
Minutes of the 36th Meeting of the
Lower Hawkesbury Estuary Management Committee
Thursday 23rd Aug 2018
Brooklyn Community Centre
2-4 Dangar Rd, Brooklyn

Title	Family Name	Given Name	Representation	Present	Apologies	Absent	Alternate Rep.
Mr	ANDREWS	John	Mooney-Mooney Progress Association	X			
Mr	BROWN	Warren	Central Coast Council		X		
Mr	BROWN	Stephen	Roads and Maritime Authority			X	
Mr	BURNS	David	Community Representative	X			
Ms	BURTON	Tegan	National Parks & Wildlife		X		
Mr	FAIRBAIRN	Iain	Sydney Water Corporation		X		
Mr	FENWICK	Andrew	Fenwicks Marina	X			
Mr	FISH	Mike	Community Representative			X	
Ms	FRATER	Ray	NSW Bridge to Bridge Committee	X			
Dr	FREEWATER	Peter	Office of Environment & Heritage	X			
Ms	CONACHER	Sarah	Industry & Investment, Primary Industries Fishing & Aquaculture	X			
Ms	HOWARD	Mary	Community Representative	X			
Mr	HUGHES	David	Affiliate members - Community Representative	X			
Mr	KARCZ	Bronek	Community Representative	X			
Dr	LIM	Leong	Community Representative	X			
Mr	HAM	Peter	Central Coast Council		X		
Cr	MARR	Mick	Councillor – Hornsby Shire Council		X		
Mrs	MCDIARMID	Jill	Community Representative	X			
Ms	MCMURDO	Wendy	Community Representative	X			
Mr	MILES	David	Boat Owners Association	X			
Ms	MOOY	Rebecca	Greater Sydney Local Land Services	X			
Mr	MOXHAM	Rob	Commercial Representative – Oysters Farmers			X	
Mr	PATTISON	Mick	Hawkesbury City Council		X		
Mr	PIGNEYGUY	Justin	Hawkesbury Cruises		X		
Mr	REES	Stan	Land and Property Management Authority			X	
Mr	ROWE	Simon	Oceanwatch Australia		X		
Dr	RUBIO	Ana	Hornsby Shire Council	X			
Mrs	RYLAND	Julie	Hornsby Shire Council	X			
Mr	SCARSBRICK	Brian	Community Representative	X			
Ms	SEGOVIA	Ingrid	Community Representative		X		

Title	Family Name	Given Name	Representation	Present	Apologies	Absent	Alternate Rep.
Ms	SHORTER	Cybele	Community Representative Dangar Island		X		
Mr	TAYLOR	Chris	Community Representative	X			
Cllr	TILBURY	Nathan	Councillor – Hornsby Shire Council	X			
Mr	VON ZELEWSKI	Axel	Community Representative	X			
Cr	WADDELL	Warren	Councillor – Hornsby Shire Council		X		

At the meeting we also had Ms Liesl Tesch (Member of the Legislative Assembly, Member for Gosford and member of the Australian Labor Party); Graeme Plummer from the Berowra Waters Progress Association and Peter Coad, Natural Resources Branch Manager from Hornsby Shire Council.

1. WELCOME

Meeting opened at 18:10. Meeting was chaired by Cr **Tilbury**. Cr **Tilbury** welcomed Ms Liesl Tesch (Member of the Legislative Assembly, Member for Gosford and member of the Australian Labor Party) and Graeme Plummer from the Berowra Waters Progress Association.

2. APOLOGIES

Warren Brown, Tegan Burton, Iain Fairbairn, Peter Ham, Cr Marr, Mick Pattison, Justin Pigneyguy, Stan Rees, Simon Rowe Ingrid Segovia, Cybele Shorter and Cr Waddell.

3. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

No pecuniary interest was declared

4. PRESENTATION:

Dr Ross McPherson, Hornsby Shire Council's Environmental Chief Scientist gave an overall view of the past, current and future issues related to the Hawkesbury estuary just before his retirement on the 14th September 2018. In particular Ross mentioned a number of projects and milestones in no particular order:

- Statement of Joint Intent 1994 in which Council's department of planning at the time in partnership with EPA, Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment Management Trust and the Water Board agreed to work together to achieve, within the framework of the (at the time) current urban development program, the ecologically sustainable development of the Berowra Creek catchment and the recovery of the environmental health of the creek.

- The importance to continue the conversation with committees like the Lower Hawkesbury Estuary Management Plan that was established as a way of having an independent body overseeing the implementation of the Estuary Management Plan. This was a requirement from OEH who funded partially the development of the plan in 2008.

- The need to maintain a healthy estuary which means we have a healthy economy in the area

- The occurrence of large algae blooms and fish kills in Berowra Creek. These have been reduced significantly as a result of upgrades of the West Hornsby STP and installing catchment remediation devices in key areas of Berowra Creek.

- Current issues: the sewer infrastructure in our catchments is old. We have problems in the pipe network between private houses and STPs. Council is monitoring bacteriological levels along the Berowra Creek and has found a number of spots where the sewer infrastructure needed to be fixed. We currently have a good relationship with Sydney Water which is helping addressing these issues quickly.

- Upgrade of STPs- there is continuing improvement in releasing fewer nutrients every year into the creeks. However, Ross pointed that there is technology available these days to be able to reuse water instead of releasing treated water into creeks. Ross looked a few years ago at the feasibility of re-using water from the STP, storing it and using it to combat bush fires. This is a project that can be discussed again with Sydney Water

- Council has always been very supportive to monitor the health of our waterways in other to assess shifts from baseline, understanding changes through time, exploring if creek condition meets community expectations and if not coming up with what can be done. We are one of the few Councils undertaking such an intensive water quality monitoring program.

- Council has also been one of the first councils taking up innovative technology to monitor our estuaries using telemetric water quality probes and applying the data to a number of tools: estuary report health cards, predicting daily swimming conditions, assisting with the management of oyster harvest areas, etc.. Council has taken the lead in a number of projects

that have involved some risk in regards to the up-take of new technology and dissemination of the information. All our information is publically available and well-used by the scientific community. Not many other coastal councils have followed the lead on this.

-Council has led best practice on a number of initiatives: Water Sensitive Urban Designs, deployment of Catchment Remediation Devices and Stormwater Harvesting (capturing first flushes)

-Results from our water quality program indicate our 3 worse sites are downstream from industrial sites. Our water quality program has been monitoring end-of-pipe systems. Sydney Water keeps telling us that our sewer problems are from leaks in private properties. Council has been lobbying the State Government to improve districts to be connected to sewer instead of relying on septic tanks.

-Overall management in Council tends to be reactive. We only act on something when a large issue happens. This is a result of resources (staff) and funding.

Wendy **McMurdo** said a few words on behalf of the committee as she was a councillor when the committee started so she worked very close to Ross and his team. Wendy summarised the great work and enthusiasm that Ross has always diverted to the estuary, Hornsby Council has a good reputation among other councils based on the approach (using science to fix things), the capacity to gain funding and the commitment to get involved in issues and to do the job. Ross will be missed as he was a key leader behind many of the significant achievements that Council has been involved in. Cr **Tilbury** followed with some words on the same line as Wendy McMurdo and a small gift was presented to Ross on behalf of the committee.

5. CORRESPONDENCE and MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

ACTION 201711: The Committee raised concerns about the potential environmental impact on the estuary from the illegal dumping in the Spencer area. **On-going:** Central Coast Council to provide an update to the committee on actions put in place to minimise any potential impacts on the estuary from the illegal dumping at Spencer. In particular information is required about who would undertake the remediation work, what will involve and how long will it take to do the remediation work

ACTION 201804: Mary Howard requested information from Sydney Water (Iain Fairbairn) about the location of the new WWTP and the volumes per day of the St Mary's WWTP into the Hawkesbury-Nepean River. **Pending.** (Iain Fairbairn has been sick having to take a few months off work)

ACTION 201803: Ana Rubio to gather information from Kylie Pitt, jellyfish researcher, in regards to the increase number of jellyfish in the Hawkesbury. **Completed.** Committee members raised the opportunity of organising a presentation by the researcher in the future. This has been taken as noted.

