

NSW Environmental Trust

ANNUAL REPORT

2016–17

Cover photographs:

- 1 Marramarra Nature Reserve provides spectacular views over the Hawkesbury River.
Photo: J Spencer, OEH.
- 2 The Saving our Species program is helping to restore habitat for the scarlet robin in the NSW Southern Tablelands.
Photo: D Ingwersen, Enviro Imagery.
- 3 Children on a WilderQuest excursion in Dorrigo National Park. Photo: J Spencer, OEH.
- 4 Background: Sandstone rock texture. Photo: D Finnegan, OEH.

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The Honourable Gabrielle Upton MP
Minister for the Environment
52 Martin Place
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Minister

I have pleasure in presenting to you the 2016–17 annual report for the NSW Environmental Trust. The report has been prepared in accordance with the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* and the *Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984* for your presentation to the NSW Parliament.

In 2016–17, the Trust provided more than \$62 million for the delivery of environmental projects by a broad range of community groups, research facilities, Aboriginal organisations, schools and government agencies across the State.

More than \$19.8 million was awarded through the Trust's contestable grant programs for projects that will reduce waste, restore natural habitats, provide innovative research solutions and enhance environmental education and community engagement.

This year the Trust awarded \$10 million to the Office of Environment and Heritage for the acquisition of properties that contain high-priority koala habitat. The five-year project will fund the purchase of strategic properties for addition to the national parks estate. The project will be guided by a statewide spatial analysis of koala records, and habitat mapping and modelling.

The Trust's large-scale restoration programs are continuing to show the value of long-term investment in rehabilitation. Now in its fifth year, the Community Bush Regeneration Program has so far established 62,543 hectares of connected vegetation across terrestrial, riparian and wetland communities through a combination of rehabilitation and replanting activities. In the Great Eastern Ranges corridor, Bush Connect grantees have so far created 755 hectares of new wildlife corridors that will improve habitat quality and connectivity.

This year, with the extension of the Waste Less, Recycle More initiative, the Trust will be managing an additional \$61.5 million over four years for six new contestable grant programs in collaboration with the NSW Environment Protection Authority. These programs will commence in 2017–18.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Lean
Secretary, NSW Environmental Trust
October 2017

About the NSW Environmental Trust

Functions of the Trust

The NSW Environmental Trust (the Trust) was established by the NSW Government as an independent statutory body to support projects that enhance the environment of New South Wales. Established under the *Environmental Trust Act 1998*, the Trust funds and administers grants across a diverse range of programs, including contestable grants, major projects, and various NSW Government initiatives. The Trust is administered by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH).

The Trust is chaired by the NSW Minister for the Environment. Members of the Trust are the Chief Executive of OEH and representatives from local government, the Nature Conservation Council of NSW and NSW Treasury. The Trust generally meets four times annually. Further information on administration of the Trust and its membership is provided in the appendices to this report.

The objectives of the Trust are to:

1. encourage and support restoration and rehabilitation projects in both the public and private sectors that will, or are likely to, prevent or reduce pollution, the waste stream or environmental degradation, of any kind, within any part of New South Wales
2. promote research in both the public and private sectors into environmental problems of any kind and, in particular, to encourage and support:
 - research into and development of local solutions to environmental problems
 - discovery of new methods of operation for NSW industries that are less harmful to the environment
 - research into general environmental problems
 - assessment of environmental degradation
3. promote environmental education and, in particular, to encourage the development of educational programs in both the public and private sectors that will increase public awareness of environmental issues of any kind
4. fund the acquisition of land for national parks and other categories of dedicated and reserved land for the national parks estate
5. fund the declaration of areas for marine parks and related purposes
6. promote waste avoidance, resource recovery and waste management (including funding enforcement and regulation, and local government programs)
7. fund environmental community groups
8. fund the purchase of water entitlements for the purposes of increasing environmental flows for the State's rivers, and restoring or rehabilitating major wetlands.

The Trust's staff are employed within the grants section of the Regional Operations Division of OEH. For issues of compliance (such as disability inclusion action plans, workforce diversity, multicultural policies and services, work health and safety etc.) refer to the *Office of Environment and Heritage Annual Report 2016–17*.

Highlights of 2016–17

In 2016–17, the Trust spent \$62 million on the delivery of environmental projects. These projects were delivered by community groups, research facilities, Aboriginal organisations, schools, industry, and state and local government agencies.

Acquiring land for conservation

Eight new properties covering more than 2136 hectares will be added to six existing national parks or conservation areas to help improve land management and connectivity in these reserves. Of particular note is the acquisition of over 987 hectares to the Gwydir State Conservation Area to enhance protection of the Gwydir Wetlands, one of the most significant semi-permanent wetlands in north-western New South Wales. This property will increase the protection and resilience of the wetland ecosystems and support the future breeding efforts of endangered waterbirds such as the magpie goose, brolga, black-necked stork and freckled duck.

This year the Trust awarded \$10 million over five years to the Office of Environment and Heritage for the acquisition of land to protect koala habitat. The project will fund the purchase of strategic properties that contain high-priority koala habitat for addition to the national parks estate. The voluntary land acquisition program will be guided by a statewide spatial analysis of koala records, and habitat mapping and modelling.

Supporting ecological restoration

The \$8-million Bush Connect program has moved into its second year of operation, with grantees working towards their goal of improving the condition and connectivity of natural resources and ecosystems within the Great Eastern Ranges corridor. Grantees have created 755 hectares of new corridors through a range of activities including the planting of seedlings, direct seeding and the installation of fencing. Monitoring has been established to determine revegetation survival rates, regeneration response to weed control and native animal activity resulting from improvements in habitat condition.

In the fifth year of the large-scale Community Bush Regeneration Program, grantees have now helped to connect 62,543 hectares of vegetation across terrestrial, riparian and wetland communities through a combination of rehabilitation and replanting activities.

The Lord Howe Island Board is continuing its move towards a rodent-free island. Stage 2 of the rodent eradication program is almost complete, with the focus this year on obtaining the relevant approvals, resource planning, and continuing the important task of engaging with the island community. An economic evaluation has shown the eradication plan is estimated to have net social benefits of \$142 million, with \$58 million of that returning directly to Lord Howe Island residents.

Protecting Aboriginal land and culture

In November 2016 the Trust approved a new funding model for the Protecting our Places Program. The new model provides for up to \$65,000 (previously \$35,000) for projects that protect culturally significant land and support education about the environment and its importance in Aboriginal life.

Grants will now be delivered over a two-stage process. Stage 1 will focus on developing a project plan while Stage 2 will implement the on-ground works and activities approved through the project plan. The first round of grants to be offered under the revised program opened in June 2017.

Protecting threatened species

The \$10-million Saving our Species (SoS) Partnership Grants program has seen all grantees from the first two rounds of funding finalise their governance arrangements and medium-term workplans, complete 10-year species monitoring plans and commence field activities with their project partners. Round one grantees have collectively reported 47 hectares revegetated with over 10,000 new plantings and 130 hectares of habitat protected through fencing.

Supporting environmental research

A major research project has identified the key cause of dieback in critically endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland. The research by Western Sydney University has identified a previously undescribed species of native psyllid which has the potential to infect grey box woodlands beyond the Cumberland Plain. Research outcomes have been published in nine scientific journals and the project has made broad recommendations for the future management of grey box woodlands.

The Trust's Research program remains one of the most highly sought-after grant programs available to environmental researchers. This year 24 grant projects concluded with research outcomes contributing to our knowledge of climate change impacts, conservation of threatened species and native vegetation management.

Promoting waste avoidance and sustainability

Since its inception, the Waste Less, Recycle More initiative has awarded around \$150 million to more than 350 individual projects through 40 competitive grant rounds. These grants range from small \$5000 grants to help avoid food waste to \$5-million major infrastructure grants that are helping to provide better resource recycling facilities.

This year the Trust announced an extension to the Waste Less, Recycle More initiative for an additional four years until 30 June 2021. The Trust will provide \$61.5 million for the delivery of six new contestable grant programs in collaboration with the NSW Environment Protection Authority. These programs will commence in 2017–18.

Contestable grants programs

This year the Trust has awarded more than \$19.8 million through its contestable grants programs for projects that meet the Trust's objectives. This includes:

- around \$12.4 million for projects that will help to reduce waste and increase recycling through the Waste Less, Recycle More initiative
- around \$4.8 million for projects that will enhance and restore natural habitat through rehabilitation and regeneration activities
- \$1.4 million for research projects that will provide innovative solutions in the areas of biosecurity, climate change, waste and pollution, and social engagement
- \$907,000 for projects that will deliver environmental education initiatives across the community and government sectors
- \$283,500 for school projects that provide opportunities for children to learn about environmental sustainability and food gardens.

Engaging with grantees

A stakeholder engagement survey completed in May 2016 has provided a wealth of insights into the views of current and past grantees, as well as others who had no previous connection with the Trust. The survey identifies two major groups – highly connected grantees who are good networkers and confident in applying for funds, and isolated grantees, with poor networks and less experience in applying for funds.

Nearly 96% of respondents had previously heard of the Trust, and 75% were aware of Trust-funded projects. Workshops and emails were viewed as a valuable form of communication from the Trust. The outcomes of the survey will help the Trust to identify opportunities for improvement and plan new engagement, communication and capacity-building initiatives, particularly for those who are less confident with the grant application process.

Trust Programs and Achievements



Land Acquisition

Funding the acquisition of land for national parks and other reserves for the national parks estate through section 7(d) of the *Environmental Trust Act 1998*.



\$5.03 million
spent on acquiring high
conservation value land



**2,136.56
hectares**
purchased for
national parks

In 2016–17 the Land Acquisition Program supported \$5.03 million of strategic high conservation value land purchases administered by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). These acquisitions focused on three important conservation themes: creating effective and efficient management of parks, connectivity conservation and culturally important landscapes and places.

Eight properties covering 2,136.56 hectares were acquired through a voluntary acquisition process. All properties acquired this year adjoin existing national parks, making subsequent land management more efficient and responsive with respect to implementing on-ground conservation actions such as the management of wildfire and the control of pest and weed species.

Acquisitions included land for addition to:

- Kanangra-Boyd National Park (16.19 hectares)
- Limeburners Creek National Park (713.92 hectares)
- Gwydir Wetlands State Conservation Area (987.47 hectares)
- Marramarra National Park (11.94 hectares)
- Carrai National Park (404.04 hectares across three properties)
- Pitt Town Nature Reserve (3 hectares).

Most of these properties satisfy the objectives of more than one of the acquisition conservation themes. They are largely naturally vegetated and their reservation as part of the national park system will sustain habitat for biodiversity. Examples of each theme are provided below.

Effective and efficient management of parks

North of Berowra, at Coba Point, 11.94 hectares of naturally vegetated land was acquired for addition to Marramarra National Park. The park contributes significantly to the scenic quality of the lower Hawkesbury River as seen from within the park on waterways and other vantage points. It offers important outdoor recreation opportunities for people within the Sydney metropolitan area. This land lies at the end of the 8-kilometre Coba Ridge walking trail on a ridge top looking

out to Berowra Creek and Bar Island in the Hawkesbury River. This walking destination point will now form part of the park, allowing NPWS to ensure the track and destination point are safe and legally accessible for its visitors.

Connectivity conservation

Connectivity conservation aims to connect habitats in the landscape to help species and communities move between habitats and to allow them to progressively adjust their ranges in response to threats such as climate change and habitat contraction. Two acquisitions this year are helping to achieve this aim.

North west of Moree, 987.47 hectares of land was purchased in the Gwydir Wetlands which is one of the most significant semi-permanent wetlands in north-western NSW and one of the most important sites in Australia for colonial nesting waterbirds. The Gwydir floodplain is an area of rapid agricultural development. Less than 10,000 hectares or 15% of the original extent of the floodplain still exists in a relatively natural condition. This property will increase the protection and resilience of the wetland ecosystems and support the future breeding of many species including the endangered magpie goose, brolga, black-necked stork and freckled duck. It importantly incorporates 44 hectares of land listed as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention and contains approximately 400 hectares of Coolibah – Black Box Woodland which is a state and nationally listed endangered ecological community. This land will be added to Gwydir Wetlands State Conservation Area.

On the NSW North Coast, south of Crescent Head, 713.92 hectares of coastal habitat was purchased adjacent to Limeburners Creek National Park. It contains Littoral Rainforest, Coastal Saltmarsh, Swamp Sclerophyll Forest and Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest, all of which are listed as endangered ecological communities, and wet heath, sedgeland and mangrove vegetation. This provides diverse habitats that support many native animal species including threatened species such as the green and golden bell frog, koala, brush-tailed phascogale, eastern chestnut mouse, wallum froglet, little bentwing-bat, osprey and rainbow bee-eater. The land forms part of a coastal corridor that links Limeburners Creek National Park to Pelican Point, Pelican

Island and to Port Macquarie. Such relatively large parcels of vegetated land are becoming increasingly rare along the NSW east coast. Adding this habitat to the national park will increase its capacity to sustain populations of coastal and migratory species.

Culturally important landscapes and places

North-east of Walcha, the Carrai Plateau is a special place for the Thunggutti People, with many ceremonial sites. This year NPWS acquired 404.04 hectares of land that was part of a large inholding surrounded by Carrai National Park and Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. The site is significant as it links to other NPWS land containing the Carrai Waterholes, a sacred Aboriginal men's site. Adding this land to the national park will improve NPWS capacity to prevent and control wildfire on the fire-prone plateau to better protect these cultural assets, biodiversity and fire-sensitive vegetation within the park.

Land acquisition for koala conservation

An addition to the land acquisition project for koala habitat conservation was approved by the Trust in November 2016. It provides \$10 million over five years (until June 2021) for the voluntary acquisition of land that will contribute to the protection of koala populations.

Land acquisition will be guided by a prioritisation framework derived from a statewide spatial analysis of koala records, habitat mapping and habitat modelling across tenures undertaken through the OEH Saving our Species program.

No funds were spent under this program in 2016–17 because the identification of key koala habitat is still underway. Land acquisition will commence in 2017–18.



The addition of core wetland habitat to the Gwydir Wetlands State Conservation Area will strengthen the protection of this Ramsar-listed site.

Environmental Management and Restoration

The NSW Environmental Trust manages a diverse range of programs which aim to enhance and restore the environment and reduce pollution and environmental degradation. These programs include:

- the long-running contestable Restoration and Rehabilitation grants for community and government organisations
- the Saving our Species Partnership Grants Program to protect threatened species in New South Wales
- Community Bush Regeneration and Bush Connect grants which allow community groups to strategically work together to achieve restoration at a regional scale
- Protecting our Places grants for restoration projects by Aboriginal communities
- a range of major (non-contestable) Restoration and Rehabilitation projects
- the Contaminated Land Management Program
- two pollution clean-up programs.

The Trust continues to lead the way in contemporary environmental grants program design with several of these environmental programs offering grantees the security of up to 10 years to complete their environmental projects. Community Bush Regeneration grants are funded for six years, allowing grantees to achieve enduring restoration outcomes beyond those that can be achieved with the traditional three-year Restoration and Rehabilitation grants. Saving our Species and Bush Connect projects both run over a 10-year time frame, with the Trust committing the first six years of funding, and grantees funding the remaining four years of the project through cash or in-kind contributions.

A new POP program

The Protecting Our Places (POP) Program was established by the Trust in 2002 specifically to fund Aboriginal organisations to deliver projects that protect land that is culturally significant to Aboriginal people and support education projects about the environment and its importance in Aboriginal life.

In November 2016 the Trust approved a new funding model for the program which was developed in response to the recommendations of an external evaluation completed in late 2015. The new model provides for up to \$500,000 (as was previously available) but increases the size of individual grants up to a maximum of \$65,000. This is a significant increase from the \$35,000 that was previously available. While this new model will mean the number of grants awarded each year will be reduced, the Trust envisages it will allow greater support and mentoring for grantees, resulting in higher quality projects and outcomes.

Grants will now be delivered over a two-stage process. Stage 1 will focus on developing a project plan while Stage 2 will implement the on-ground works and activities approved through the project plan.

The POP Program has been on hold while the outcomes of the evaluation were considered and the new funding model developed. During this time the community has shown there is a significant demand for the Trust to continue with this program.

This year the Trust has continued to support several existing POP projects with \$114,810 in milestone payments made to grants still in progress under the old program. The first round of funding under the revised POP Program opened in June 2017 with successful projects to commence in early 2018.

■ CASE STUDY

Finding common ground in Tumut

In a joint project coordinated by Tumut Shire Council (now Snowy Valleys Council), Tumut Common has been transformed from an unusable and degraded piece of land into a valued community asset.

Located adjacent to the town of Tumut, the 273-hectare Common acts as a protective buffer zone between the town and Wereboldera State Conservation Area. Many organisations have an interest in the area through access rights or as owners or managers, including the local council, Forestry Corporation of NSW, Department of Industry – Lands and Forestry (responsible for Crown lands), NPWS and TransGrid. These organisations joined forces with the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and Rural Fire Service to become joint project partners, with Tumut Shire Council acting as the overall project manager. The initial grant of \$83,500 from the Trust was boosted by an extra \$186,000 in works and in-kind funding from the project partners. The project has been an outstanding example of what can be achieved through coordinated effort.

The area supports an endangered ecological community: White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Redgum Woodland. However, this was degraded and had become infested with weeds such as blackberry, St Johns wort, privet and cotoneaster, as well as highly invasive bridal creeper which arrived as a result of illegal green waste dumping. Bridal creeper was posing a direct threat to the state conservation area, one of the few places in New South Wales with well-established Norton's box – red stringybark grass-forb mid-high open forest. The main aim of the project was to protect this conservation area and restore the buffer zone by removing the weeds.

The project exceeded its initial scope and targets and is now complete. All 273 hectares of the Common have been treated for weeds, and heavy blackberry infestation has been controlled from an additional surrounding 150 hectares. Over 57 cubic metres of bridal creeper and 750 cubic metres of privet have been removed, and African boxthorn removed from four hectares of the site. Controlled burning of dead biomass has promoted phenomenal natural regrowth.



Restored Norton's box woodland community surrounding Tumut Common.

Over 300 cubic metres of putrescible waste and 600 cubic metres of recyclable material and steel were removed from the Common. A disused landfill site was discovered during the project. In consultation with the EPA and with help from NPWS this site has been remediated and revegetated with 200 native trees and shrubs.

