

## Out and about...

What we've been up to:



**|** *New whale watching platform on the headland at Black Head - see 'Biodiversity'*

### Estuary and Water Quality



**Completed** two drain modification projects in partnership with local landholders in the Ghinni Ghinni Creek catchment to reduce the generation and discharge of acid runoff into Dickenson's Creek. These drains are located in one of the highest priority areas identified in the Lower Manning River Drainage Remediation Action Plan featuring some of the lowest-lying topography on the floodplain and pH (acidity) levels as low as 3.5. Both projects involved engineering works aimed at raising the groundwater table which prevents the oxidation of acid sulfate soils which leads to sulfuric acid entering the waterway.



**Completed** two dairy effluent management projects in partnership with local farmers to improve the quality of water in the Manning River. One of the projects involved the construction of an 800kL above ground storage tank to capture and reuse dairy effluent – one of the first of its kind in NSW. Both projects will result in less nutrients entering the waterway which can lead to excessive algal growth and reduced oxygen levels, suffocating fish and other aquatic organisms. The project was funded through the NSW Estuary Management Program with matching funding provided through the Environmental Levy.

**Commenced** the restoration of over 2km of actively eroding riverbank at Dumaresq and Oxley Islands through a combination of methods including the construction of rock fillets, which deflect wave energy and allow mangroves to recolonise and stabilise the riverbank; stock exclusion fencing and weed control. This project is being funded through the NSW Estuary Management and Fish Habitat Action Grant Programs with matching funding provided through Council's Environmental Levy.

### Biodiversity



**Completed** the construction of 400m of boardwalk in conjunction with the Dawson River Wetland Restoration Project with funding assistance provided through the NSW Environmental Trust and labour provided through the Work for the Dole program.

**Constructed** a whale watching platform in partnership with the Hallidays Point Landcare Group on the headland at Black Head. The platform stands over 4 metres high to protect the adjoining rainforest by avoiding the pruning of vegetation that would normally be required to maintain views.

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## Keeping you updated

In November 2013 the former Greater Taree City Council adopted an Environmental Action Plan that was developed in close consultation with the community to identify local environmental issues of concern.

To help fund the projects in the plan, an environmental levy in the form of a special rate variation was also introduced in July 2014 for a period of 5 years.

The levy will raise just over \$1.4 million each year for projects that address a range of issues grouped under the following themes: Estuary and Water Quality; Biodiversity; Sustainability and Environmental Performance; Dredging and Foreshore Improvements.

In May 2016 Greater Taree City Council was amalgamated with Great Lakes and Gloucester Shire Councils to form MidCoast Council.

*This update contains a snapshot of the achievements and projects undertaken in MidCoast Council's Manning Region between 1 July and 31 December 2016.*



### Dredging and Foreshore

#### Improvements

**Completed** the extension of the foreshore pathway from Endeavour Place to the Bicentennial Gardens, resulting in over two kilometres of continuous pathway along the Manning River.

**Completed** the survey and design for the upgrade of the Bohnock Boat Ramp Facility which will involve the extension of the boat ramp, installation of a pontoon and formalisation and extension of the car park.

## What we've been up to:

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### Biodiversity

**Undertook** a noxious weed inspection program on urban properties at Hallidays Point to support the weed control efforts on public land. Over 90% of all noxious weeds are known to have originated from the garden. The most common weed found during the inspections was the Asparagus plant, which has spread into our native bushland.

**Welcomed** two new Green Army Teams who will undertake bush regeneration works at Cattai Wetlands, Wingham Foreshore, and Manning Waters and Andrews Reserve at Taree West.

**Installed** a number of Koala awareness signs on roadsides within koala black spot areas near Tinonee and Hillville in partnership with the local rescue group Koalas in Care.

### Sustainability and

#### Environmental Performance

**Commenced** the 2016/17 water quality monitoring program for the Manning River estuary in partnership with the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage.

**Installed** a 25kW 90-panel solar system at the Manning Entertainment Centre, which will provide around one third of its power needs and result in over \$7,000 in cost savings each year.



**Continued** to monitor and report on Council's electricity and water consumption across all of its buildings and facilities through the Planet Footprint Scorekeeping Service.

**Installed** an electronic pedestrian counter at Cattai Wetlands to monitor visitor numbers and identify peaks in usage.

Email us anytime, about anything  
[council@midcoast.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@midcoast.nsw.gov.au)



## Improving our natural areas

Over the last 6 months Council has continued to undertake a number of bush regeneration projects on public reserves in an effort to reduce the impact of weeds and improve biodiversity.

Over 600 hectares of land has been targeted which contains vegetation of high conservation value including littoral rainforest, coastal wetlands, lowland floodplain rainforest and riparian vegetation growing along riverbanks.



Council frequently works with community groups such as Manning Landcare, Taree Landcare, Friends of Browns Creek, Cundletown Landcare, Manning Coastcare and Hallidays Point Landcare to undertake these works which helps to achieve better outcomes on the ground and value for money.



## Funding success

One of the benefits of the environmental levy is that it enables us to attract additional funding from the State and Federal governments, as most grant programs require matching funding.

As of 31 December 2016 we have been successful in receiving a total of \$2.11 million in external funding to assist in implementing environmental projects funded through the levy.

During the last 6 months we have received an additional **\$70,000** in funding including:

**\$50,000** through the Hunter Local Land Services Partnership Program to coordinate bush regeneration activities within coastal vegetation areas on public reserves in partnership with the Hallidays Point Landcare Group with a focus on Asparagus.

**\$20,000** through the Hunter Local Land Services Partnership Program to implement Acid Sulfate Soil remediation works in accordance with the priorities identified in the Lower Manning River Drainage Remediation Action Plan.