



Greening Australia

YOUR RIVER

THE HAWKESBURY
-NEPEAN

RIVER
RECOVERY

YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE

YOUR RIVER OF DREAMS

The Hawkesbury-Nepean River System is one of Australia's most beautiful and bountiful natural assets. Incorporating 20 major rivers and covering some 22,000 square kilometres, this enormous catchment includes the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area of over 1 million hectares.

Incredibly varied natural landscapes encompass rainforests, open woodlands, heathlands, wetlands, highland freshwater streams and the magnificent Hawkesbury River estuary.

The Hawkesbury-Nepean's complex ecosystems provide habitat for a multitude of native plants and animals. Its unique recreation opportunities, spectacular gorges and the National Parks help attract over 10 million visitors every year.

Aboriginal communities have respected the Hawkesbury-Nepean as a source of water and food for many thousands of years, and since European settlement it has been increasingly relied upon to meet the requirements of a burgeoning population.

This great river system now provides 95% of the fresh drinking water for more than 4.8 million people living in and around Sydney - Australia's largest and most cosmopolitan city - and supports the agricultural industries that provide much of Sydney's fresh food.

The Hawkesbury-Nepean River System also supports numerous other extractive, manufacturing and processing industries vital to the State's economy.

For more than two hundred years, the Hawkesbury-Nepean River System has been an integral part of our prosperity, and today this fertile region generates \$61 billion dollars in economic activity.

In other words, our thriving economy and our high standard of living depends largely upon the quality - and quantity - of the water flowing through the Hawkesbury-Nepean River System.

So it may surprise you to learn that whilst we know how important the Hawkesbury-Nepean is to our prosperous way of life, the river system's ability to continue to support that life is seriously declining.

Sections of the Hawkesbury-Nepean River System are, in fact, dying.





YOUR IMPACT

YOUR RIVER IS SUFFERING

Parts of the Hawkesbury-Nepean River System are gasping for life.

Most of the natural vegetation in the catchment has been cleared for agriculture, housing and industry, with only 13% left intact in the Sydney basin.

Chemical and nutrient run off from industry, residential development and agriculture, plus waste from over 20 major sewerage plants, are poisoning the water, causing frequent outbreaks of toxic blue-green algal blooms.

Noxious weeds are strangling the riverbank and impeding natural water flows.

Foul, polluted water is posing serious health risks. Out of 27 monitored sites, 24 are considered unsuitable for swimming.

The Hawkesbury-Nepean's failing ability to support life is also directly affecting the survival of the native plants and animals that rely upon the health of the river system.

The once plentiful Platypus, Australia's most loved native mammal, can no longer be found in the many parts of the river system it used to inhabit.

The Australian Bass, so highly prized by recreational fishing enthusiasts, is now under great threat of disappearing from this system.

The River System's appalling water quality is being exacerbated by the amount of water constantly drawn from it. Natural flows have been lost forever, and now there is simply not enough water regularly flushing the system of pollutants.

With the population of Sydney expanding so rapidly, and with climate change affecting temperatures and rainfall, these problems are becoming absolutely critical.

If the insidious degradation of this overburdened river system is allowed to continue, it will become completely dysfunctional, becoming nothing more than a drain for pollution.

Many parts of the Hawkesbury-Nepean River System are close to ecological collapse. Our quality of life is at stake.

It is happening right now. It is time to act.

YOUR LEGACY

YOUR RIVER NEEDS YOUR HELP



David Butcher CEO
Greening Australia
NEW SOUTH WALES

The Hawkesbury-Nepean River System has been the cradle of modern civilisation for Australia. It is the home of Australia's agricultural and industrial beginnings. But we have failed to re-invest in the health of the system. We must now begin to repay our debt.

The River Recovery program developed for the Hawkesbury-Nepean River System will address the

causes of the problems in order to ensure that this prolifically productive region continues to function as a 'great provider' for many, many years to come.

With your help, Greening Australia will be able to:

- Restore and rehabilitate native vegetation along the riverbanks.
- Construct fencing to improve the rehabilitation of riverbanks.
- Remove weeds and implement strategies to minimise nutrient loads in the river, fostering the re-establishment of aquatic native vegetation and the habitats it provides.
- Minimise sediments and nutrients and remove rubbish.
- Work strategically with stakeholders to address major causes of poor water quality such as sewage treatment works.
- Work with government to ensure that adequate water flows are maintained to protect the health of the river system.

- Improve the river system's resilience to climate change by early adoption of prevention and adaptation methods.

Our ambitious goal is to see Platypus swimming in the parts of the river system they have disappeared from.

The River Recovery program integrates the power and initiative of business, science, community and government. It takes a practical and strategic approach to putting infrastructure, programs and procedures in place to reverse the degradation and decline of the once magnificent Hawkesbury-Nepean.

Please help us to save the river system that has given so much for so long.

Your River.
When there's nothing left to take, it will be too late to give.



growingthefuturetogether



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