The scale of works, constant activity at the site and dramatically visible before-and-after results have boosted overall community awareness of the problems caused by illegal activities such as unauthorised dumping and removal of habitat through firewood collection. An increase in bushwalkers and cyclists has been evident in the past year, and the community is now more aware of the need to be vigilant and report illegal activity.

The project partners worked together to review existing access tracks and work out the most cost-effective, useful and sustainable access arrangements. This collaboration saved those organisations hundreds of thousands of dollars in access maintenance costs, and in return the project partners generously contributed extra work and in-kind contributions.

Restoration and Rehabilitation Program

Protecting and restoring our natural environment by reducing environmental degradation and pollution, protecting important ecosystems and habitats, and improving capacity for environmental restoration.

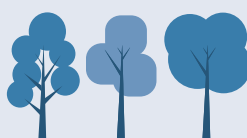
The Restoration and Rehabilitation Program is an annual contestable grants program that offers funds of up to \$100,000 to community organisations and government agencies for projects that enhance and restore the environment. A total of \$4,138,911 was spent this year supporting grants currently in progress under this program.

Achievements

Achievements from recently concluded restoration and rehabilitation projects include:

- Over 1000 koala food trees have been planted across five sites on the mid North Coast, with follow-up weeding and the installation of fencing. Further corridors which would benefit from plantings in the South West Rocks area have also been identified. A community education campaign has raised awareness of the threats faced by the South West Rocks koala colony.
- More than 200 hectares of riparian and roadside habitat in the Hunter Valley has been treated for African olive infestations. Thirteen landholders have signed five-year agreements to control this introduced tree on their properties.
- A riparian rehabilitation project in the Yass Valley has increased the connectivity and biodiversity of riparian vegetation by establishing 6000 plants over 13 hectares, fencing riparian remnants, and treating weeds over 38 hectares of riparian land. Fish surveys at five sites have shown positive benefits for fish populations including Murray cod, golden perch and the southern pygmy perch.
- A large-scale, community-based biological control program is helping to control crofton weed in New South Wales. The rust fungus *Baeodromus eupatorii* was mass-produced and distributed, with nearly 170 confirmed releases across the State. The long-term benefits will be achieved over time as the rust fungus naturally spreads through the landscape, debilitating the crofton weed and reducing its ability to invade new areas.

Restoration and Rehabilitation Program outcomes 2012–14



6819 hectares regenerated

by native regrowth after weeding, fencing, erosion control or pest control



1723 hectares revegetated

by planting or direct seeding



776 organisations

adopted improved land management practices



6629 volunteers

contributed 138,439 hours

853 contractors

employed for around 124,000 hours



31,617 people

attended 1171 training and other events



4274 students

(primary, secondary and tertiary) involved for 20,136 hours

Note: This data is drawn from 158 projects that were funded in the 2012–14 grant years, with 106 of these projects (67%) now complete.

Restoration and Rehabilitation grants awarded in 2016–17

In 2016–17, the Trust received 131 applications requesting \$10,754,093. From these, 54 grants were approved totalling \$4,770,668 as follows:

- 26 community grants (\$2,302,629)
- 28 government grants (\$2,468,039).

Tables 1 and 2 list the grants awarded under each of these funding streams.

Table 1

Restoration and Rehabilitation community grants awarded in 2016–17

Organisation	Project	LGA	Amount
Australian River Restoration Centre Limited	Rivers of Carbon – Yass River Linkages – Stage 2	Yass Valley	\$99,954
Barragal Landcare Group Inc.	Restoring Shale Hill Woodland in Barragal Lagoon Catchment	Wollondilly	\$99,060
Big Scrub Rainforest Landcare Group Inc.	Enhancing remnants, linkages and corridors across the Big Scrub	Various	\$100,000
Boorowa Community Landcare Group Inc.	Creating land and water connections for superb parrots and pygmy perch	Hilltops Council	\$95,601
Bowning-Bookham Districts Landcare Inc.	Habitat hops from Burrinjuck to Bango – Stages 1–3	Yass Valley	\$99,650
Brunswick Valley Landcare Inc.	Simpsons Creek Koala Corridor – restore, enhance and connect – Stage 1	Byron	\$94,400
Bush Heritage Australia	Restoration of threatened grasslands at Scottsdale Reserve, Bredbo	Snowy Monaro Regional Council	\$93,546
Central Tablelands Landcare Inc.	Planned woodland pathways – connecting our endangered communities	Orange	\$99,241
Dungog Common Recreation Reserve Trust	Protection and restoration of 'Hungry Hill' at Dungog Common	Dungog	\$37,500
EnviTE Inc.	Dorriggo World Heritage Area ecological restoration	Bellingen	\$100,000
EnviTE Inc.	Restoring and connecting rainforest habitat in Wanganui Gorge – Stage 1	Byron	\$100,000
Goonengerry Landcare Group Inc.	Goonengerry Landcare's restoration and rehabilitation project 2017	Byron	\$92,450
Australian River Restoration Centre Limited	Rivers of carbon – burra banks, bush and biodiversity	Snowy Monaro Regional Council	\$99,954
Hunter Wetland Centre Australia	Restoring wetland EECs and protecting threatened waterbirds	Newcastle City	\$91,639
Inland Waters Rejuvenation Association	Returning flow to the Barren Narran	Walgett	\$59,848
Jaliigirr Biodiversity Alliance Inc.	Jaliigirr koala habitat restoration – Hydes Creek to Bongil Bongil	Coffs Harbour	\$99,500
Landcare Illawarra Inc.	Reconstructing EECs in Illawarra farmscapes	Kiama	\$99,995
Michelago and District Landcare Group Inc.	Building habitat linkages for woodland birds on the Monaro	Snowy Monaro Regional Council	\$52,676

Organisation	Project	LGA	Amount
Molonglo Catchment Group Inc.	Wandiyali banks to bush riparian linkages project	Various	\$74,920
Murrumbidgee Landcare Association Inc.	More than just pretty trees: Restoring native habitat on Junee farms	Junee	\$100,000
Nambucca Valley Landcare Inc.	Protecting threatened ecological communities of northern Nambucca	Nambucca	\$95,256
Shoalhaven Landcare Association Inc.	Reintroduction of stuttering frog to Cambewarra Range	Shoalhaven	\$81,055
Sydney Institute of Marine Science (SIMS)	Healing old wounds: restoring <i>Posidonia australis</i> in mooring scars	Port Stephens	\$95,954
Tweed Landcare Inc.	Protecting and restoring biodiversity at Bilambil Creek	Tweed	\$40,460
Tweed Landcare Inc.	Filling biodiversity gaps connecting Tweed coast to border ranges 3	Tweed	\$100,000
Upper Clarence Combined Landcare Inc.	Restoring Upper Clarence Floodplain Wetlands – Stage 1 – Tabulam	Tenterfield	\$99,970
Total			\$2,302,629

Table 2

Restoration and Rehabilitation government grants awarded in 2016–17

Organisation	Project	LGA	Amount
Albury City Council	Wagirra Trail Murray River restoration project	Albury	\$100,000
Ballina Shire Council	Reinstating coastal EEC and protecting a cultural site, East Ballina	Ballina	\$98,500
Bellingen Shire Council	Restoring public reserves of the Never Never, Gleniffer – Stage 1	Bellingen	\$100,000
Blayney Shire Council	Revive 2: Rehabilitation of the Belubula River – Danvers Street Carcoar	Blayney	\$54,265
Byron Shire Council	Byron habitat corridors – ensuring a future for threatened fauna	Byron	\$99,850
Canterbury-Bankstown Council	Post-flooding restoration in Deepwater Park	Canterbury-Bankstown Council	\$61,860
Fairfield City Council	Creating habitat corridors along Green Valley Creek, Mount Pritchard	Fairfield	\$86,750
Federation University	Enhancing habitat values for threatened species on Nanya Station	Unincorporated Far West	\$99,804
Hunter Councils Inc.	Conservation of Hunter Valley Weeping Myall Woodland Stage 2	Singleton	\$79,230
Hunter Councils Inc.	Valleys Wildlife Corridor Project in the Upper Hunter Stage 1	Muswellbrook	\$97,178
Ku-ring-gai Council	Duffys Forest endangered ecological community remnant consolidation	Ku-ring-gai	\$63,500
Ku-ring-gai Council	Restoration of Warrimoo Coastal upland swamp endangered ecological community	Ku-ring-gai	\$69,043

Organisation	Project	LGA	Amount
Lane Cove Municipal Council	Batten Reserve: restore endangered vegetation and create habitat	Lane Cove	\$91,255
Lismore City Council	Assisting rural landholders to restore high conservation value areas	Lismore	\$100,000
Local Land Services Western Region	Lower Darling River riparian rehabilitation – Tandou Station	Central Darling	\$100,000
Mid-Coast Council	Restore the core: littoral rainforest endangered ecological community restoration project	Mid-Coast Council	\$69,212
Mid-Coast Council	Protecting and enhancing squirrel glider habitat in urban Forster	Mid-Coast Council	\$92,800
Mid-Western Regional Council	Putta Bucca wetlands extension	Mid-Western Regional	\$89,250
Murray Local Land Services	Habitat enhancement for threatened squirrel gliders in Burrumbuttock	Greater Hume	\$99,500
Murray Local Land Services	Protecting the riparian zones of the Edward-Wakool river system	Murray River Council	\$99,300
Northern Beaches Council	Restoring our coastal headland ecosystems – Stage 2	Northern Beaches Council	\$100,000
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council	Keeping an eye on oxeye daisy in south-east NSW	Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional	\$88,300
Sutherland Shire Council	Track closure and rehabilitation – Lucas Heights conservation area	Sutherland	\$40,000
Sydney Opera House Trust	Rehabilitation of marine biodiversity at Bennelong Point	Sydney City	\$86,442
Wingecarribee Shire Council	Three creeks (north bank) rehabilitation project	Wingecarribee	\$100,000
Wollongong City Council	Restoring the ecological integrity of Wollongong's dune systems	Wollongong	\$100,000
Royal Botanic Gardens & Domain Trust	Western Sydney rainforest rescue	Camden	\$99,500
Randwick City Council	Managing stormwater runoff to improve water quality at Maroubra	Randwick	\$102,500
Total			\$2,468,039

Community Bush Regeneration Grants

Assisting community groups to strategically tackle the restoration of priority bushland areas at a regional scale.

The \$10-million Community Bush Regeneration Program is supporting community groups to restore degraded bushland at a regional scale. This was the fifth year of the program which consists of two components. The large-scale bush regeneration grants are administered by the Trust, while the Private Land Conservation Grants program is administered by the Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife.

Community Bush Regeneration Program

The Community Bush Regeneration Program provides funding over six years for large-scale bush regeneration projects that allow community groups to work together across large areas to achieve enduring environmental outcomes for their region. The program provides for the regeneration of degraded bushland, including riverbanks, urban bushland, degraded waterways and rare or endangered ecosystems. The aim is to improve the health and resilience of these bushland ecosystems and improve ecological connectivity within and between natural areas.

Thirty-four projects that were funded at the start of the program in 2011–12 are now all entering the final year of their six-year life span. Milestone payments of \$872,742 were made to these grantees in 2016–17.

The Palm Grove Ourimbah Creek Landcare group has been restoring 24 hectares of subtropical rainforest with funding from the Community Bush Regeneration Program. Their achievements are highlighted in the following case study.

Private Land Conservation Grants

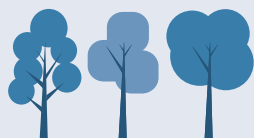
Since 2008 the Private Land Conservation Grants program has been providing financial support to private landholders in New South Wales who wish to undertake conservation work on their own properties.

In 2012 the Trust awarded \$2 million to the Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife to enhance the existing Private Land Conservation Grants program. The aim of the extra funding is to expand the program to include different types of conservation agreements and some practical community education programs. This partnership between the Trust and the Foundation provides financial support to landholders who have signed voluntary conservation agreements to restore and maintain conservation values on their land.

In 2016–17, the Foundation received 108 applications from landholders, seeking \$813,756 to improve and protect the biodiversity of their land. Funds were awarded to 56 projects, to a total value of \$333,849. Funding was awarded to 25 grantees with in-perpetuity conservation agreements and 27 grantees with less binding conservation agreements. Four grantees will benefit from training and education activities.

Through the program the Foundation reaches many small stakeholders who protect and restore their local environment. The Trust has previously established a funding model that enables it to allocate additional funds of up to \$500,000 to the grant program in any year, if funds are available. This also allows the Trust to target the additional funds for specific environmental priorities. In 2016–17, the Trust awarded \$500,000 to the Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife which will be used for future funding rounds (Table 3).

Community Bush Regeneration Program outcomes since 2012



4400 hectares
of degraded bushland currently
under regeneration



142,000 seedlings
planted to restore native
habitats



62,543 hectares
of vegetation connected
across terrestrial, riparian and
wetland communities through
regeneration and revegetation



5880 volunteers
contributed over 256,000
hours



**381 professional
contractors**
employed for over 121,000 hours
on bush regeneration activities



4600 students
involved in bush regeneration
activities for 15,262 hours

Table 3

Community Bush Regeneration Private Land Conservation grants awarded in 2016–17

Organisation	Title	LGA	Amount
Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife	Community Bush Regeneration Private Land Conservation Supplementary Funding 2016–17	Various	\$500,000
Total			\$500,000

■ CASE STUDY

Regenerating Ourimbah rainforest

Since 2012, a group of Landcare volunteers have been working alongside contractors to regenerate 24 hectares of subtropical rainforest adjacent to the M1 motorway at Ourimbah on the NSW central coast. Despite its proximity to the motorway, the site is of high significance because it is one of the few surviving patches of subtropical rainforest in the area.

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, much of the surrounding land was cleared for timber harvesting and agriculture, but patches of rainforest survived because they were valued as a source of town water. These patches were remarkably intact and weed-free, but were surrounded by degraded land. In the 1980s the land was acquired by NSW Roads and Maritime Services as part of the easement for the motorway. The rainforest and paperbark forest expanded into the cleared areas, but the regeneration of native species was accompanied by an equally vigorous outbreak of environmental weeds. Blackberry, large- and small-leaved privet, balloon vine, lantana, tree tobacco and honeysuckle grew rampantly into the canopy, while tradescantia and panic veldtgrass suppressed native seedlings at ground level. These weeds significantly degraded the site, causing erosion, suppressing native plant growth and allowing nutrients and sediment to flow downstream into Tuggerah Lake.

Palm Grove Ourimbah Creek Landcare Inc. successfully applied for funding from the Trust and is now in the final year of this six-year project to restore the site. Project partners include Central Coast Council, Greater Sydney Local Land Services, local contractors and Roads and Maritime Services. The project has successfully regenerated 20 hectares of degraded native vegetation and linked them with the adjacent surviving rainforest remnants to help create a continuous corridor of 120 hectares. Aerial photography has been particularly helpful in tracking the project's progress, and, although not quite complete, the project has already exceeded its initial goals.

The Landcare group established a native plant nursery on site and runs volunteer working bees twice a week. Their extensive body of knowledge about rainforest regeneration has been shared through delivery of 18 training days, 19 awareness events and site visits, and via the group's website. Initial work to remove weeds is carried out by

contractors and this is followed up by the volunteers. So far 44 volunteers have contributed more than 10,000 hours to the project activities.

The group has encouraged the local community to learn about its work and the significance of the site through residents' meetings and guided bushwalks, and has welcomed the involvement of students from local schools, and the nearby university and TAFE college.

As well as protecting local water quality, rehabilitating this endangered rainforest ecosystem has improved local native biodiversity and helped to provide habitat for threatened plant and animal species, including large forest owls and frogs. The site is also popular with local bushwalkers and birdwatchers.



Restored riparian vegetation acts as a filter to protect water quality in Ourimbah Creek.

Saving our Species (SoS) Partnership Grants Program

Supporting multiple stakeholder partnerships between government, industry and community organisations to protect and conserve threatened plant and animal species in the wild within New South Wales.

The Saving our Species (SoS) Partnership Grants program funds coordinated, multiple stakeholder partnerships between government, industry and community organisations to protect and conserve threatened plant and animal species in the wild within New South Wales. This \$10-million program has provided two major rounds of funding for targeted groups of threatened species, and a small research program for data-deficient species.

The SoS Partnership Grants program complements the NSW Government's \$100 million Saving our Species program which is managed by OEH. The NSW program provides a framework for better management of threatened species across the State by establishing priority management actions required to secure a species in the wild. All funded projects for both rounds and the data-deficient species research align with the objectives of the NSW Government's SoS program.

The two major rounds that were awarded through the SoS Partnership Grants program in 2014–15 and 2015–16 support nine long-term projects that vary between \$500,000 and \$1 million. The Trust and applicants fund up to 80% of the total project cost in the first six years, with the remaining 20% committed solely by the applicants over the following four years.

This funding model assumes that restoration projects need a decade of intervention before they can become self-sustaining with minimal maintenance effort. During this time, around 80% of the resources are needed within the first six years. The 10-year time frame for SoS grant projects is therefore aimed at increasing the likelihood of long-term improvements in threatened species populations.

In 2015–16 the Trust awarded two smaller projects that target data-deficient species. These are threatened species for which more information is required before actions can be taken to secure them in the wild. The research program aims to increase our knowledge about the distribution, ecology and threats for these species and develop effective management actions to help secure priority threatened species in the wild.

No new grants will be awarded through the SoS Partnership Grants due to the commencement of the NSW Government's \$100 million five year Saving Our Species Program which seeks to coordinate further targeted investment in threatened species. Therefore the focus this year has been on supporting the 11 projects that are currently funded.



The Brush tailed rock wallaby – an iconic species under threat

Achievements

Through 2016–17, the Trust spent \$1,381,893 to support projects that seek to conserve and protect the following groups of threatened species:

- 26 site-managed species (plants and animals that can be secured by site-specific conservation actions)
- 12 landscape-managed species (plants and animals that need broad landscape-scale conservation actions to address habitat loss or degradation)
- 67 co-occurring species (plants and animals that are listed in multiple SoS management streams).

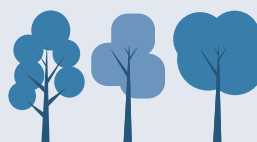
This year Round 2 grantees finalised their consortium governance arrangements and medium-term workplans, completed standardised 10-year species monitoring plans, and commenced field activities with their project partners. Having already completed this phase of their projects, Round 1 grantees focused this year on implementing on-ground activities such as surveys, ecological burns, fencing, planting and weed control.

