

Hon. Ian Macdonald MLC
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Energy
Minister for Mineral Resources
Minister for State Development



Hon. Phil Costa MP
Minister for Water
Minister for Regional Development

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\$77 million boost to Hawkesbury Nepean welcomed

The NSW Government has welcomed a \$77.4 million recovery package for the Hawkesbury Nepean River, which will restore the river system's health and improve the ecology and water quality.

NSW Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald and NSW Minister for Water Phil Costa said a total of seven initiatives will receive funding, thanks to the Federal Government recovery package announced for the Hawkesbury Nepean river.

"This is great news for the Hawkesbury Nepean, landholders and the community," Mr Macdonald said.

"This funding will benefit a range of projects, including two projects already underway by the Department of Primary Industries, which will receive \$28 million to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus from entering the rivers, and save up to 5.9 gigalitres of water each year.

"I commend the Commonwealth for their significant support - they clearly recognise the vital role of agricultural industries as providers of fresh local produce in this region, and the importance of a sustainable river system."

Minister Costa said the funds will be administered by the new Office of the Hawkesbury-Nepean, which was recently opened by NSW Premier Nathan Rees.

"The NSW Government has developed a package of projects that will see more water available for the River, help prevent weed and algae growth, and help local farmers to water their crops more efficiently," Mr Costa said.

"In addition to the \$77.4 million in Australian Government funding, the NSW Government will provide funding and in-kind contributions and implement the projects, while further funding and in-kind contributions will be provided by local landholders and the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Authority."

Member for Penrith Karyn Paluzzano welcomed the investment.

"The Hawkesbury-Nepean River Recovery Package will help breathe more life back into this iconic Western Sydney waterway," Ms Paluzzano said.

"Many factors have contributed to the current state of the river, with the most significant issues including reduced river flows and elevated levels of nutrients.

"With this substantial funding support from the Australian Government, we will be working to turn back the hands of time and promote a more sustainable river system.

Hawkesbury-Nepean River Recovery Package Fact sheet

The Office of the Hawkesbury-Nepean River will manage the delivery of seven projects in coordination with a number of project partners.

Nutrient Smart Management

Department of Primary Industries/Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Authority

The aim of the project is to reduce diffuse nutrient loads from agricultural activity downstream of the major water supply dams. This project will also involve some on ground works, including compost treatment. The program will also develop an education program for landholders to improve nutrient management and reduce nutrient export from farms.

Water Smart Farms

Department of Primary Industries

To increase the water efficiency of irrigated agriculture across the catchment by introducing sprinkler retrofitting or an irrigation system upgrade, water harvesting /recycling and reuse, and education and training. New irrigation scheduling information will also be provided to participating irrigators in real time via SMS technology. This project hopes to prevent more than 48 tonnes of nutrients entering the river system each year.

Improving Hawkesbury-Nepean water balance accounting (metering)

Department of Water and Energy

The water balance accounting project aims to install water metering systems compliant with the National Water Meter standards for up to 2000 licensed water users (such as irrigators, industrial and recreational water users). Department of Water and Energy licensed water users that extract water from rivers in the Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment will be part of this project.

Irrigation and Landscape Efficiency Program

Sydney Water

To improve the efficiency of water use for irrigation, Sydney Water will offer a subsidised Irrigation and Landscape Assessment (ILA) to councils, schools and golf courses within Sydney Water's area of operations that use potable water for open space irrigation.

Licence Purchase project

Department of Environment and Climate Change

The Licence Purchase project will purchase water access licences from willing sellers across the Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment from around September 2010. The project is expected to gauge the commercial value of water in the Hawkesbury-Nepean and stimulate a market in water entitlement trading.

Hawkesbury City Council South Windsor Effluent Reuse Scheme

Hawkesbury City Council

To replace 100 million litres of drinking water currently used each year in irrigation with recycled water. Council will construct a recycled water plant at its South Windsor sewage treatment plant to improve the quality of treated effluent flowing into the river and increase the flexibility of potential uses for the recycled water.

Nutrient Export Monitoring program

Department of Environment and Climate Change

This project will collect information on diffuse nutrient exports from primary industries within the Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment before and after the implementation of nutrient reduction measures undertaken by the Nutrient Smart Management and Water Smart Farms Project Components. This information will help to provide objective estimates of nutrients entering the river system and also identify locations for future investments of on-ground works for reducing diffuse nutrient loads.