Correspondence:

- **14/June/2018-** Information on the reforms announcement on short-term holiday letting was disseminated to members
- **19/June/2018** – Notification on algae bloom at Berowra Waters from *Pseudochattonella*. This species has been previously linked to fish kills. No reports on fish kills were received
- **18/July/2018** – Notification to members and NPWS of seal resting on sandstone wall at Parsley Bay

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- **1/Aug/2018** – Hazard reduction Notification from NSW RFS for the areas of Brooklyn and Fishermans Point
 - **6/Aug/2018** – Information requested on the PFAS investigation (Human Health Risk Assessment and Ecological Risk Assessment) at the Richmond RAAF Base from Defence

6. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Acceptance of minutes of the Lower Hawkesbury Estuary Management Committee meeting on Thursday 22nd May 2018:

Accepted: Wendy **McMurdo**

Carried: Chris **Taylor**.

7. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE LOWER HAWKESBURY ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Hornsby Shire Council

- Whole of Hawkesbury River/Estuary Coastal Management Program (CMP). MoU almost finished among our five neighbouring councils including: Central Coast, Northern Beaches, Ku-ring-gai, Hawkesbury and The Hills Councils. An OeH funding application will be submitted on behalf of the 6 councils in order to undertake a Scoping Study in line with the new NSW Coastal Reforms. The Scoping Study will cover the area from South Creek to the mouth including Brisbane Waters.

The scoping study will involve:

- Strategic context for coastal management
- Purpose, vision and objectives of the CMP
- Scope- issues, areas, including maps of relevant CMAs
- Review of current management practices and arrangements
- Identification of roles and responsibilities
- Risk assessment to identify where action is required
- Stakeholder and community engagement
- Preliminary business case
- Implementation plan including timeframes

As part of this process there will be a series of stakeholder and community engagement events. Since we are covering a larger area for the new plan than before we will need to decide on best approach to engage and receive feedback. This will happen once the funding has been received and a consultant has been engaged.

Currently we are contacting key stakeholders from the following agencies:

- Sydney Water
 - NSW DPI/ Fisheries/MEMA
 - OEH Science
 - DPE
 - RMS
 - SIMS
 - Crown Land
 - NPWS
 - Metropolitan Aboriginal Land Council
 - Others? E.g. Greater Sydney Commissioner
- Hornsby Shire Council undertook intensive water quality sampling at Laughtondale and Windsor in partnership with NSW OeH. Water samples were collected every hour throughout a 6-hr tide cycle. Results are currently being analysed. The aim of the intensive sampling was to understand resuspension, nutrient levels and potential linkages with Chl-a levels as proxy

for algal activity. This information will feed on to the estuarine computer models currently being developed by Sydney Water and OEH for the Hawkesbury-Nepean systems.

- Hornsby Shire Council has started a new project partnership with the UTS Harmful Algae team looking at the potential toxicity of *Pseudo-nitzschia delicatissima*. This species tend to bloom in Australian coastal waters. There are 20 different species of this algae and so far 3 have been found to be toxic so far. Samples of the last bloom that occurred in the Hawkesbury where collected and grown in UTS labs so that toxicity tests could be undertaken.
- A 'Hawkesbury Macrophyte Meander' boat trip has been organised for Saturday 27th October. Trip is fully booked. This educational trip will target: the importance of saltmarsh and mangrove ecosystems; historical information about the site; on-ground vegetation management works undertaken in particular targeting lantana and some litter collection. The activity has been done before and was supported by Greater Sydney LLS and NPWS

Central Coast Council – no report as they were an apology

National Parks and Wildlife Service - no report as they were an apology

Greater Sydney Local Land Service

2018 Floating Landcare

- In 2018 there have been 9 Floating Landcare trips held of the 15 activities on the calendar. Long Island Floating Landcare event is next.
- All activities so far have had participation form and average of 18 volunteers per trip

Bec reminded people to watch Floating Landcare the movie:

- [Floating Landcare Video](#)
- The video was produced following filming and production by Vera Hong. The interviews of 4 volunteers, NPWS Ranger Sue Guthrie and myself took place on Spectacle Island in late February.
- The video is aimed at enticing more volunteering in the estuary and potentially attract some corporate sponsorship to keep the Program afloat.