The two projects funded under the small contestable Data-deficient Species Research Grants program have completed their first year of implementation. Research outcomes for all 20 target species addressing 30 priority research actions will be finalised at the end of the third year of the program.

SoS Partnership Grants outcomes from Round 1 since 2014



50 hectares
of degraded habitat
enhanced through weeding



47 hectares
of native habitat
revegetated by planting



10,200 seedlings
planted



130 hectares
of habitat protected
through fencing



278 people
attended training in conservation
or regeneration activities
1181 people
attended events to raise
awareness of threatened species



1465 volunteers
contributed
8416 hours
of work towards conservation
or regeneration activities

Note: This data is drawn from first year reports submitted by the five SoS partnership projects awarded in 2014.

Bush Connect

Building partnerships between community, industry and government to protect, conserve and restore the natural environment of the Great Eastern Ranges.

Now into its second year of operation, Bush Connect is an \$8-million program that funds long-term outcomes for the NSW environment within the Great Eastern Ranges (GER) corridor. Through this program, community, industry and government organisations are working together to restore the natural environment through a range of practical on-ground and community capacity-building activities.

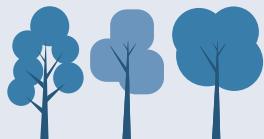
The objectives of the Bush Connect program are to:

- improve the condition and connectivity of natural resources and ecosystems within the GER corridor
- increase the area of land (public and private) suitable for long-term protection for its environmental value through appropriate conservation mechanisms
- increase the number of partnerships and aligned efforts that protect the environmental values of the GER corridor.

Bush Connect projects are focused on achieving on-ground ecological outcomes through practical activities such as revegetation, fencing, artificial habitat installation and assisted natural regeneration. The capacity of landholders and local community groups is increased throughout the 10-year period to help implement and maintain these actions.

The Trust awarded competitive grants of between \$250,000 and \$500,000 to 16 partnership-run projects in 2015–16. One grantee has subsequently withdrawn. The remaining 15 projects are now in their second stage of implementation and will run until 2025. This year the Trust paid \$1,576,790 for progress achieved through these grants.

Bush Connect outcomes since 2015



755 hectares
of new bushland corridors
created



13,000 seedlings
planted and
5 kilograms
of native seed sown



105 hectares
of degraded bushland
enhanced through weeding



7.6 kilometres
of fencing installed



31 professional contractors
employed for over 6000 hours
on conservation activities



591 volunteers
contributed more than 17,000
hours to on-ground works

Note: This data is drawn from first year reports submitted by the five SOS partnership projects awarded in 2014.

Achievements

Across the program, grantees have created 755 hectares of new vegetation corridors through a range of activities including planting, direct seeding, fencing and weed removal. Over 1500 people, including volunteers, contractors, staff and students, have contributed to these on-ground achievements so far.

Monitoring has been established across all projects to determine revegetation survival rates, regeneration response to weed control and native animal activity resulting from improvements in habitat condition.

The following projects highlight some of the achievements by grantees this year.

Rivers of Carbon – Goulburn district river linkages

The Australian River Restoration Centre is working with landholders to protect and enhance 25 kilometres of riparian corridor in the Goulburn district. Up to 25 landholders will receive ongoing assistance and support until the project ends in 2025.

A highlight of this year was the 'Mess it up and slow it down' workshop which successfully engaged 80 local landowners from across the district to learn about why 'messing things up' in the riparian zone was better for river health, biodiversity and carbon sequestration. In the project's first year, seven landholder agreements have been signed with several other landholders expressing interest in an agreement. Work has been completed on one of these properties while other landholders will proceed with their agreed works in 2017 as part of their farm management plans. So far 5.7 kilometres of stock-proof fencing has been installed, more than 7000 seedlings planted, and assistance provided for four alternative water sources (tanks, troughs and piping).

Jaliigirr landscape connections in the Great Eastern Ranges

As a partner of the Jaliigirr Biodiversity Alliance Inc., Bellinger Landcare has committed to managing 10 sites over 10 years that will enhance, protect and reinstate native vegetation corridors. The focus of work is on regenerating bushland to restore viable habitats for forest-dependent native animals on priority Indigenous sites and private property. All sites are connected to the Gondwana Rainforests World Heritage property within this region, through a mosaic of land tenures including private landholdings, national parks and state forests.

Year 1 on-ground works, consisting mainly of primary weed control, are now complete with 87 hectares of land under regeneration. Planting activities were affected by drought conditions during the year but still achieved the installation of more than 800 young trees.

Land management agreements have been secured for each site and site plans prepared in collaboration with site owners and land managers. The foundations for meaningful monitoring and evaluation have been established with rapid vegetation assessments completed and included in the monitoring plan for each site.

Monaro tree comeback

Dieback of ribbon gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) in the Monaro region has left a stark landscape of dead and dying trees. Greening Australia, Upper Snowy Landcare, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and South East Local Land Services are working together through the Bush Connect program to develop a rehabilitation strategy to bring this landscape back to life.

While it is preferable to restore the original ribbon gum community this may not be possible due to insect attack and reduced seed stock. The project will undertake trial plantings to test possible replacement species that may be more resilient, and carry out cultural burning trials with local Indigenous groups to see if burning can stimulate natural regeneration and help to control insect pests. Upper Snowy Landcare will work with the local community to establish new corridors or stepping stones for native wildlife.

Most of the activity in this first year has concentrated on raising community awareness of the issue and formalising land management agreements with eight private landholders. Some planting has occurred across three properties, however, seed collection of ribbon gum has been restricted due to poor abundance of seed in the project area. A workshop on cultural burning was held with project partners and Indigenous groups.

Supplementary funding

In 2017 the Trust announced the Bush Connect Supplementary program which is a contestable grants program seeking to extend the outcomes currently being achieved through the original funding allocation. This additional funding provides an opportunity for existing grantees to add to their current Bush Connect projects.

The Bush Connect Supplementary program will provide an additional \$500,000 (in total) to existing Bush Connect grantees through a competitive grant process, with individual grants of between \$50,000 and \$100,000 available. The additional funding will be applied to years 3 to 6 of the current approved budgets of successful applicants. Projects will still run until 2025, with the final four years to be funded by the grantee and their project partners.

Applications for the supplementary funding opened in July 2017 with the successful projects to be announced by the end of 2017.

Major Restoration and Rehabilitation Projects

The Trust currently funds a range of major projects that fall outside the contestable grants program but which are consistent with the objectives of the Restoration and Rehabilitation Program. A total of \$6,376,466 was spent this year on supporting existing and new major restoration and rehabilitation projects. The following sections provide a summary of the progress achieved from some of these diverse projects.

Two new major projects worth a total value of \$11 million were awarded by the Trust in November 2016 (Table 4).

Plant Sure is a new project that aims to engage the nursery industry to promote environmentally safe plants and avoid those that pose an environmental weed risk.

A major grant of \$10 million will contribute to conservation of high-priority koala habitat through voluntary land acquisition. This project is being provided as a \$2 million a year supplementary grant to the existing NPWS land acquisition program for five years. Further information on this project is included under the Land Acquisition section of this report.

Table 4

Major Restoration and Rehabilitation projects awarded in 2016–17

Organisation	Title	LGA	Amount
Nursery & Garden Industry NSW & ACT Limited	PlantSure: Environmentally Safe Ornamental Plant Scheme	Various	\$1,000,000
Office of Environment and Heritage	Land Acquisition Supplementary Grant for Koala Habitat Conservation	Statewide	\$10,000,000
Total			\$11,000,000

Biocontrol research for weed management

This project aims to take advantage of previous or current biocontrol research projects to significantly reduce the cost, time and resources required for researching the safe introduction of biocontrol agents for environmental weeds in New South Wales. The project has adopted a coordinated approach involving NSW Department of Primary Industries and OEH, and is led by CSIRO.

The first stage of the project was completed this year which consisted of developing and applying a framework to prioritise environmental weeds for biocontrol research. The prioritisation framework is based on a matrix assessment system and comprises assessments of:

- the threat to natural ecosystems posed by each weed
- the feasibility of undertaking a biocontrol project using the most promising biocontrol agent
- the likelihood of the selected agent being successful at controlling the weed if released in a new environment.

The following five weeds were subsequently selected for research under Stage 2 of the project: balloon vine (*Cardiospermum grandiflorum*), sea spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*), leaf cactus (*Pereskia aculeata*), broadleaved pepper tree (*Schinus terebinthifolius*) and yellow bells (*Tecoma stans*). An implementation plan was developed for the research which will begin in 2017–18.

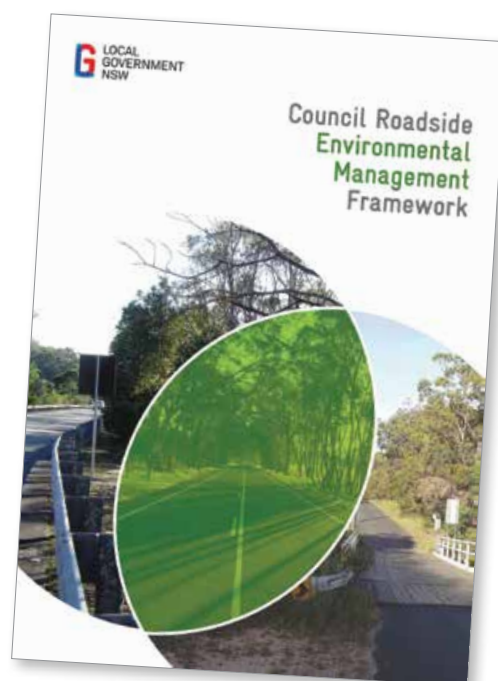
Linear reserves

Council roadside reserves

In 2015–16 Local Government NSW was awarded \$2 million from the Trust to develop a framework that will integrate the management of roadside reserves into local government operational plans. Two key milestones were achieved this year. The first was finalising the Council Roadside Reserves Environmental Framework which aims to streamline roadside environmental management in councils and address barriers to the long-term management of these areas.

The second milestone was administering the contestable grants round for local government projects to pilot components of the environmental framework. Four regional workshops were held to provide details on the environmental framework and available grants. A recorded presentation was also provided for staff unable to attend a face-to-face session.

The grants opened from March–May 2017 and 42 applications were received. Twenty-one grants were awarded for local government projects totalling \$1,205,206. These projects will engage 27 councils and one county council to pilot aspects of the framework. A full list of successful projects and a summary description of each project is available on the Local Government NSW website.



Travelling stock reserves

A \$4.75-million grant awarded in 2015–16 is allowing Local Land Services to assess the conservation significance of all travelling stock reserves (TSRs) in New South Wales and put in place management practices that will retain and enhance natural values. This year the development of a rapid assessment method has been completed for assessing and classifying the conservation status of TSRs. The methodology has been developed in consultation with Local Government NSW and will allow local councils and other reserve managers to rapidly assess linear reserves using a consistent approach. A training package and guide will be developed and rolled out in 2017–18.

Historic data on TSR conservation values along with important landscape and environmental datasets have been incorporated into a spatial database. This will form the basis of a statewide web-based system, which will enable linear reserve managers to view and add information collected using the rapid assessment method.

The next six to twelve months will see conservation assessments on TSRs being implemented in Local Land Service regions and the further development and implementation of management and innovative funding trials.



Testing the rapid assessment methodology that will be applied to both roadsides and travelling stock reserves.

Plant Sure

This new project was awarded \$1 million to prevent future environmental impacts from weeds by reducing the availability of weedy ornamental plants from supply and trade in New South Wales. A voluntary accreditation scheme will be developed to engage relevant industries in promoting environmentally safe plants and removing or avoiding the use of plants that pose an environmental weed risk. The scheme will be underpinned by a robust plant risk assessment process that will provide confidence for industry and consumers that their plant choices do not pose a high risk to the environment.

The project's first year has focused on establishing the framework for the project including appointment of a project manager and developing various governing documents such as terms of reference and project plan for delivery of Phase 1 milestones.

Phase 1 of the project consists of a comprehensive investigation of existing schemes, standards and plant risk assessment processes, and the development of a fit-for-purpose plant risk tool and model. Macquarie University has been appointed as the successful supplier for delivering the plant risk assessment investigation.

Phase 2 will further develop the accreditation scheme in collaboration with stakeholders using various communication platforms, branding and promotion. It will assess the plants currently used by industry and develop agreed lists of high-risk and environmentally safe species. Industry participants will be trained in the scheme and the project will implement behaviour change campaigns to encourage consumer and industry uptake.

Protection of koalas in Murrah Flora Reserves

This project will protect important habitat for the last remaining koala population on the NSW far south coast through ceasing commercial timber harvesting in several state forests in the region. Around 11,800 hectares of forest in Murrah, Mumbulla, Tanja state forests and part of Bermagui State Forest, will be permanently protected as a flora reserve to protect koala habitat and Aboriginal cultural heritage. Forestry Corporation of NSW is managing the project which will fund access to alternative sources of sustainable timber to maintain current supply contracts in the south-east region.

The flora reserve was formed in 2015–16 with OEH being appointed as the land manager. In early 2016–17 the Murrah Flora Reserves Steering Committee developed an interim working plan that has been implemented and adopted. Since that time a working group has met regularly to develop the final working plan which will be released for public consultation in 2017–18. The steering committee consists of representatives from Biamanga and Gulaga (Aboriginal Boards of Management), the timber industry, community, conservation groups, Rural Fire Service, Forestry Corporation of NSW, NPWS and OEH.

Rodent eradication on Lord Howe Island

Rats on Lord Howe Island are recognised as a key threatening process under both State and Commonwealth legislation. This project aims to remove two of the most significant introduced predators on Lord Howe Island – ship rats and house mice – which are having a major impact on the island's species and ecosystems.

This year the focus has been on progressing approvals, logistics and resource planning and continuing to build community support. A detailed workforce plan has been developed identifying the staff resources required, their roles and required timing. A preferred helicopter operator has been selected along with a provider for biosecurity detector dogs and handlers.

Engagement with the island population has continued through monthly meetings of a community working group. One-on-one engagement with almost all community members has also continued during detailed planning on individual properties. An island-wide community clean-up has removed over 400 tonnes of hard waste to reduce rodent hiding places and increase chances of eradication success.

A human health risk assessment has been completed for the project, overseen by the NSW Office of the Chief Scientist and Engineer. Key approval documents have been submitted under a range of legislation including the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* and NSW *Fisheries Management Act 1994*.

A final decision on whether the eradication program is to proceed will be made in 2017–18. This will consider whether all the required approvals have been obtained, and the economic and technical feasibility of successfully undertaking the eradication.

An economic evaluation of the rodent eradication plan has shown it has a benefit-to-cost ratio of 17:1, resulting in estimated net social benefits of \$142 million with \$58 million of that returning directly to Lord Howe Island residents. The plan is therefore justified on economic efficiency grounds.

Classification and mapping of regional-scale native vegetation in New South Wales

This project is improving the classification of plant community types across New South Wales by comprehensively mapping vegetation on a regional scale. In 2016–17 the focus of this project has been on vegetation mapping and classification for the Coastal New South Wales, the Central Tablelands and Upper Hunter regions.

Over 54,000 sites are undergoing numerical analysis and strategic vegetation surveys are being undertaken to fill gaps in knowledge and coverage. New survey information is systematically entered into the Vegetation Information System maintained by OEH. Classification is due for completion by December 2017. This work has been complemented by pilot work on state forests that matches and maps threatened ecological communities.

Mapping activities have proceeded across a number of regions. Public exhibition of draft mapping has been completed for the Riverina Murray and the Western Region with the final release of mapping planned for August 2017 and October 2017 respectively. Plant community type modelling has been completed in both the Central Tablelands and Upper Hunter regions with the release of draft maps for public comment planned for August–September 2017. Structural mapping has been completed for the Coastal New South Wales region, however, a six-month delay is anticipated with the development of a new classification scheme. During this time the project resources will focus on assisting with classification and survey until the new classification scheme is delivered in 2018.

Snowy River Rehabilitation Stage 2

This project, which has sought to deliver enhanced environmental, social and economic outcomes for the recovering Snowy River and its communities, concluded in June 2017. The achievements in the final year included the revegetation of 11.3 hectares of riparian habitat with a 90% survival rate. More than 421 hectares of riverbanks were weeded and 20 hectares of land protected by fencing. Three new voluntary landholder agreements were signed resulting in a total of six agreements that have been entered into during Stage 2 of the project.

The change in administration from Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority to South East Local Land Services created some disruption to the project through the loss of key staff and momentum in delivering some project outcomes. While the development of a tourism strategy, and improved recreational access to the river was not fully achieved, a successful Paddling Working Group has been established which has resulted in regular paddling trips to perform weed control, promotion of the river and the creation of a guided paddling business.

The river rehabilitation component of the project has been very successful, with much of the NSW part of the Snowy River now free of willows. Increased channel roughness and bank stability have been achieved through native vegetation plantings and fencing to exclude livestock.

Communication resources that have been produced through the project include a brochure *Platypus of the Monaro* and a book on traditional uses of plants in the Snowy River catchment by the Ngarigo People. The book is a beautiful record of the traditional uses of many Snowy River plants and is a valuable cultural resource.

The Snowy River's journey of recovery will continue beyond this project. A local community group, The Snowy River Alliance, is once again active and championing the Snowy River. This group, with Local Land Services, is working with the newly amalgamated Snowy Valleys Council to develop and refine river access and tourism strategies.



The book *Ngarigo Plant Use in the Snowy River Catchment* records traditional uses of many Snowy River plants.

Contaminated Land Management Program

The three-year, \$6-million Contaminated Land Management Program is administered by the EPA and comprises a number of subprograms that provide financial assistance, capacity building and education. Without effective management, contaminated sites can pose a major risk to human health and the environment. They can be a source of ongoing pollution of aquifers and waterways, degrade habitats, limit the use of natural resources and prevent the development of land.

In 2016–17 the Trust provided \$1.9 million as a final milestone payment to the Contaminated Land Management Program for delivery of the following subprograms:

The **Council Gasworks Program** assists regional councils responsible for investigating and remediating former gasworks facilities to mitigate the damage from serious contamination. This year Newcastle City Council was awarded \$191,015 for the investigation of the former Waratah Gasworks.

