity**

This project continues the excellent works already undertaken at Dangar falls. The minimal investment has resulted in an excellent response from the Beech 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 2012-13 financial year.

### **Connect with Your River – Environmental Trust Grant**

Council has been successful in securing an Environmental Trust grant of \$100,000 over the next 3 years to deliver the above titled project. Currently in the second 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.



Project Officer 2 days per week. Council is required to match the grant (to a total over the 3 years of \$47,000).

The funds to be allocated to this program are \$20,000 for the 2012-13 financial year.

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

Council has been successful in securing a NSW Recreational Fishing Trust Habitat Action grant of \$40,000 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 is also providing \$155,000 towards this project which will mitigate erosion, protect infrastructure (boat ramps) and provide habitat for mangroves, fish and marine invertebrates.

Levy funds will contribute to the revegetation along adjacent river banks.

Council is required to match the grant to a value of \$53,760. The funds to be allocated to this program are \$4,000 for the 2012-13 financial year with \$50,000 to come from the Environmental Levy Reserve fund subject to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter budget review being completed and reserve being reconciled.

### **Fernmount Beach Rehabilitation Project**

Council has been successful in securing a NSW Recreational Fishing Trusts Fish Habitat Action grant of \$18,245 for the construction of a permanent stock laneway and to undertake riparian revegetation on Perry's dairy farm immediately upstream of Fernmount Beach boat launch area in the Bellinger River. The landholder is also constructing fence lines to exclude stock access. This project will rehabilitate a degraded river bank and ultimately improve water quality and fish habitat.

Levy funds will contribute to progressive revegetation of adjacent river banks.

The funds to be allocated to this program are \$2,000 for the 2012-13 financial year.

### **Sustainability Projects**

Council's Sustainability Officer was engaged in 2011 to implement actions as part of the Bellingen Emission Reduction Plan (BERP) and the Local Adaptation Pathway, both of which have been adopted by Council. There is a requirement to fund actions from the plan to achieve Council's greenhouse gas emission reduction target of 40% by 2020. This funding will focus on energy efficiency actions, engaging Planet Footprint to measure and report our GHG emissions and preparing Council and the community for climate change mitigation.

The funds to be allocated to this program are \$38,825 for the 2012 - 2013 financial year.



<b>Project</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan	\$30,000
Community Fund	\$28,000
Weeds Action Program	\$48,000
Dangar Falls Pathway Upgrade Stage 2	\$50,000
Dangar Falls Biodiversity & Management Plan	\$7,000
Connect with your River Project	\$20,000
Rock Fillets for Fish Fillets	\$4,000
Fermount Beach Rehabilitation Project	\$2,000
Sustainability Projects	\$38,825
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$227,825</b>

**This report is for the information of the committee.**