LLS will aim to keep funding 2019 Floating Landcare activities

Other projects/events:

- Greater Sydney LLS in partnership with Hornsby Council and NPWS organised an event on the 26th August with Berowra Waters residents including the Berowra Waters Bushcare group to target weeds, in particular Mother of Millions & Asparagus. Depending on how this event goes, another similar one will be planned next year.
- In September there will be a weeds conference at which there will be a good show case of projects showing good partnership with NPWS
- LLS currently funding a number of projects in Hornsby Shire area:
 - Restoration of native vegetation surrounding Fishponds waterhole on the Fishponds Walk track along Berowra Creek
 - Creek line remediation at Saltpan reserve
 - Restoring the Saltmarsh and Swamp Oak forest at Crosslands and Calna Creek managed by NPWS
- LLS currently funding a number of projects in Central Coast area:
 - Funding assistance to the Patonga Bushcare group for primary weed work on the dunes

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

Other Business

PFAS at Richmond RAAF Base – Leong Lim

Concerns were raised about the potential contamination from PFAS around the Richmond Air Base based on media coverage and residents' concerns after seeing a local commercial fisher catching eels from the surrounding area. NSW DPI Fisheries were also informed about this issue. Ana **Rubio** contacted the Department of Defence and staff from the Hawkesbury City Council for an update. The Detailed Site Investigation has been completed for the RAAF Base Richmond PFAS Investigation and includes sampling, analysis and interpretation of soil, water, plants, animals and other environmental media which may be affected by PFAS contamination. The Detailed Site Investigation has identified the areas where legacy firefighting foam was previously used and how far it has spread in the environment. Following the completion of the Detailed Site Investigation, a human health and ecological risk assessment is currently being undertaken. Community Information Sessions will be organised to disseminate results. Ana **Rubio** asked to be added to the mailing list so that future events could be shared with the committee. In the meantime, the latest findings on the PFAS investigation are up to date on the Defence website: <http://www.defence.gov.au/environment/pfas/Richmond/publications.asp>

Increasing impact on foreshore from boat wash

This issue was mentioned at previous meeting but the RMS officer was not present at the time. David Lyons agreed that boat wash is becoming an increasing issue as a result of the increase number of larger boats in the Hawkesbury. It is an on-going issue and RMS is trying through education to address this, especially in situations in which boat wash becomes potentially dangerous. RMS can only enforce an offence if the activity is unsafe to other vessels or boaters but not if the impact is on an environmentally protected vegetation community.

Increasing number of derelict boats

David **Lyons** mentioned that there 7,000 swing moorings all taken up with registered boats. The current procedure to allow boats to be at a mooring is to be registered and to undertake a visual physical inspection to ensure that it is suitable to be moored. Once this is done boat owners only need to keep renewing the registration. It was agreed that there are opportunities to improve this process in other to ensure that boats are kept in good conditions. RMS website states that your vessel will only be deemed to be in a seaworthy condition it is capable of undertaking a voyage. There was agreement that further discussion will take place to address this issue between Hornsby Council, RMS, the Boat Owner Association and the Boating Industry Association.

Fantasea Cruising – issues affecting trawlers at Patonga – Mary Howard

It was raised that the ferry Fantasea Cruising from Ettalong via Patonga Wharf to Palm beach keeps stirring the bottom impacting trawlers moored at Patonga. RMS took noticed of this observation.

Future Meetings

Next meetings in 2018 are scheduled on:
-22nd Nov

You can access information on meeting dates and previous minutes from <http://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/environment/water-catchments/hawkesbury-estuary/lower-hawkesbury-estuary-management-committee-meetings>

CLOSE

Meeting closed at 8:45pm