The **Derelict Underground Petroleum Storage Systems Program** is a trial program designed to identify derelict underground petroleum storage systems within council road reserves, and to provide funding to investigate and remediate or manage derelict tanks. These leaking underground tanks are the largest source of contaminated land in regional New South Wales.

Eight local government areas were provided with funding this year totalling \$855,580:

- Bellingen Shire Council
- Blayney Shire Council
- Gundagai Shire (now Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council)
- Kempsey Shire Council
- Warrumbungle Shire Council
- Narrabri Shire Council
- Gunnedah Shire Council
- Mid-Coast Council.

The **Regional Capacity Building Program** assists regional councils to improve their capacity to manage contaminated lands by employing specialist technical staff to provide region-specific assistance. Four regional capacity-building officers were employed in 2016–17 who have assisted more than 50 councils.

The **Regional Acceleration Program** helps rural and regional landowners to obtain geotechnical and environmental information to make an appropriate submission for a regulatory assessment of the potential environmental or public health risks of legacy contaminated sites on their land. Three officers have been engaged through the program and are undertaking research and assessments for relevant parties to allow the contaminated sites to be assessed by regulatory staff.

The **Innocent Owners Scheme** provides financial assistance to landowners who have found themselves legally responsible for significant contamination, where they are not the polluter and cannot afford to pay for site remediation. This year a special grant of \$93,341 was awarded to Coffs Harbour City Council to assist with the ongoing management of a former Innocent Owners project. The funds will be used to continue management work at a contaminated site on the banks of the Orara River at Coramba.

Remediation of former antimony processing site at Urunga

This project has seen the successful remediation of a contaminated site at Urunga, near Coffs Harbour. The site, which includes a State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) no. 14 Coastal Wetland, was contaminated by the operation of an antimony processing plant in the early 1970s. Contaminants present at the site included antimony, arsenic, copper, lead, mercury and cyanide.

The Trust funding of \$700,000 which was awarded in 2012 was a valuable contribution to enable commencement of the project and attract funds from other sources including the NSW Resources and Energy Derelict Mines Program and the NSW Department of Industry – Lands & Forestry.

A remediation action plan was developed as Stage 1 of the project. The preferred option for the remediation was to excavate the contaminated material from the site, including the wetland, treat it to below threshold levels and place it into a specially designed and constructed on-site containment cell. The remediation was implemented as Stage 2 of the project, including preparing an environmental impact statement. The aim was to excavate and treat approximately 25,000 cubic metres (97%) of contaminated material from the site.

The project achieved greater than 97% removal and treatment of contaminated material, with 28,409 cubic metres being placed in the containment cell, with a compacted volume of 23,000 cubic metres. The project proved to be extremely challenging in both design and implementation due to the limited area available to operate in and the toxic nature of the contaminants being dealt with. Extreme rainfall in December 2015 also caused some issues relating to uncontrolled discharges into the local environment.

The SEPP 14 wetland is now free of contaminants for the first time in over 45 years and has become a valued recreation site for the community. A boardwalk made from 100% recycled plastic stretches for 150 metres across the wetland as part of a walking track around the site. The project was recognised with an award at the 2017 Earth Awards which is organised by the Civil Contractors Federation NSW.

Pollution Clean-up Programs

The Trust's pollution clean-up programs provide funds for councils and other land managers to manage pollution incidents where the polluter cannot be identified, or where there is uncertainty about the prospect of the responsible party paying clean-up costs. Nominated EPA officers have the power to authorise spending of Trust funds under these programs.

Guidelines for the Illegally Dumped Asbestos Clean-up Program and Emergency Pollution Clean-up Program are available on the Trust's website.

Emergency Pollution Clean-up Program

The Emergency Pollution Clean-up Program provides up to \$500,000 each year for the removal, dispersal or mitigation of emergency pollution events. Three payments were made in 2016–17 to address emergency pollution incidents, with a total value of \$69,462.47 (Table 5).

Large-scale Emergency Pollution Clean-up Program

The Large-scale Emergency Pollution Clean-up Program was established in 2013 as a temporary program to provide contingency funding in the case of a large-scale emergency pollution event, beyond the scope of the Trust's Emergency Pollution Clean-up Program. Up to \$2 million is available depending on the broader availability of funds within the Trust's budget.

A grant of \$360,000 was awarded to the EPA in September 2016 to address contaminated groundwater at Woolomin, in northern New South Wales (Table 6). This is only the second grant awarded under this program since its inception.

Woolomin is a small community of about 100 homes around 32 kilometres south-east of Tamworth. The majority of these properties rely on groundwater bores or wells for their domestic water supply. In 2016 a leak from an underground fuel tank at the Woolomin General Store contaminated the local groundwater, resulting in the establishment of a 'no pump' zone. Around half of the community was unable to access water from their bores. The EPA sought approval from the Trust for a grant under the Large-scale Emergency Pollution Clean-up Program for investigation, monitoring and remedial works at the site which was paid in 2016–17.

Illegally Dumped Asbestos Clean-up Program

The Illegally Dumped Asbestos Clean-up program is funded through the Waste Levy. It provides up to \$500,000 each year for the removal and management of illegally dumped asbestos and orphan waste. These funds are typically used for clean-up actions, including sampling, analysis and identification of waste; assessment of risk to human health or the environment; and removal, storage and disposal of the waste.

In 2016–17 40 grants worth \$262,840.87 were made to clean up illegally dumped asbestos and other orphan waste (Table 7).

Table 5

Emergency Pollution Clean-up payments awarded in 2016–17

Organisation	Incident	Date of incident	Amount
City of Canada Bay Council	Orphan waste – Drum, Wymston Parade, Abbotsford	May 2015	\$1,058.80
Tamworth Regional Council	Orphan waste – Nundle Road, Woolomin – leak from underground fuel storage tank	Feb 2016	\$65,616.17
Willoughby City Council	Orphan waste – spill of cooking oil into stormwater outlet of Crick Street and Eden Street and Scotts Creek, Chatswood	Sept 2016	\$2,787.50
Total			\$69,462.47

Table 6

Large-scale Emergency Pollution Clean-up payments awarded in 2016–17

Organisation	Incident	Date of incident	Amount
Tamworth Regional Council	Orphan waste – Nundle Road, Woolomin – leak from underground fuel storage tank	Sept 2016	\$360,000
Total			\$360,000

Table 7

Illegally Dumped Asbestos Clean-up grants awarded in 2016–17

Organisation	Incident	Date of incident	Amount
Blacktown City Council	Asbestos – corner Watkin and Barrett streets, Marsden Park	Dec 2015	\$7,100.00
City of Canterbury Bankstown	Asbestos – Clapham Road, Sefton	May 2016	\$2,288.22
City of Canterbury Bankstown	Asbestos – Clapham Road, Sefton	May 2016	\$3,265.00
City of Canterbury Bankstown	Asbestos – Tillett Parade, Lansdowne	May 2016	\$8,125.00
City of Canterbury Bankstown	Asbestos – Clapham Road, Sefton	May 2016	\$5,000.00
City of Canterbury Bankstown	Asbestos – Beaufort Place, Chullora	July 2016	\$6,500.00
City of Canterbury Bankstown	Asbestos – Rosedale Avenue, Greenacre	July 2016	\$6,500.00
City of Canterbury Bankstown	Asbestos – Chisholm Road, Sefton	July 2016	\$5,915.92
City of Canterbury Bankstown	Asbestos – Bellona Avenue, Sefton	Oct 2016	\$5,615.48
Department of Industry	Asbestos – Appin Road, Appin	July 2015	\$2,700.00
Department of Industry	Asbestos – bushland off Braidwood Road, Sassafras	Mar 2016	\$11,140.00
Fairfield City Council	Asbestos – Hollywood Drive, Lansvale	Aug 2016	\$2,320.00
Fairfield City Council	Asbestos – Canley Vale Road, St Johns Park	Jan 2017	\$5,377.00
Fairfield City Council	Asbestos – Sandal Crescent, Carramar	Jan 2017	\$6,095.00
Forestry Corporation	Asbestos – Roseburg State Forest, Blayney	Sept 2016	\$2,089.80
Forestry Corporation	Asbestos – Osland Road, Freemans Waterhole	Mar 2016	\$2,531.82
Hawkesbury City Council	Asbestos – Fairey Road, South Windsor	April 2016	\$6,970.00
Hawkesbury City Council	Asbestos – Corner Cornwallis Road & Cupitts Lane, Richmond Lowlands	July 2016	\$2,480.00
Hawkesbury City Council	Asbestos – Bicentenary Road, Webbs Creek	July 2016	\$2,355.00
Hunter Development Corporation	Asbestos – Ladysmith Road, West Wallsend	Dec 2016	\$44,706.45
Lake Macquarie City Council	Asbestos – Wangi Road, Rathmines	June 2015	\$2,700.00
Lake Macquarie City Council	Asbestos – Freemans Drive, Freemans Reach	Mar 2016	\$4,350.00
Liverpool City Council	Asbestos – Jagleman Road, Badgerys Creek	April 2016	\$4,560.00
Liverpool City Council	Asbestos – Memorial Avenue, Liverpool	Aug 2016	\$2,363.60
Liverpool City Council	Asbestos – Yarrunga Road, Prestons	Aug 2016	\$4,493.60
Liverpool City Council	Asbestos – Longley's Road, Badgerys Creek	Sept 2016	\$3,250.00
Liverpool City Council	Asbestos – Airfield Drive, Hinchbrook	Nov 2016	\$8,440.00
Lismore City Council	Asbestos – Showview Street, East Lismore	Feb 2016	\$11,000.00
NSW Aboriginal Land Council	Asbestos – Wangi Road, Rathmines	Feb 2017	\$16,260.00
Office of Environment & Heritage	Asbestos – Werakata National Park	Nov 2014	\$4,003.63

Organisation	Incident	Date of incident	Amount
Office of Environment & Heritage	Asbestos – Albion Street, Pennant Hills, Lane Cove National Park	March 2016	\$2,411.63
Office of Environment & Heritage	Asbestos – Mountain Lagoon Road, Wollemi National Park	July 2016	\$2,440.00
Office of Environment & Heritage	Asbestos – Mickeys Point, Georges River	July 2016	\$10,000.00
Office of Environment & Heritage	Asbestos – Dural Nature Reserve	July 2016	\$14,976.00
Office of Environment & Heritage	Asbestos – Marramarra National Park	Sept 2016	\$2,114.70
Office of Environment & Heritage	Asbestos – Haydons Road, Middle Brother National Park	Jan 2017	\$10,985.00
Parramatta City Council	Asbestos – Boundary Road, Chester Hill	Feb 2016	\$6,510.00
Strathfield Municipal Council	Asbestos – Wentworth Street, Greenacre	May 2016	\$4,266.20
Wingecarribee Shire Council	Asbestos – Ferndale Road, Bundanoon	March 2016	\$2,732.73
Wingecarribee Shire Council	Asbestos – Colo Road, Colo Vale	May 2016	\$5,909.09
Total			\$262,840.87

Environmental Education

Supporting educational projects or programs that develop the community's knowledge, skills, and commitment to protecting the environment and promoting sustainable behaviour.

The Environmental Education Program provides competitive grants to community organisations and government agencies for a range of environmental projects that seek to promote environmental awareness and sustainability. Projects funded through this program need to demonstrate five basic principles for effective environmental education:

- environmental benefit
- community need
- collaboration with partners
- capacity building and training
- evaluation and dissemination.

In 2016 the Trust made some changes to the contestable education grants by amending both the minimum amount available and the minimum time frame to help achieve longer term outcomes. From 2017 all projects must be a minimum of two years in duration with a minimum grant request of \$10,000. A maximum of 70% of the requested funding may be available in the first 12 months. Changes to the expression of interest form have also been made based on feedback from applicants and the technical review committee. These changes are intended to make them easier to understand and respond to.

During 2016–17 the Trust spent \$931,154 on milestone payments to grantees under its Environmental Education Program.

Achievements

Thirty-one environmental education projects came to a conclusion this year. Some of the notable achievements include:

- education of 16 commercial cattle graziers in the Tweed Valley who have now adopted a range of sustainable land management practices that will reduce erosion and runoff and increase waterway health and farm profitability
- implementation of Start the Switch NSW, a unique peer-to-peer sustainability education model that has inspired more than 7000 high school students across 75 schools to lead sustainability projects in their school or community
- increased awareness of dog owners about the threats of unleashed dogs to beach-nesting birds and migratory shorebirds. A series of 'Dog's Breakfast' educational days engaged communities and tourists on the north coast with a total of 970 people attending the seven events, more than double the number of attendees originally anticipated.

Environmental Education Program outcomes 2012–14



1685 training
and awareness raising
events delivered to over
47,000 people



548 publications
and education products produced



20,311 students
(primary secondary and
tertiary) involved for
85,258 hours



3003 volunteers
contributed 15,299 hours



387 partnerships
with government and
community organisations

Note: This data is drawn from 49 projects that were funded in the 2012–2014 grant years, with 38 of these projects (77%) now complete.

Environmental Education grants awarded in 2016–17

Each year the Trust offers a total of \$1 million in competitive environmental education grants, with \$500,000 available to community organisations and \$500,000 to government entities.

In 2016–17 the Trust received 89 expressions of interest for the community stream of the Environmental Education Program, with the government stream receiving 51 expressions of interest. Thirteen community and 14

government organisations were invited to submit full applications. Based on these applications, the Trust awarded three community grants totalling \$238,571 (Table 8) and nine government grants totalling \$668,489 (Table 9).

It is anticipated that some 170 educational products and publications will be prepared by the 12 projects funded in the 2016-2017 grant year, with these resources reaching more than 63,000 people. Through these projects over 7000 people; including almost 1400 primary, secondary and tertiary students; are expected to receive environmental education through an estimated 437 training and awareness-raising events.

Table 8

Environmental Education community grants awarded in 2016–17

Organisation	Title	LGA	Total
Dharma Karta	My community, my environment	Various	\$100,000
Friends of the Koala Incorporated	Koala watch: community-led koala recovery – Northern Rivers	Various	\$76,621
Conservation Volunteers Australia	Northern coastal rivers pest fish force	Tweed	\$61,950
Total			\$238,571

Table 9

Environmental Education government grants awarded in 2016–17

Organisation	Title	LGA	Amount
Ballina Shire Council	Educating our community through animation: Let's clean up our river	Ballina	\$95,000
Blue Mountains City Council	Kids, communities and creeks project	Blue Mountains	\$49,875
Charles Sturt University	Powering down: an energy efficiency education project	Albury	\$100,000
Canada Bay Council	Managing and protecting mangroves in Canada Bay	Canada Bay	\$37,500
Hunter Councils Inc.	Flying fox community engagement in the Hunter & Central Coast region	Various	\$100,000
Mid-Coast Council	Backyard bushcare in Pacific Palms	Mid-Coast Council	\$100,000
Orange City Council	High-risk weeds study tour	Orange	\$22,400
Taronga Conservation Society Australia	Plastic-free oceans	Mosman	\$72,000
Tweed Shire Council	Love cats, love wildlife	Tweed	\$91,714
Total			\$668,489

■ CASE STUDY

New skills and connections for Sydney-based rural landholders

One of the challenges in improving natural resource management on privately owned rural land is that many properties are owned by people who live elsewhere, and visit their land only on weekends or occasionally.

Absentee landholders are often time poor, and compared to their rural neighbours, often have little knowledge of how basic management practices like fencing waterways and controlling invasive species can contribute to natural resource management. As a result, their properties can suffer from soil and water problems and become sources of weeds, feral pests and diseases that can spread to neighbouring lands. While resources to help are available, absentee landholders are generally less likely to participate in Landcare activities, field days, information sessions and courses because they lack the time, or the timing and locations of courses and meetings do not suit them. They also miss out on the benefit of learning from other landholders.

Greater Sydney Local Land Services tackled this challenge by organising a series of Sydney-based evening workshops for landholders with rural properties throughout New South Wales. The workshops have been extremely successful in reaching this traditionally difficult-to-engage group of people. Many of these landholders are educated, retired or professional people who are willing to make changes but lack the time, knowledge and skills to get started.

Eight two-hour evening workshops plus an additional training day were held in 2015 and 2016 on a variety of topics related to sustainable land management, including feral animals, weeds, water, soil and groundcover, native vegetation, biosecurity and conservation. Attendance was higher than expected, with 241 individuals across the eight workshops. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive with 89% of attendees reporting the workshop had definitely or somewhat increased their knowledge, and 79% reporting they intended to change their land management practices.

Feedback gathered in a post-project survey in 2017 was also very encouraging. Most participants reported they had made on-ground improvements to their properties and had taken other follow-up action such as online reading, contacting Local Land Services, contacting a Landcare group, attending further training or subscribing to Local Land Services newsletters. Some have received grant funding to undertake on-ground improvements, and others have applied for this.

While the evening workshops were targeted specifically at those living in Sydney, Greater Sydney Local Land Services needed to implement other communication strategies to reach landholders living in rural and remote areas. This has been accomplished using two other successful tools: a newsletter that is emailed to a growing database of subscribers, and a smartphone app.

The free smartphone app LandSmart was developed specially for this program and has proven to be very popular. A year after launching in April 2016, the app had been downloaded 772 times and accessed 3793 times, exceeding initial expectations. It provides spatially relevant information about local resources, Landcare networks and support agencies and natural resource management advice about rural living. Ten case studies have also been developed featuring testimonials about the project from Sydney-based landholders, and covering a range of land management issues.

The program has been promoted via Landcare networks, rural agencies, the Greater Sydney Local Land Services website and Facebook page, and other social media. The project provides a successful model for other regions wanting to engage with and educate absentee landholders.



Landholders try out the LandSmart App with Land Services Officer Angela Maier.

Eco Schools Program

Providing hands-on learning opportunities for students, teachers and the school community through curriculum-based environmental education.

The Eco Schools Program provides grants of \$3500 for school-based environmental projects that aim to:

- increase resource use efficiency and improve the local environment
- develop student knowledge, values and behaviour to support environmental sustainability
- assist teachers to access targeted professional learning and integrate environmental management into school curriculums
- encourage schools and the community to work together for sustainability outcomes.

Eco Schools projects have a strong focus on student participation.

An internal review of the Eco Schools Program found that demand for the program continues to be strong. Since the program began in 1990, more than \$2.3 million has been awarded to more than 1200 projects in schools across New South Wales. The Eco Schools Program is probably the most geographically diverse program run by the Trust, and a recent research project funded by the Trust found that 44% of environmental volunteers did so because of childhood experiences with nature (Deakin University 2016). Engagement with, and education about, the environment in the formative years of a person's development continues to be an important precursor for later environmental volunteering.

In 2016–17 \$285,000 in milestone payments were made to both existing and new grantees in the Eco Schools Program.

Achievements

For the 2015–16 funding round the Trust combined the Eco Schools and Food Gardens in Schools programs, adopting the Food Gardens in Schools funding model which allows for a project duration of two years. Therefore, there were no Eco Schools projects completed during 2016–17.

Fifty projects funded through the 2014–15 round of the Food Gardens in Schools program concluded this year, resulting in the establishment of new fruit, vegetable, herb and bush tucker gardens. Several schools included aquaponics systems or chicken coops in their project plans, or focused on sustainable living through composting and worm farming and sustainable food production.

John Palmer Public School in Sydney's north-west completed their Sensory Organic Food Garden in October 2016. Over 550 students took part in a curriculum-based project that delivered 24 units of learning across the whole school. Students learnt about the life cycle of plants, weather systems, the Earth's resources, micro-organisms, health and nutrition.

The school made good use of repurposed resources by converting old fish tanks into mini greenhouses, and using recycled materials to make scarecrows. The new gardens cover 40 square metres and produce a range of fruit and vegetables. The school estimates that around 1000 kilograms of garden and food waste were recycled through their new composting and worm-farming facilities.

Eco Schools grants awarded in 2016–17

The Trust received 212 applications for Eco Schools grants in 2016–17. Following the assessment process, 80 Eco Schools grants totalling \$280,000 were approved. However, five of the grantees chose to withdraw their applications for various reasons. The Trust then offered an additional six grants to projects on the reserve list, resulting in a total of 81 grants totalling \$283,500 (Table 10).

These projects are expected to involve almost 14,000 primary school students and nearly 2000 high school students, who together will spend over 130,000 hours learning about a range of environmental issues. Approximately 10,000 food and non-food plants will be established, and almost 550 volunteers from the schools and local communities are expected to participate. This year will include the delivery of nearly 400 units of study.

This year a concerted effort was made to raise awareness of the program in the Sustainable Schools newsletter and a variety of new resources were added to the Eco Schools webpages including video clips. It was therefore pleasing to see that in 2016–17 more than 90% of applications were received from schools that had not previously applied for funding.

Table 10

Eco Schools Program grants awarded in 2016–17

Organisation Name	Title	LGA	Amount
Adelong Public School	Life lab – lets get dirt on our shirts!	Snowy Valleys	\$3,500
Albury West Public School	Albury West Public School community garden	Albury	\$3,500
Aldavilla Primary School	War on waste	Kempsey	\$3,500
Appin Public School	Sustainability into the future – our outdoor learning space	Wollondilly	\$3,500
Ascham School	Promoting pollination and biodiversity in a school garden – A Year 8 STEAM project	Woollahra	\$3,500
Assumption School Bathurst	Outdoor classroom – plant, play, learn, live!	Bathurst	\$3,500
Bangor Public School	Native bush food sensory garden	Sutherland	\$3,500
Berkeley Public School	Living classroom: outdoor learning seating circle	Wollongong	\$3,500
Berrigan Public School	Live life well veggie gardens	Berrigan	\$3,500
Bingara Central School	Nourish – bush tucker garden	Gwydir	\$3,500
Bossley Park Public School	A high environmental score means we waste less and recycle more!	Fairfield	\$3,500
Bringelly Public School	Bringelly Public School: bush tucker sensory garden	Liverpool	\$3,500
Brunswick Heads Public School	Nangayn Bara Ngalingah Jugan (food from our land)	Byron	\$3,500
Buxton Public School	Lyrebird bush tucker learn-scape	Wollondilly	\$3,500
Caddies Creek Public School	Caddies waste crusaders	Blacktown	\$3,500
Camdenville Public School	Seed to seed: closing the loop	Inner West	\$3,500
Campbelltown Public School	Bringing the community together with bush tucker	Campbelltown	\$3,500
Cascade Environmental Education Centre	Biophilic Explore Centre	Bellingen	\$3,500
Casino High School	Nunghing Jagun bush tucker and cultural garden rejuvenation	Richmond Valley	\$3,500
Cattai Public School	Cattai cropper's club	Hawkesbury	\$3,500
Chapel School – Key College Merrylands	Wellbeing	Parramatta	\$3,500
Chifley College Mount Druitt Campus	Outdoor learning space	Blacktown	\$3,500
Cobar Public School	Indigenous garden for learning	Cobar	\$3,500
Coledale Public School	Indigenous community garden	Wollondilly	\$3,500
Dalmeny Public School	Reduce, re-use, recycle	Liverpool	\$3,500
Dulwich High School of Visual Arts and Design	Dulwich High School of Visual Arts and Design outdoor learning area	Inner West	\$3,500
Duval High School	Sensory and healthy habits garden	Armidale Regional	\$3,500
East Hills Boys High School	The life hub	Canterbury-Bankstown	\$3,500
Eden Public School	Interactive 3D eco-culture calendar project	Bega Valley	\$3,500

Organisation Name	Title	LGA	Amount
Engadine West Public School	Native bird garden	Sutherland	\$3,500
Evans River K–12 Community School	Bandjalang nature trail and bush tucker garden	Richmond Valley	\$3,500
Forestville Montessori School	Our organic kitchen garden, from seed to plate	Northern Beaches	\$3,500
Giant Steps Sydney	Native bush foods garden	Hunters Hill	\$3,500
Greenacre Baptist Christian Community School	Greener Greenacre	Canterbury-Bankstown	\$3,500
GS Kidd Memorial School	Gardening makes sense	Gunnedah	\$3,500
Holy Cross Catholic Primary School – Helensburgh	Sustainable food gardens – including bush tucker plants	Wollongong	\$3,500
Holy Cross Primary School – Kincumber	Kincumber walk	Central Coast	\$3,500
Hunter River High School	Sustainable footprints – creating impressions for tomorrow	Port Stephens	\$3,500
Hurstville Public School	Construction of raised garden beds to enhance student wellbeing	Georges River	\$3,500
International Grammar School	Urban bush tucker garden @ IGS Ultimo	Sydney City	\$3,500
Irrawang High School	Support Unit playground and garden	Port Stephens	\$3,500
Jewells Primary School	Bush Tucker Sensory Garden and Yarning Circle	Lake Macquarie	\$3,500
Jugiong Public School	Wiradjuri Yarning Place and Bush Tucker project	Hilltops	\$3,500
Kiama Public School	Propagating the future	Kiama	\$3,500
Killarney Heights High School	Toward a sustainable bushland environment	Northern Beaches	\$3,500
Kurri Kurri Public School	Lettuce eat restaurant growers garden	Cessnock	\$3,500
Laguna Street Public School	Restoring the remnant-eco and Indigenous trail	Sutherland	\$3,500
Lake Munmorah Public School	Bush tucker garden	Central Coast	\$3,500
Lakelands Public School	Connecting with nature	Wollongong	\$3,500
Lucas Heights Community School	Sustainability expansion – bush garden, teacher development for all	Sutherland	\$3,500
Mainsbridge School	Gandangara bush tucker garden	Liverpool	\$3,500
Maitland Tutorial Centre	MTC chill-out patch	Maitland	\$3,500
Middle Harbour Public School	Habitat enhancement learning project (HELP)	Mosman	\$3,500
Mullumbimby Public School	Mullum kids produce	Byron	\$3,500
Murrurundi Public School	Bush tucker garden/gathering place	Upper Hunter	\$3,500
Nabiac Public School	Growing great gardeners	Mid-Coast	\$3,500
Narara Public School	School garden	Central Coast	\$3,500
Pittwater House	Stage 2 earth angels: waste warriors and bush tucker garden	Northern Beaches	\$3,500
Prairiewood High School	Frog habitat on the prairie	Fairfield	\$3,500
Railway Town Public School	Sustainable sensory space	Broken Hill	\$3,500
Roseville Public School	Sustainable living garden project	Ku-ring-gai	\$3,500

Organisation Name	Title	LGA	Amount
Shearwater, the Mullumbimby Steiner School	Mullumbimby Creek riparian rainforest regeneration – the western end	Byron	\$3,500
St Ambrose Primary School Pottsville	St Ambrose, Pottsville student stewardship program	Tweed	\$3,500
St Anthony of Padua Primary School	Regrow St Anthony's	Wollondilly	\$3,500
St Brigid's Catholic College Lake Munmorah	Fish and chook project	Central Coast	\$3,500
St Clare's Catholic School Narellan Vale	Outdoor living classroom	Camden	\$3,500
St Michael's Catholic Primary Stanmore	Veggie explosion program	Inner West	\$3,500
St Patrick's Parish School Cooma	Boosting our biodiversity – worms, birds and bees!	Snowy Monaro	\$3,500
St Therese Catholic School West Wollongong	Going green at St Therese	Wollongong	\$3,500
St Therese's Community School	Bush tucker garden and yarning circle	Central Darling	\$3,500
Tumut High School	Tumut Grevillea and bush tucker project	Snowy Valleys	\$3,500
Uki Public School	Bees, birds and butterflies: cross-pollinators	Tweed	\$3,500
Ulong Public School	Gumbaynggirr garden	Coffs Harbour	\$3,500
Wahroonga Public School	The bush patch and green waste project	Ku-ring-gai	\$3,500
Waratah Public School	Native epithet/fern sensory tranquillity garden	Newcastle City	\$3,500
Wentworthville Public School	Sensory bush tucker garden	Holroyd	\$3,500
William Carey Christian School	Seed to lunches @ WCCS	Liverpool	\$3,500
Wollondilly Public School	Sensory garden	Goulburn-Mulwaree	\$3,500
Woodport Public School	Let's get it sorted!	Central Coast	\$3,500
Woolgoolga Public School	K–6 school gardens and recycling	Coffs Harbour	\$3,500
Yetman Public School	Creating a living classroom at Yetman	Inverell	\$3,500
Total			\$283,500

■ CASE STUDY

Holroyd School Food Garden – grow healthy, be healthy!

New outdoor spaces at Holroyd School provided the opportunity to involve students and parents in creating a school garden as a practical stimulus for many different types of learning.

Located in Merrylands in western Sydney, Holroyd School caters for students with disabilities. For many students, of all ages and all levels of ability, physical and sensory activities like planting and tending a garden are a fun and rewarding way of learning about keeping living things alive, caring for the environment and the important connection between good food and good health.

The garden has flourished, and tasks like watering plants and harvesting produce have become a favourite school activity for students. Initially six garden beds were planned but due to popular demand the number of beds has grown to 12. One of the aims of the project, and a key to its success, was involving parents in a school-based activity. Some helped with the garden design and construction, and others have contributed many hours as volunteer gardeners.

Another important success factor was integrating gardening activities across a range of key learning areas in the school's curriculum. The garden has provided a context and subject matter for literacy and numeracy lessons as well as high school science projects. Environmental lessons have included learning about orientation and access to sunlight, healthy soil, fertilisers, compost, mulch, plant selection, non-toxic pest control and wise water usage. Cooking lessons have been designed around the garden produce, and other school programs have helped to reinforce the importance of sustainable food production and healthy eating, through initiatives such as the Crunch and Sip program, and Fruit and Veg Month.

Teachers have also enjoyed learning about sustainable gardening methods and have organised visits, for professional development, to other schools with permaculture and food garden programs. The project has also inspired an excursion to a city farm where students learnt more about where food comes from and how it gets from farms and factories to consumers.

The Holroyd food garden project has been promoted through the school website, Facebook page and newsletters, and has been featured in local newspapers. Plans for expansion include planting a row of citrus trees, involving more classes in the gardening and cooking programs, and teaching more students about composting.



Students at Holroyd School help mulch their new garden beds.

Environmental Research

Supporting applied research projects that help address environmental problems in New South Wales.

The Environmental Research Program provides around \$1 million in contestable grants each year for projects that aim to:

- generate new information that will help solve environmental problems
- discover innovative methods and technologies that will reduce environmental impacts of business and industry
- support assessments of environmental degradation
- increase general awareness of environmental issues.

This year the Trust paid a total of \$1,248,376 in milestone payments to projects currently in progress within the Research program.

Achievements

Twenty-four research projects concluded this year. Some of the research outcomes are highlighted below.

Biodiversity conservation

Research by OEH has confirmed a significant decline in koala populations in the Pilliga Forest in north-west New South Wales since the 1990s. An analysis of 19 environmental variables concluded that the sites where koalas have persisted typically had deep soils with a high water-holding capacity, and were located close to waterways. However, the widespread disturbance of waterways within the forest may be affecting the value of these areas as koala refugia.

Researchers at the University of Wollongong have developed assisted reproductive technologies for a number of critically endangered frog species in New South Wales. Hormone regimens to induce breeding were successfully developed for the Booroolong frog, the brown toadlet, the red-backed toadlet and the southern and northern corroboree frogs. The administration of hormones to northern corroboree frogs was shown to improve reproductive success in breeding tanks.

Native vegetation

Sydney Institute of Marine Science has evaluated the success of restoring the marine seaweed crayweed (*Phyllospora comosa*) through transplantation into four rocky reefs in Sydney. Survival of transplanted individuals was similar to natural populations, and successful recruitment was recorded up to 200 metres away from restored patches. The project received widespread media interest in Australia and overseas and was recently nominated for one of the Australian Museum Eureka Prizes.

The Fenner School of Environment and Society analysed data from more than 300 farms and 40 published scientific articles to quantify the effectiveness of on-farm environmental management. The results have generated important insights on a variety of land management activities including:

- the function of plantings as habitat for woodland birds
- the management of rocky outcrops to support reptile biodiversity
- the value of restoration work to enhance biodiversity at farm and landscape scales
- the value of woodland remnants as climate refugia during droughts.

A project by the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust has developed more than 200 models that can predict the future habitat of existing endemic native species within New South Wales. The data generated has the potential to change the future of rehabilitation and restoration works.

Climate change

Two projects have highlighted the impact of climate change on marine ecosystems. A collaboration between researchers at The University of NSW and Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Fisheries has identified important changes in the East Australian Current which show that transport in the current is increasing, bringing warm water further south, more frequently. The project looked at the implications of this on the survival of lobster larvae under both current and future scenarios. The outcomes of the research have important implications for the management of economically and ecologically important species in the NSW marine estate.

Research by the University of Sydney has investigated the impacts of warming and acidification on sea urchins (*Heliocidaris erythrogramma*) and seastars (*Meridiastra calcar*) from Sydney Harbour. While both species have mechanisms to reduce stress from modest warming and acidification, sublethal responses were found in reduced energy, compromised immunity and increased porosity of the exoskeleton. Increased temperature was found to be the more important stressor with temperatures of 4–5 °C above ambient levels resulting in increased mortality and stress.

Environmental Research Program outcomes 2012–14



43 innovative technologies

or new methods or approaches to previously known work generated



161 scientific or technical conferences

and other events where the research has been presented



Over 77,000 people

potentially reached by the work of these projects so far



More than 600 people

contributed including 140 researchers and 31 tertiary and post-graduate students



142 resources and articles

produced including articles published in academic journals and other scientific publications

Note: This data is drawn from 27 projects that were funded in the 2012–14 grant years, with 16 of these projects (59%) now complete.

■ CASE STUDY

What inspires young people to visit and value nature?

An initiative of the World Parks Congress – urging young people to get involved with environmental concerns – led a team of researchers at Macquarie University to set up a project to explore what motivates young people to visit and value nature.

The (re)Generation Project took place over two years and involved several different modes of research, including active participation by young people (14 to 25 years) who were invited to create and then reflect on their own projects. Each participant's challenge was to devise a project to encourage other young people – their peers – to experience nature, care for and respect nature, and act for nature.

The researchers were also motivated by two concerns: that young people are now more focused on technology, and less with nature, than previous generations, and that there is a growing disconnection between urbanised young people and the natural environment.

The research was conducted by Macquarie University in partnership with OzGreen, an independent, not-for-profit organisation engaged with environmental education, leadership training and community development.

The main research aims were to study what motivates young people to connect and engage with nature, and to learn about how young people use social media and technology to communicate with their peers about nature. The research also investigated how youth and community organisations play a role in fostering this engagement, participation and action.

As part of the research, 37 young people devised and led their own youth engagement projects. With some help from mentors, but mostly using their own creativity and resources, the participants planned and presented an inspiring range of successful events and projects. These included staging a community festival in Bellingen, running a multi-school congress for 300 high school students in Liverpool, providing training in Muswellbrook for how to run a youth leadership forum, running a school gardening and clean-up project, presenting an art installation and survey, writing a song and broadcasting it on social media, and using social media to present inspirational nature-based experiences.

One of the main outputs was the 'Young Storytellers for Nature' program which recruited and trained 22 young people in digital storytelling. Eleven short films were completed and screened at the Museum of Contemporary Art and Parramatta Riverside Theatre. These films were also featured on National Geographic and Channel 3. The films allowed the young storytellers to share and inspire other young people to get involved with the natural world. To date the 11 films have collectively been viewed over 4900 times on YouTube.

The researchers had assumed that most participants would choose social media as the dominant channel to engage with young people, but were surprised that most chose face-to-face engagement over technology.

One of the main recommendations for how to inspire young people to participate in a nature-based project was to involve them in the project planning and decision-making processes. Overall the research presented a wealth of information about how young people can be inspired to connect with nature, including their aspirations, motivations and barriers.

Environmental Research grants awarded in 2016–17

Grants of up to \$150,000 are awarded through a competitive two-stage application process for projects of up to three years.

In 2016–17 the Environmental Research Program received 187 expressions of interest, requesting more than \$25 million in funding. From this, 38 applicants were invited to make full applications.

Twenty-eight full applications requesting a total of more than \$4 million were received and peer-reviewed by relevant scientific experts. The Trust awarded a total of \$1,458,247 for 10 research projects (Table 11) across the following program priorities:

- biosecurity
- climate change
- waste and pollution
- mechanisms for social engagement.

To help applicants focus on the program's priority themes, and attract more targeted applications, the prioritisation framework developed by the Natural Resources Commission in 2014–15, was implemented again in 2016–17. This framework identified state-wide research priorities for the next two rounds of the program.

Together, the 10 Environmental Research Program projects funded in the 2016-2017 grant year include plans to develop at least 31 innovative technologies, or new methods or approaches to previous work. The researchers anticipate presenting their findings at around 68 technical or scientific events, and publishing at least 60 related articles in journals and other scientific publications.

Table 11

Environmental Research grants awarded in 2016–17

Organisation	Title	LGA	Amount
Australian National University	Adaptive evolution of eucalyptus trees under future climates	Statewide	\$120,408
Australian National University	Knowledge to Action: co-design of climate adaptation strategies	Statewide	\$149,888
CSIRO Land and Water Flagship	Biohydrometallurgical metal recovery from e-waste	Statewide	\$150,000
CSIRO Land and Water Flagship	Predicting leachability of perfluorinated chemicals from NSW soils	Statewide	\$145,406
Office of Environment and Heritage	Improving Aboriginal engagement through cultural science	Wentworth	\$149,119
Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust	Increasing the adaptive potential of restored plant assemblages	Statewide	\$148,312
University of Newcastle	Developing a theoretical model for improving waste management	Statewide	\$146,292
University of New South Wales	Dioxin biodegradation for harbour sediment remediation	Canada Bay	\$149,322
University of Sydney	Transgenerational plasticity and epigenetics – ocean change adaptation	Statewide	\$150,000
Western Sydney University	A scientific basis for assisted gene migration under climate change	Statewide	\$149,500
Total			\$1,458,247

Major research project

Psyllid-induced dieback of grey box on the Cumberland Plain

After five years this major research project on the cause of dieback in critically endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland concluded this year. The research by Western Sydney University focused on a native psyllid which has caused widespread defoliation, canopy dieback and mortality of grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*).

The psyllid was identified as grey box *Cardiaspina* species, a previously undescribed species distinct from all other *Cardiaspina* species which has been found to be endemic to the Cumberland Plain Woodlands. However, its host plant grey

box is widespread across eastern Australia, and experiments demonstrated that the grey box psyllid has the potential to infest grey box communities in other regions. Water stress and anthropogenic influences have been identified as a causative factor in outbreaks, and this has implications for the management of grey box woodlands under current climate change and land-use change projections.

Research outcomes have been published in nine scientific journals and accepted by the scientific community. During the course of the project consultations occurred with at least nine key stakeholders. Broad suggestions for management are included in the final report, but these are yet to be translated into information resources or detailed guidelines suitable for use by stakeholders. The research team has indicated a strong desire to deliver these outcomes in the near future.

Waste Less, Recycle More Initiative

Delivering waste and recycling services to help communities and businesses reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill.

The NSW Government committed \$465.7 million over five years for a range of support packages delivered through the Waste Less, Recycle More program. The Trust was allocated \$154.4 million to manage the contestable grants under this initiative. At the end of the five years, the Trust has delivered over 40 grant rounds with grants awarded totalling over \$150 million to over 350 individual projects. Individual grants ranged from \$5,000 Love Food Hate Waste grants to \$5 million Major Resource Recovery Infrastructure grants.

In 2016–17 the NSW Government announced a further \$337 million will be invested in waste and recycling infrastructure and services. The Trust will provide \$61.5 million of this for the delivery of six contestable grant programs commencing in 2017–18. The Trust will continue to deliver these programs in collaboration with the EPA.

The initial Waste Less, Recycle More initiative (2013–17) was structured into a number of individual funds which supported one or more contestable grant programs. This financial year a total of \$12,392,383 in grants were awarded through these funds to 40 waste and recycling projects. Further detail on these programs and projects is provided in the following sections.

Improved Systems for Household Problem Wastes (\$11.77 million)

This fund supports construction of a network of community recycling centres across the State. Residents can bring household 'problem' wastes, which should not be disposed of through residential bin collection services, to the centres free of charge. Such wastes can present a significant management issue for the environment and from a handling or human health perspective if not disposed of properly. Where possible, wastes are processed for resource recovery, re-use and recycling.

This year 27 community recycling centres were officially launched and opened to the public, bringing the total number of centres across the State to 60. More than 1.1 million kilograms of paint, oils, household and car batteries, gas bottles and fire extinguishers, fluoro globes and smoke detectors were collected in 2016–17 from these centres.

A total of \$566,577 was paid to existing grantees for milestones achieved this year. The Trust also approved one further grant for a new community recycling centre in Lithgow (Table 12).

Table 12

Community Recycling Centre grants awarded in 2016–17

Organisation	Title	LGA	Amount
Lithgow City Council	Community Recycling Centre – Lithgow City Council	Lithgow	\$148,562
Total			\$148,562

Organics Infrastructure (\$60.75 million)

This fund supports programs that encourage and support waste avoidance, re-use and recycling of food and garden organics, which make up a large percentage of waste disposed of in the red-lid general waste bins in NSW communities.

In 2016–17 the Trust spent \$9,775,315 in milestone payments to support new and existing organics collection projects.

Organics Collection Program

This year saw the first grants awarded under the revised Organics Collection Program (previously the Local Government Organics Collection Systems program). This program assists councils to implement new, or enhance

existing, household kerbside collection services for garden, food or combined food and garden waste. The program increases the diversion of separated household organics from landfill.

The Trust received four applications seeking approximately \$1.7 million. All four projects were funded to a total of approximately \$1.6 million (Table 13).

This latest round of grants is expected to provide new or enhanced kerbside organics collection services to more than 48,500 households in New South Wales, resulting in the diversion of over 11,000 tonnes of food and garden organics from landfill each year.

Table 13

Organics Collection grants awarded in 2016–17

Organisation	Title	LGA	Amount
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council	Kerbside and greenwaste collection – diverting organics from landfill	Gundagai	\$94,368
Tamworth Regional Council	Tamworth Regional Council FOGO Collection Service	Tamworth	\$585,549
Upper Hunter Shire Council	Organic waste collection – Upper Hunter Shire	Upper Hunter	\$320,152
Tweed Shire Council	Food and Organics Collection and Processing – Tweed Shire Council	Tweed	\$656,162
Total			\$1,656,231

Organics Infrastructure (Large and Small) Program

This program encourages the re-use or separation and recycling of organics from households and businesses through four streams:

- Stream 1: food and garden organics processing
- Stream 2: business organics recycling
- Stream 3: food donation
- Stream 4: home composting.

In 2016–17, the Trust called for applications under the first three streams. Twenty-eight applications were received requesting approximately \$9.45 million, of which 12 were awarded with a combined value of more than \$3.2 million. Two grant offers were subsequently declined resulting in 10 projects funded to the value of almost \$2.7 million (Table 14).

Over the life of this program, grant projects will increase the capacity in New South Wales to divert over 400,000 additional tonnes of organic wastes from landfill each year. The capacity will also be developed to rescue up to 6000 tonnes of good quality food and donate it to people in need.



Raising awareness of organics recycling at the Sustainable Expo in Bathurst.

Table 14

Organics Infrastructure (Large and Small) grants awarded in 2016–17

Organisation	Title	LGA	Amount
Stream 1: Food and garden organics processing			
Australian Native Landscapes Pty Ltd	ANL Food and Garden Organics Processing Facility – Wyong	Central Coast	\$911,400
Byron Shire Council	Byron garden organics processing and recovery	Byron	\$118,500
Lord Howe Island Board (LHIB)	Upgrade of the LHIB Waste Management Facility	Lord Howe Island	\$255,000
3 Pallaettes	3Pallaettes	Central Coast	\$295,600
Stream 2: Business organics recycling			
HealthShare NSW	NSW Health diversion and avoidance of food organics in hospitals	Blacktown	\$500,000
Southern Cross Care (NSW & ACT)	SCC organics recycling	Holroyd	\$20,904
Stream 3: Food donation			
Mid Richmond Neighbourhood Centre	Far North Coast NSW food recovery program	Richmond Valley	\$190,970
SecondBite Melbourne	SecondBite fresh food rescue and redistribution expansion in NSW	Sydney City	\$270,000
Coast Shelter	Community Centre Freezer	Central Coast	\$33,989
Settlement Services International Limited	The Staples Bag	Canterbury-Bankstown	\$89,500
Total			\$2,685,863

Love Food Hate Waste

The Love Food Hate Waste (Food Waste Avoidance Education) Program supports local councils, council groups, non-government organisations and community groups to deliver food waste avoidance education and awareness projects.

In 2016–17, 17 applications were received requesting \$604,283. One applicant subsequently withdrew leaving 16 applications worth \$583,186. Seven projects were approved, with funding totalling \$214,125 (Table 15).

To date over 4700 people have received training in how to reduce food waste, and almost 600,000 people have participated in community consultations. Across the projects currently running, almost 250 volunteers and more than 550 tertiary students have been involved in activities such as meal planning, learning how to store and re-use leftovers, and spreading the waste avoidance message through fun events such as film nights.



Participants in Hidden Harvest’s ‘More Taste, Less Waste’ events in the Illawarra region pledge to reduce their food waste.

Table 15

Love Food Hate Waste grants awarded in 2016–17

Organisation	Title	LGA	Amount
Hidden Harvest	A taste of less waste	Wollongong	\$33,032
Kariong Eco Garden Incorporated	Making it normal to avoid food waste	Central Coast	\$18,733
Muslim Aid Limited	Strategic interventions on food waste	Canterbury-Bankstown	\$55,000
NetWaste	Love food hate waste and improve your health	Narromine	\$10,735
Riverwood Community Centre	Riverwood foodies project	Canterbury-Bankstown	\$35,000
Southern Tablelands Arts Incorporated (STARTS)	Waste free for me	Goulburn-Mulwaree	\$32,825
SAGE	SAGE: Cook to grow project	Eurobodalla	\$28,800
Total			\$214,125

Waste and Recycling Infrastructure (\$53.75 million)

This fund stimulates investment to increase the processing capacity of recycling facilities in New South Wales. Priority waste materials for recovery are determined by the EPA and include paper, cardboard, timber, plastics, glass and metals from commercial and industrial and municipal waste streams.

The fund includes two grant programs:

- Resource Recovery Facility Expansion and Enhancement (for existing facilities)
- Major Resource Recovery Infrastructure (for new infrastructure).

This year \$8,254,697 was spent on milestone payments for projects currently in progress.

Resource Recovery Facility Expansion and Enhancement Program

This grant program enables expansion and enhancement of existing recycling facilities. Two rounds of funding were awarded this year. The second round included a focus on the construction and demolition sector, and support for facilities in non-levy paying areas of New South Wales to stimulate capital investment in recycling across regional New South Wales.

Over the two rounds the Trust received 34 applications requesting nearly \$19 million in funds. Twelve projects were awarded to a value of around \$5.7 million (Table 16).

Grantees have reported that so far over 33,800 tonnes of glass, plastics, metals, paper, cardboard, wood and other materials have been diverted from landfill through recycling. Another 18,000 tonnes of materials have been diverted to make refuse-derived fuel. New infrastructure built through the grants has increased the capacity of grantees to process an additional 386,000 tonnes of recyclable materials per year.

Table 16

Resource Recovery Facility Expansion and Enhancement grants awarded in 2016–17

Organisation	Title	LGA	Amount
Albury City Council	Albury waste management centre enhancement	Albury	\$298,320
Australian Paper Recovery Pty Ltd	APR baling and packing shed expansion project	Holroyd	\$153,750
Grima Environmental Services Pty Ltd	Grima resource recovery facility expansion	Fairfield	\$858,783
Kurrajong Waratah	Upgrade of material recovery facility-feed system and FEL, increase energy efficiency	Wagga Wagga	\$161,000
Lake Macquarie City Council	Resource recovery station at Lake Macquarie's landfill	Lake Macquarie	\$530,000
Lismore City Council	Lismore waste sorting facility enhancement and expansion	Lismore	\$1,000,000
Tox Free Australia Pty Ltd	Hazpak MK II container washing unit	Penrith	\$300,000
Veolia Environmental Services (Australia) Pty Ltd	Greenacre resource recovery facility upgrade	Canterbury-Bankstown	\$250,000
Wollongong Recycling and Building Supplies Pty Ltd	Kembla Grange commercial and industrial material recovery facility and resource recovery facility	Wollongong	\$672,800
Shoalhaven Recycling	Shoalhaven Recycling MRF Enhancement & Expansion	Shoalhaven	\$921,678
Macleans Waste Management	Macleans construction waste recycling facility upgrade	Penrith	\$460,000
Byron Shire Council	Enhancement of the Byron Resource Recovery Centre	Byron	\$119,602
Total			\$5,725,933

Recycling Innovation (\$11.7 million)

This fund supports innovation for improving infrastructure, research and development and increasing recovery of residual waste from recyclers.

The fund supports two grant programs:

- Innovation in Shredder Floc Management
- Innovation in Priority Problem Wastes Management

This year \$1,933,831 in milestone payments were made to new and existing grantees for progress in their recycling projects.

Grants for shredder floc management have in the past attracted a very small number of grantees due to the speciality of the waste issue. This year it was decided that as the EPA identifies shredder floc as a 'priority problem waste' projects addressing this issue could be funded through the Priority Problem Wastes grants.

Innovation in Priority Problem Wastes Management

This program aims to fund innovative projects that provide new recycling infrastructure solutions, establish (or expand) recycling material markets through research and development, and improve or introduce new approaches and technologies to increase the recycling of wastes listed in the EPA's 'priority problem wastes' list. To date, nine innovative waste technologies or new methods have been developed as a result of research undertaken through this program.

Stream 1 (infrastructure projects) received nine applications worth approximately \$5.4 million. Three grants worth over \$1.5 million were awarded (Table 17). These projects include innovative approaches to the management of road sweepings and gully waste and recycling of agricultural plastics.

Stream 2 (research and development projects) received 10 applications worth approximately \$1.3 million. Three grants were awarded worth \$457,700. Stream 2 projects will undertake outcomes-focused research into the viable recovery of organic material from problematic wood wastes and further fine metals recovery from shredder floc.

Table 17

Innovation in Priority Problem Wastes Management grants awarded in 2016–17

Stream 1

Organisation	Title	LGA	Amount
Downer EDI Works Pty Ltd	Street sweepings and road gully arising recovery facility	Parramatta	\$1,000,000
RDT Engineering	Mobile agricultural plastics recovery and processing	Statewide	\$310,200
TES-AMM Australia Pty Ltd	Transforming electronic waste into innovative high-value products	Canterbury-Bankstown	\$193,769
Total			\$1,503,969

Stream 2

Organisation	Title	LGA	Amount
The Crucible Group Pty Ltd	Novel pathway for resource recovery of problematic wood wastes	Central Coast	\$200,000
Sell & Parker Pty Ltd	Use of vibrating water tables to recover metal small fraction floc	Blacktown	\$166,700
Australian Native Landscapes Pty Ltd	Composting engineered timbers	Liverpool	\$91,000
Total			\$457,700

Business Recycling (\$9.45 million)

This fund provides rebates to small- and medium-sized enterprises to fund small-scale recycling infrastructure and equipment to help improve source separation of recyclables, reduce waste and increase recycling in the workplace. The fund is administered by the EPA.

The main grant program administered through this fund is the Bin Trim Grants Program. Projects awarded funding through Round 2 were completed in March 2017. These projects resulted in participating businesses increasing their recycling by an average of 13%. The combined efforts of the grantees and the businesses they worked with saw approximately 54,000 additional tonnes of waste diverted from landfill.

No further grants were awarded through the Business Recycling fund this year.

Landfill Consolidation Fund (\$7 million)

This fund provides financial support to regional and rural local councils for landfill consolidation and closure, and environmental improvements to small landfills serving rural communities.

Grants are provided through the Landfill Consolidation and Environmental Improvements Grant Program. No new grants were awarded this year, however, \$317,230 was paid by the Trust to support 26 existing projects awarded in 2015–16. Eleven projects were completed this year. These projects have helped to address environmental issues associated with poorly managed landfills and improve the environmental performance at landfills and waste management facilities across New South Wales.

Over 1000 people have participated in community consultation regarding the closure or environmental improvement of regional and rural landfills, and nine new waste transfer stations have been established.



A Bin Trim rebate has helped Illawarra childcare centres to teach young children about recycling.

Other Waste and Environment Programs

The Trust manages a range of other waste and environment programs that are funded from the NSW Government's Waste Levy. The programs funded in 2016–17 have been running for several years and focus on sustainability, protecting threatened species and enhancing biodiversity. This was the final year of funding for Devil Ark, the Flying-fox Netting Subsidy, and Native Forestry Reforms.

During 2016–17 the Trust spent \$1,390,948 on milestone payments for existing grantees.

Devil Ark

Now towards the end of its 7th breeding season, Devil Ark continues to succeed with 31 Tasmanian devil joeys confirmed in pouches from the 2017 season so far. Devil Ark maintains a population of approximately 150 devils, however, the program will increase this number to 360 in the near future to increase its conservation efforts.

Funding provided by the Trust was allocated to cover employment expenses so Devil Ark keepers can fulfil the requirements of their positions, including:

- daily health checks and monitoring
- food preparation and presentation
- maintenance of fencing and yards
- data collection and analysis of devil behaviour, health and welfare
- implementation of the breeding program
- weed and pest management and restoration of habitat.

During six years of funding through the Trust, the facility has produced around 240 joeys and continues to provide a cost-effective and innovative solution to the captive insurance component of the Save the Devil program. Devil Ark currently holds over 52% of the mainland insurance population of Tasmanian devils.

Flying-fox Netting Subsidy Program

The \$7.1 million Flying-fox Netting Subsidy Program, introduced in 2011 to eliminate the need to issue shooting licences to mitigate flying-fox damage to crops, closed on 30 June 2017. Originally introduced in the Sydney Basin and Central Coast regions, the program was later extended to all of New South Wales, and expanded to include throw-over netting and the upgrade of non-compliant netting.

The program was administered by the NSW Rural Assistance Authority. In 2016, the funding was fully allocated with 130 subsidies approved across the State to cover nearly 700 hectares of crops.

Since 1 July 2015, OEH has been issuing licences to shoot flying-foxes as a crop protection measure only under special circumstances.

Grow Sustainable Nature Based Tourism

NSW National Parks Campaign for Young Adults

This project aims to develop and implement a cost-effective, multi-year brand campaign aimed at young adults (18 to 35 years) in New South Wales. It aims to raise awareness of national parks experiences and encourage a greater awareness, appreciation and support for nature.

Extensive internal and external consultation has been undertaken to ensure the campaign integrates with other NPWS projects and teams. The campaign was launched in October 2016, comprising a bespoke NPWS blog site, an advertising campaign, more than 75 pieces of campaign content including articles and videos, and social media engagement including launch of the NPWS Instagram site and enhancing the NPWS Facebook page.

Pre-campaign benchmarking of existing knowledge of and visitation levels of young adults to national parks, along with their attitudes to the environment and conservation, was undertaken. This will be followed by six-monthly benchmarking milestones planned for the remainder of the campaign.

Results to date have surpassed expectations with over 180,000 unique visitors to the campaign blog who have spent an average of 1.5 hours on the site. The NPWS Facebook community has grown by more than 100% since the launch of the campaign and NPWS now has more than 12,000 followers on Instagram.



Young adults have been targeted in a new NPWS campaign to increase awareness of national parks and nature experiences.

WilderQuest Learning

In its second year of delivery, WilderQuest Learning has continued to build on the existing program by expanding the number and quality of curriculum-linked resources available to teachers. By the end of June 2017, 1121 teachers and 6379 students from 804 schools in New South Wales had registered to use WilderQuest Learning online.

'Ranger Vision' and '3600 Aboriginal Storytelling' are two diverse products developed this year, integrated into key curriculum learning resources. Ranger Vision is an app which allows students to identify and classify plants and animals in nature, both around their school and in a national park. 3600 Aboriginal Storytelling is a series of videos with NPWS Aboriginal Discovery rangers sharing stories and lessons from the land and sea in six different NSW locations, that can help teachers educate their students about Aboriginal heritage and culture. Both of these new products have been extremely well-received with their success being measured and evaluated in this upcoming year of the project.

In addition to the growing use of the online resources, there has been significant emphasis this year on motivating teachers to take students out into nature, particularly national parks, for hands-on experiential learning. The WilderQuest Learning program continues to be successful in providing school students with the opportunity to experience nature and develop positive environmental stewardship values.

Native forestry reforms and mapping of threatened ecological communities and koala habitat

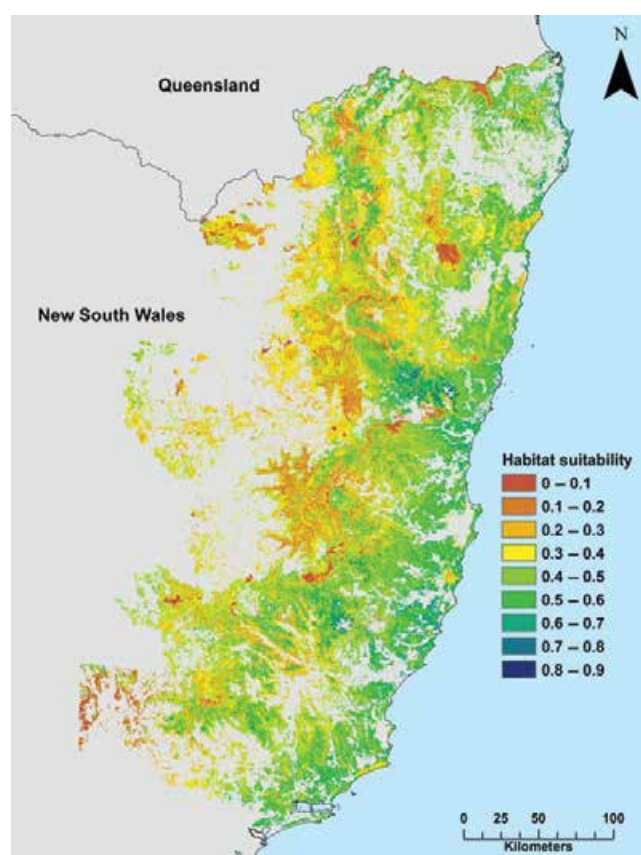
Funding of \$3 million was awarded to the EPA by the Trust in 2013–14 to deliver major reform of the environmental regulation of native forestry in New South Wales.

A key component of this reform was achieved in May 2017 when the EPA released the outputs of a koala habitat and threatened ecological communities mapping program. These programs aimed to improve the identification and management of threatened ecological communities and koala habitat in both public and private forestry areas.

The koala habitat mapping program examined new approaches to identifying and mapping potential koala habitat and occupancy to improve the management of koalas and their habitat in NSW native forests. The Trust funding has delivered several mapping outputs: a baseline map of koala occupancy in New South Wales; a habitat mapping pilot

project in state forest in northern New South Wales; and a predictive koala habitat model for the NSW north coast. These maps will be used to improve how koala habitat is identified and protected in native forestry areas on both public and private land.

The project mapped 18 threatened ecological communities across a coastal project study area of 1.4 million hectares. The project has identified important information on the location, extent and complexity of these threatened communities. The maps bring a higher degree of certainty, consistency and transparency to the identification of these communities in New South Wales, and are already being used to improve management of threatened communities on public native forestry lands.



Predictive koala habitat map for the NSW north coast (red is lowest habitat suitability, blue is highest habitat suitability).

BioBanking Trust Fund and Offset Programs

The Biodiversity Banking and Offsets Scheme (BioBanking scheme) allows for the negotiation of long-term conservation agreements (biobanking agreements) between landowners and the Minister for the Environment. As at 30 June 2017, the Fund held investments for 53 biobank sites, including nine new sites that commenced in 2016–17.

The BioBanking Trust Fund, managed by the Trust until August 2017, receives funds from each biodiversity credit sale. These are then invested in the TCorp Investment Management Fund. Annual management payments are made to biobank site owners from these investments to improve the biodiversity value of their land.

Funds are invested in three investment options (Cash Fund, Medium Term Growth Fund and Long Term Growth Fund). An operating account is also held with Westpac to receive deposits and make payments. As of 30 June 2017, the total funds held within the BioBanking Trust Fund totalled more than \$60.7 million (Table 18). In 2016–17, the fund provided \$3.44 million in payments to property owners for the management of biodiversity on their land.

The Trust's role in managing these funds moved to the recently established Biodiversity Conservation Trust in August 2017.

Table 18

BioBanking Trust Fund 2016–17

Details	Amount \$'000
Cash balance at the beginning of the financial year	\$50,752
Receipts by the BioBanking Trust Fund (no GST)	\$9,660
Return on invested funds	\$3,927
Annual management payments (including OEH management fee)	-\$3,445
Administration fee (NSW Environmental Trust)	-\$118
Cash balance invested in the BioBanking Trust Fund	\$60,776

Growth Centres Biodiversity Offset Program

The Growth Centres Biodiversity Offset Program has so far protected more than 568 hectares of high conservation value land at 13 locations across western Sydney. Program funds can be used to acquire land from willing landowners for new reserves, to purchase biodiversity credits from existing biobank sites, or to establish new biobank sites with willing landowners and purchase the biodiversity credits created by these. The program aims to preserve some of the best remaining bushland in western Sydney.

Funding of \$10,393,000 in 2016–17 was used to purchase biodiversity credits from two existing biobank sites that occur within the program's first preference investment areas, protecting an additional 56 hectares of threatened vegetation.

The Hardwicke biobank site at Orangeville near Camden, was established independently of the program in March 2017. The 57-hectare biobank site is the first of three sites proposed for the 240-hectare property. The property is mainly comprised of undulating hill country and has a long history of agricultural use.

The native vegetation on the site is in a variety of conditions, ranging from native grasslands through to good condition Cumberland Plains Woodland. Reduced stocking rates on the site from the late 1990s combined with a lack of pasture improvement has seen significant natural regeneration occurring across the site. In 2016–17 the program purchased biodiversity credits from the Hardwicke biobank site equivalent to 25 hectares of Cumberland Plain Woodland. Secure funding through the establishment of the biobanking agreement and the sale of credits will ensure the site can be well managed on an ongoing basis.

The second biobank site was established by the Growth Centres program in 2015–16 at the historic Mater Dei property on the banks of the Nepean River at Cobbitty. The 58-hectare site adjoins an existing 26-hectare biobank site that was protected on the property by the program in 2011–12. Both sites protect critically endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland and endangered River-flat Eucalypt Forest. The program purchased biodiversity credits equivalent to 31 hectares of this vegetation in 2016–17 and will complete the purchase of credits in the next financial year.



The Hardwicke biobank site contains critically endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland which is in good condition.

Warnervale Town Centre

The development of Warnervale Town Centre in the Wyong local government area over the next 10 to 20 years will require biodiversity offsets to mitigate the impacts on a number of plant communities and species, including the vulnerable heath wrinklewort (*Rutidosia heterogama*) and wallum froglet (*Crinia tinnula*). These impacts require biodiversity offsets of up to \$4.4 million, which the Trust has previously awarded.

The biodiversity certification assessment calculated that 2233 ecosystem credits and 2508 species credits would need to be retired, which equates to the conservation of approximately 270 hectares. During 2016–17 a number of potential offset lands have been investigated and further engagement has occurred with new land managers, including Lake Macquarie City Council. The Trust paid \$53,152 for progress achieved against this project this year.

Other Trust Programs

Lead Environmental Community Groups

The Trust provides funding to eligible peak non-government organisations with an environmental focus. The Lead Environmental Community Groups program supports lead environmental community organisations to develop or widen the community's knowledge of, skills in, and participation in protecting the environment and undertaking sustainable behaviour.

Fifteen organisations were awarded two-year grants in 2015–16 and therefore no new grants were awarded this year. The Trust spent a total of \$519,800 to support these grantees in 2016–17.

Dissemination

The Dissemination Program draws on the success, knowledge and tools of completed grant projects to further build capacity in environmental protection across a wider audience.

The Dissemination Program was recently subject to an evaluation and is currently under review. No new projects were awarded this year, however, the Trust spent \$32,542 in progress payments to existing grantees.

Finance





INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Environmental Trust

To Members of the New South Wales Parliament

Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Environmental Trust (the Trust), which comprise the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2017, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

In my opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Trust as at 30 June 2017, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards
- are in accordance with section 41B of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* (PF&A Act) and the Public Finance and Audit Regulation 2015.

My opinion should be read in conjunction with the rest of this report.

Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under the standards are described in the 'Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements' section of my report.

I am independent of the Trust in accordance with the requirements of the:

- Australian Auditing Standards
- Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 'Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants' (APES 110).

I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with APES 110.

Parliament promotes independence by ensuring the Auditor-General and the Audit Office of New South Wales are not compromised in their roles by:

- providing that only Parliament, and not the executive government, can remove an Auditor-General
- mandating the Auditor-General as auditor of public sector agencies
- precluding the Auditor-General from providing non-audit services.

I believe the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Trustees' Responsibility for the Financial Statements

The Trustees are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the PF&A Act, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees must assess the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern except where the Trust will be dissolved by an Act of Parliament or otherwise cease operations. The assessment must disclose, as applicable, matters related to going concern and the appropriateness of using the going concern basis of accounting.

Auditor's Responsibility for the Audit of the Financial Statements

My objectives are to:

- obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error
- issue an Independent Auditor's Report including my opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but does not guarantee an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect material misstatements.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error. Misstatements are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions users take based on the financial statements.

A description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf. The description forms part of my auditor's report.

My opinion does *not* provide assurance:

- that the Trust carried out its activities effectively, efficiently and economically
- about the assumptions used in formulating the budget figures disclosed in the financial statements
- about the security and controls over the electronic publication of the audited financial statements on any website where they may be presented
- about any other information which may have been hyperlinked to/from the financial statements.



Reiky Jiang
Director, Financial Audit Services

29 September 2017
SYDNEY

ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

Statement by Members of the Environmental Trust

For the year ended 30 June 2017

Pursuant to Section 41C (1C) of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*, we state that:

- a) the accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*, the applicable clauses of the Public Finance and Audit Regulation 2015, Australian Accounting Standards, the Financial Reporting Code for NSW General Government Sector Entities and the Treasurer's Directions;
- b) the statements exhibit a true and fair view of the financial position and transactions of the Trust; and
- c) there are no circumstances which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.



The Hon Gabrielle Upton MP
Chair
Environmental Trust
28 September 2017



Anthony Lean
Secretary
Environmental Trust
28 September 2017

ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

	Notes	Actual 2017 \$'000	Budget 2017 \$'000	Actual 2016 \$'000
Expenses excluding losses				
Operating expenses	2(a)	3,832	3,454	4,069
Grants and subsidies	2(b)	58,261	96,770	63,146
Total expenses excluding losses		62,093	100,224	67,215
Revenue				
Grants and contributions	3(a)	58,800	98,033	53,647
Other revenue	3(b)	1,427	300	1,373
Total revenue		60,227	98,333	55,020
Net result		(1,866)	(1,891)	(12,195)
Other comprehensive income		—	—	—
Total other comprehensive income				
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		(1,866)	(1,891)	(12,195)

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT 30 JUNE 2017

		Actual 2017 \$'000	Budget 2017 \$'000	Actual 2016 \$'000
ASSETS				
Current assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	5	2,934	1,930	4,234
Receivables	6	671	1,629	1,049
Total current assets		3,605	3,559	5,283
Total assets		3,605	3,559	5,283
LIABILITIES				
Current liabilities				
Payables	7	390	480	202
Total current liabilities		390	480	202
Total liabilities		390	480	202
Net assets		3,215	3,079	5,081
EQUITY				
Accumulated funds		3,215	3,079	5,081
Total equity		3,215	3,079	5,081

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

	Accumulated Funds \$'000	Total \$'000
Balance at 1 July 2016	5,081	5,081
Net result for the year	(1,866)	(1,866)
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	(1,866)	(1,866)
Balance at 30 June 2017	3,215	3,215
Balance at 1 July 2015	17,276	17,276
Net result for the year	(12,195)	(12,195)
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	(12,195)	(12,195)
Balance at 30 June 2016	5,081	5,081

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

		Actual 2017 \$'000	Budget 2017 \$'000	Actual 2016 \$'000
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES				
Payments				
Grants and subsidies		(58,112)	(96,770)	(63,145)
Other		(6,083)	(3,591)	(6,472)
Total payments		(64,195)	(100,361)	(69,617)
Receipts				
Interest received		-	-	410
Grants and other contributions		58,800	98,033	53,647
Other		4,095	300	3,663
Total receipts		62,895	98,333	57,720
NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	12	(1,300)	(2,028)	(11,897)
NET INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		(1,300)	(2,028)	(11,897)
Opening cash and cash equivalents		4,234	3,958	16,131
CLOSING CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	5	2,934	1,930	4,234

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**(a) Reporting Entity**

The Environmental Trust (the Trust), is a NSW government entity, as constituted by the *Environmental Trust Act 1998*, and is a reporting entity under the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*.

The Trust is an independent statutory body established by the NSW government to fund a broad range of organisations to undertake projects that enhance the environment of NSW. The Trust is empowered under the *Environmental Trust Act 1998*, and its main responsibility is to make and supervise the expenditure of grants. The Trust is administered by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH).

The Trust is chaired by the NSW Minister for the Environment. Members of the Trust are the Chief Executive of OEH, and representatives from local government, the Nature Conservation Council of NSW and NSW Treasury.

The Trust is a going concern and a not-for-profit entity (as profit is not its principal objective) with no cash generating units. The reporting entity is consolidated as part of the NSW Total State Sector Accounts.

Since July 2008, the Trust has been the Fund Manager for the BioBanking Trust Fund pursuant to section 127ZY(1) of the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSC Act). The BioBanking Trust Fund is an element of the Biodiversity Banking and Offsets Scheme (BioBanking Scheme) established under Section 127A of the TSC Act. This scheme provides a robust framework for private land conservation and offsetting, providing long-term arrangements for biodiversity conservation on private land. Each BioBanking site has a legal agreement between the Minister for the Environment and the BioBanking site land owner(s). The BioBanking Trust Fund holds and invests financial assets to pay for the future management of BioBanking sites. The operations of the BioBanking Trust Fund are not consolidated with the Trust's financial statements. BioBanking Trust Fund financial information is disclosed in note 11.

The Trust's current appointment as a BioBanking Trust Fund Manager will conclude with the establishment of the Biodiversity Conservation Trust, expected in the 2017-18 financial year. Under its legislation, the Biodiversity Conservation Trust will be the fund manager for the BioBanking Trust Fund.

The Trust's financial statements have been authorised for issue by the Secretary of the Trust on 28 September 2017.

(b) Basis of Preparation

The Trust's financial statements are general purpose financial statements which have been prepared on an accruals basis and in accordance with:

- applicable Australian Accounting Standards (which include Australian Accounting Interpretations);
- the requirements of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* and *Public Finance and Audit Regulation 2015*; and
- Financial Reporting Directions mandated by the Treasurer.

Financial statement items are prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention.

Judgements, key assumptions and estimates made by management are disclosed in the relevant notes to the financial statements.

All amounts are rounded to the nearest one thousand dollars and are expressed in Australian currency.

(c) Statement of compliance

The financial statements and notes comply with Australian Accounting Standards, which include Australian Accounting Interpretations.

(d) Insurance

A range of insurances are carried by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) with the New South Wales Treasury Managed Fund. This coverage extends to the operations of the Trust. Insurance cover is reviewed annually to ensure adequacy.

(e) Accounting for the Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Income, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except that the:

- amount of GST incurred by the Trust as a purchaser, that is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office, is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of an asset or as part of an item of expense, and
- receivables and payables are stated with the amount of GST included.

Cash flows are included in the statement of cash flows on a gross basis.

(f) Income recognition

Income is measured at the fair value of the consideration or contribution received or receivable.

Grants from the principal department in the cluster (Department of Planning and Environment) and contributions from other bodies (including grants and donations) are generally recognised as income when the Trust obtains control over the assets comprising the grants and contributions. Control over grants and contributions is normally obtained upon the receipt of cash.

(g) Financial instruments

Financial instruments give rise to positions that are both a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability (or equity instrument) of another entity.

In accordance with AASB 132 *financial instruments: presentation*, the Trust's financial assets include cash, accounts receivable and financial assets at fair value and its financial liabilities include accounts payable.

In accordance with AASB 139 *financial instruments: recognition and measurement*, the Trust's financial assets and financial liabilities are disclosed at amortised cost. Detailed information is disclosed in note 13.

(h) Receivables

Receivables are non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market.

These financial assets are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less an allowance for any impairment of receivables. Any changes are recognised in the net result for the year when impaired, derecognised or through the amortisation process.

Short term receivables with no stated interest rate are measured at the original invoice amount where the effect of discounting is immaterial.

(i) Impairment of financial assets

All financial assets are measured at fair value. These assets are considered impaired when there is an objective evidence that the Trust will not be able to collect all amounts due.

(j) De-recognition of financial assets and financial liabilities

A financial asset is derecognised when the contractual rights to the cash flows from the financial assets expire or if the Trust transfers the financial asset:

- where substantially all the risks and rewards have been transferred, or
- where the Trust has not transferred substantially all the risks and rewards, but has not retained control.

Where the Trust has neither transferred nor retained substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership or transferred control, the asset is recognised to the extent of the Trust's continuing involvement in the asset.

A financial liability is derecognised when the obligation specified in the contract is discharged, cancelled or expires.

(k) Payables

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Trust and other amounts. Payables are recognised initially at fair value, usually based on the transaction cost or face value. Subsequent measurement is at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Short-term payables with no stated interest are measured at the original invoice amount where the effect of discounting is immaterial.

(l) Equity and reserves

The category 'Accumulated Funds' includes all current and prior period retained funds.

(m) Budgeted amounts

The budgeted amounts are drawn from the original budgeted financial statements presented to Parliament in respect of the reporting period. Subsequent amendments to the original budget (e.g. adjustment for transfer of functions between entities as a result of Administrative Arrangements Orders) are not reflected in the budgeted amounts. Major variances between the original budgeted amounts and the actual amounts disclosed in the primary financial statements are explained in note 10.

(n) Assistance provided by other organisations

The maintenance of the Trust's accounting records and provision of other administrative services is provided by the Office of Environment and Heritage. The fair value of such services is charged to the Trust. Refer note 2(a).

(o) Comparative Information

Except when an Australian Accounting standard permits or requires otherwise, comparative information is disclosed in respect of the previous period for all amounts reported in the financial statements.

(p) Changes in accounting policy, including new or revised Australian Accounting Standards

The accounting policies applied in 2016–17 are consistent with those of the previous financial year except for the following new or revised Australian Accounting Standard that has been applied for the first time in the year to 30 June 2017:

- AASB 2015-6 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Extending Related Party Disclosures to Not-for-Profit Public Sector Entities.

The impact of the Standard in the period of initial application has not resulted in a material impact on the financial statements, however additional disclosure has been made as a result of this application (refer note 14).

Issued but not yet effective:

NSW public sector entities are not permitted to early adopt new Australian Accounting Standards, unless Treasury determines otherwise.

The following new Accounting Standards have not been applied and are not yet effective (NSW Treasury mandate TC 17/04):

- AASB 9 Financial Instruments
- AASB 15, AASB 2014-5, AASB 2015-8 and 2016-3 regarding Revenue from Contracts with Customers
- AASB 16 Leases
- AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-profit Entities
- AASB 2016-1 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Recognition of Deferred Tax Assets for Unrealised Losses
- AASB 2016-2 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Disclosure Initiative: Amendments to AASB 107
- AASB 2016-4 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Recoverable Amount of Non-Cash-Generating Specialised Assets of Not-for-Profit Entities
- AASB 2016-5 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Classification and Measurement of Share-based Payment Transactions
- AASB 2016-6 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Applying AASB 9 with AASB 4 Insurance Contracts
- AASB 2016-7 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Deferral of AASB 15 for Not-for-Profit Entities
- AASB 2016-8 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Australian Implementation Guidance for Not-for-Profit Entities

- AASB 2017-1 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Transfer of investment Property, Annual Improvements 2014-2016 Cycle and Other Amendments
- AASB 2017-2 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Further Annual Improvements 2014-2016 Cycle
- Interpretation 22 Foreign Currency Transactions and Advance Consideration

These standards have been assessed for their possible impact on the financial statements, if any, in the period of their initial application. The assessment concluded that there will be no material financial impact. However additional disclosures are expected as a result of the application of AASB 1058 income of not-for-profit entities, effective from the 2019-20 financial year.

2. EXPENSES EXCLUDING LOSSES

(a) Other operating expenses:	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Auditor's remuneration - audit of the financial statements	35	34
Corporate and specialist support from OEH	3,240	3,315
Advertising, printing and publishing	23	107
Fees for services	448	586
Impairment of assets and bad debts	78	-
Travel	7	18
Other	1	10
	3,832	4,069

(b) Grants and subsidies:	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Federal Government	310	340
State and Local Governments	36,837	41,421
Other	21,114	21,385
	58,261	63,146

3. REVENUE

(a) Grants and other contributions	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
NSW Government funding *	58,800	53,647
	58,800	53,647

*Includes Government funding received through the Department of Planning and Environment

(c) Other income	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Fund manager fees	138	118
Refunds by grantees of unspent grants	1,289	1,255
	1,427	1,373

4. SERVICE GROUP DESCRIPTIONS

Service Description: Competitive Grants

This service group covers grant funding to community groups, non-government organisations, schools, Aboriginal organisations, industry, research bodies, and state and local government agencies to undertake restoration and rehabilitation, education, research and waste management initiatives.

Major Programs

This service group covers grant funding to government agencies and other groups for programs addressing key environmental initiatives and government priorities.

ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

SERVICE GROUP STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

	Competitive Grants		Major Programs		Non attributable		Total	
	June 2017 \$'000	June 2016 \$'000	June 2017 \$'000	June 2016 \$'000	June 2017 \$'000	June 2016 \$'000	June 2017 \$'000	June 2016 \$'000
EXPENSES AND INCOME								
Expenses excluding losses								
Operating expenses								
Other Operating expenses	1,916	2,034	1,916	2,035	-	-	3,832	4,069
Grants and subsidies	32,392	35,914	25,869	27,232	-	-	58,261	63,146
Total expenses excluding losses	34,308	37,948	27,785	29,267	-	-	62,093	67,215
Revenue								
Grants and other contributions	-	-	-	-	58,800	53,647	58,800	53,647
Other income	826	986	601	387	-	-	1,427	1,373
Total revenue	826	986	601	387	58,800	53,647	60,227	55,020
Net result	(33,482)	(36,962)	(27,184)	(28,880)	58,800	53,647	(1,866)	(12,195)
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME	(33,482)	(36,962)	(27,184)	(28,880)	58,800	53,647	(1,866)	(12,195)

SERVICE GROUP STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

AS AT 30 JUNE 2017

	Competitive Grants		Major Programs		Total	
	June 2017 \$'000	June 2016 \$'000	June 2017 \$'000	June 2016 \$'000	June 2017 \$'000	June 2016 \$'000
ASSETS & LIABILITIES						
Current assets						
Cash and cash equivalents	1,631	2,409	1,303	1,825	2,934	4,234
Receivables	578	1,049	93	-	671	1,049
Total current assets	2,209	3,458	1,396	1,825	3,605	5,283
TOTAL ASSETS	2,209	3,458	1,396	1,825	3,605	5,283
LIABILITIES						
Current liabilities						
Payables	332	185	58	17	390	202
Total current liabilities	332	185	58	17	390	202
TOTAL LIABILITIES	332	185	58	17	390	202
NET ASSETS	1,877	3,273	1,338	1,808	3,215	5,081

5. CURRENT ASSETS – CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Cash at bank and on hand	2,934	4,234
	2,934	4,234

For the purposes of the statement of cash flows, cash and cash equivalents include cash at bank.

Cash and cash equivalent assets recognised in the Statement of Financial Position are reconciled at the end of the financial year to the Statement of Cash Flows.

Refer note 13 for details regarding credit risk, liquidity risk and market risk arising from financial instruments.

6. CURRENT ASSETS – RECEIVABLES

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Trade debtors	84	105
Less: Allowance for impairment	(78)	-
Accrued Income	138	178
GST receivables	527	766
	671	1,049

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Movement in the allowance for impairment		
Balance at 1 July 2016	-	-
Increase/(decrease) in allowance recognised in profit or loss	78	-
Balance at 30 June 2017	78	

Details regarding credit risk of trade debtors that are neither past due or impaired, are disclosed in note 13.

7. CURRENT LIABILITIES – PAYABLES

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Creditors	44	6
Accrued expenses	346	196
	390	202

Details regarding liquidity risk, including a maturity analysis of the above payables, are disclosed in note 13.

8. COMMITMENTS FOR EXPENDITURE

There were no commitments as at 30 June 2017 (2016 - nil).

9. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND CONTINGENT ASSETS

There were no contingent liabilities or contingent assets as at 30 June 2017 (2016 - nil).

10. BUDGET REVIEW

(a) Net result

The actual net deficit of (\$1.866 million) was slightly lower (\$0.03 million) than the budget of (\$1.891 million). Under expenditure was nearly offset by lower than budgeted revenue of \$38.1 million. Expense and revenue variances were due to:

	\$ million
<i>Expenses:</i>	
– Reduction in grant expenses primarily due to delays experienced by grantees in fulfilling their grant milestone obligations, the impact of council amalgamations, delays in waste and licencing approvals and in the commencement of new major programs. As part of the 2017-18 State Budget process, Trust obtained approval to reallocate majority of these grants to future years.	38.51
– Increase in operating expenses primarily due to higher corporate and specialist support fees to OEH towards implementing new grants programs, which include 'urban habitat renewal' and 'integrated volunteer initiative' and for the evaluation of existing grant programs, such as 'contaminated land management' and 'sustainability programs'.	(0.38)
Total variances in expenses	38.13
<i>Revenue:</i>	
– Higher than budgeted refunds of unspent grants by grantees mainly due to their under expenditure.	1.13
– Reallocation of government funding to future years to correspond with the timing of expenses reallocated through the State Budget process (refer above).	(39.23)
Total variances in revenue	(38.10)
Variance in net result	0.03

(b) Assets and liabilities

There was no material variance between the actual and budgeted net assets.

(c) Cash flows

Total payments and total receipts were below the budget due to reduced program expenditure and revenue (refer above). The net cash reduction of \$1.3 million in 2016–17 is lower than the budgeted net reduction of \$2 million by \$0.7 million. This is due to higher than budgeted refund of unspent grants by the recipients and reduction of receivables, partly offset by higher than budgeted operating expenses and lower payables.

11. BIOBANKING TRUST FUND – ADMINISTERED ACTIVITY

Nine new site transactions occurred during the 2016–17 financial year bringing the total number of sites managed to 53. Refer to note 1 (a) for further detail on Biobanking Trust Fund.

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Cash balance at the beginning of the financial year	50,752	43,878
Add: receipts by the BioBanking Trust	9,660	9,549
Add: Interest on invested BioBanking Trust funds	3,927	549
Less: annual management payment	(3,445)	(3,133)
Less: fund manager fee to the Trust	(118)	(91)
Balance invested in the Fund	60,776	50,752

12. RECONCILIATION OF CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES TO NET RESULT

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Net cash used on operating activities	(1,300)	(11,897)
(Increase)/decrease in creditors	(188)	201
(Decrease)/increase in receivables	(378)	(499)
Net Result	(1,866)	(12,195)

13. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The Trust's principal financial instruments are outlined below. These financial instruments arise directly from the Trust's operations or are required to finance the Trust's operations. The Trust does not enter into or trade financial instruments, including derivative financial instruments, for speculative purposes.

The Trust's main risks arising from financial instruments are outlined below, together with the Trust's objectives, policies and processes for measuring and managing risk. Further quantitative and qualitative disclosures are included throughout these financial statements.

The Trust has overall responsibility for the establishment and oversight of risk management and reviews and agrees policies for managing each of these risks. Risk management policies are established to identify and analyse the risks faced by the Trust, to set risk limits and controls and to monitor risks.

(a) Financial instrument categories

Financial Assets	Note	Category	Carrying Amount	Carrying Amount
			2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Class:				
Cash and cash equivalents	5	N/A	2,934	4,234
Receivables (1)	6	Loans and receivables (at amortised cost)	144	283
			3,079	4,517
Financial Liabilities	Note	Category	Carrying Amount	Carrying Amount
			2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Class:				
Payables	7	Financial liabilities (at amortised cost)	390	202
			390	202

Notes

1. Excludes statutory receivables of \$0.527m (2016:\$0.766m).

(b) Credit Risk

Credit risk arises when there is the possibility that the Trust's debtors will default on their contractual obligations, resulting in a financial loss to the Trust. The maximum exposure to credit risk is generally represented by the carrying amount of the financial assets (net of any allowance for impairment).

Credit risk arises from the financial assets of the Trust, including cash, receivables, and authority deposits. No collateral is held by the Trust. The Trust has not granted any financial guarantees.

Credit risk associated with the Trust's financial assets, other than receivables, is managed through the selection of counterparties and establishment of minimum credit rating standards.

Cash

Cash comprises cash on hand and bank balances within the NSW Treasury Banking System.

Receivables and trade debtors

All trade debtors are recognised as amounts receivable at balance date. Collectability of trade debtors is reviewed on an ongoing basis. Procedures as established in the Treasurer's Directions are followed to recover outstanding amounts, including letters of demand. Debts which are known to be uncollectible are written off. An allowance for impairment is raised when there is objective evidence that the Trust will not be able to collect all amounts due. This evidence includes past experience, and current and expected changes in economic conditions and debtor credit ratings. No interest is earned on trade debtors. Sales are made on 30 day terms.

The Trust is not materially exposed to concentrations of credit risk to a single trade debtor or group of debtors. Most debtors have a good credit rating.

The only financial assets that are past due or impaired are 'sales of goods and services' in the 'receivables' category of the statement of financial position.

		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
	Total ^{1,2}	Neither past due not impaired	Past due but not impaired ^{1,2}	Considered impaired ^{1,2}
2017				
< 3 Months overdue	28	6	-	22
3 months – 6 months overdue	-	-	-	-
> 6 months overdue	56	-	-	56
2016				
< 3 Months overdue	50	10	40	-
3 months – 6 months overdue	55	-	55	-
> 6 months overdue	-	-	-	-

Notes

- Each column in the table reports 'gross receivables'.
- The ageing analysis excludes statutory receivables as these are not within the scope of AASB 7. Therefore, the 'total' will not reconcile to the receivables total recognised in the statement of financial position.

(c) Liquidity Risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Trust will be unable to meet its payment obligations when they fall due. The Trust continuously manages risk through monitoring future cash flows and maturities planning to ensure adequate holding of high quality liquid assets. The objective is to maintain a balance between continuity of funding and flexibility through the use of overdrafts, loans and other advances.

During the current and prior year, there were no defaults of loans payable. No assets have been pledged as collateral. The Trust's exposure to liquidity risk is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk.

The liabilities are recognised for amounts due to be paid in the future for goods or services received, whether or not invoiced. Amounts owing to suppliers (which are unsecured) are settled in accordance with the policy set out in NSW TC 11/12. For small business suppliers, where terms are not specified, payment is made not later than 30 days from date of receipt of a correctly rendered invoice. For other suppliers, if trade terms are not specified, payment is made no later than the end of the month following the month in which an invoice or a statement is received. For small business suppliers, where payment is not made within the specified time period, simple interest must be paid automatically unless an existing contract specifies otherwise. For payments to other suppliers, the Head of an authority (or a person appointed by the Head of an authority) may automatically pay the supplier simple interest. The applicable rate of interest for the period was 9.8% (2016: 10.3%).

The table below summarises the maturity profile of the entity's financial liabilities, together with the interest rate exposure.

Maturity analysis and interest rate exposure of financial liabilities

		\$'000 Interest Rate Exposure				\$'000 Maturity Dates		
	Weighted Average Effective Interest Rate	Nominal amount 1	Fixed interest rate	Variable interest rate	Non- interest bearing	< 1 year	1-5 years	> 5 years
2017								
Payables:	N/A	390	N/A	N/A	390	390	—	—
2016								
Payables:	N/A	202	N/A	N/A	202	202	—	—

Notes

- The amounts disclosed are the contractual undiscounted cash flows of each class of financial liabilities based on the earliest date on which the Trust can be required to pay.

(d) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. The Trust has no exposure to foreign currency risk and does not enter into commodity contracts.

The effect on profit and equity due to a reasonably possible change in risk variable is outlined in the information below, for interest rate risk and other price risk. A reasonably possible change in risk variable has been determined after taking into account the economic environment in which the Trust operates and the time frame for the assessment (i.e. until the end of the next annual reporting period). The sensitivity analysis is based on risk exposures in existence at the statement of financial position date. The analysis is performed on the same basis as for 2016. The analysis assumes that all other variables remain constant.

Interest rate risk

Exposure to interest rate risk arises primarily through the Trust's interest bearing liabilities. Under the Treasury banking system, the Trust does not earn any interest. The Trust does not account for any fixed rate financial instruments at fair value through profit or loss or as available-for-sale. Therefore, for these financial instruments, a change in interest rates would not affect profit or loss or equity. A reasonably possible change of +/- 1% is used, consistent with current trends in interest rates. The basis will be reviewed annually and amended where there is a structural change in the level of interest rate volatility.

(e) Fair value compared to carrying amount

Financial instruments are generally recognised at cost.

14. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

a) Key management personnel are those persons who have authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the Trust, directly or indirectly.

The Trust's key management personnel compensation is as follows:

	2017 \$
Trust sitting fees	550
Total	550

Trust sitting fees are paid to the members of the Trust, who are external to the NSW government agencies.

The key management personnel compensation excludes the Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage, as well the Chief Executive, OEH who is the Secretary of the Trust. Ministerial compensation is paid by the NSW Legislature, not the Trust. No compensation is paid by the Trust to the Secretary.

Based on advice provided by KMPs and NSW Treasury, and transactional reviews undertaken, the Trust did not enter into any transactions with key management personnel, their close family members and any entities controlled or jointly controlled thereof during the year.

b) During the year, the Trust entered into transactions, mainly payments of grants, with other agencies that are controlled/jointly controlled/significantly influenced by the NSW Government.

Grants payments allow the Trust to meet its objectives as disclosed in its Service Groups (refer note 4) and grants to the NSW government agencies in aggregate are a significant component of its operations (refer note 2b). In 2016–17, total grants in the amount of \$19.2 million were paid to OEH, whose Chief Executive is also the Secretary of the Trust. The Trust members approve the award of grants to recipients based on documented processes and procedures, which include evidence-based supports such as grant guidelines, application forms, business cases, business plans and independent technical reviews. Where a grant application from OEH is identified, a conflict of interest is disclosed by the Secretary of the Trust at the meeting, which is minuted. The Secretary of the Trust refrains from voting in these instances.

The Trust receives government funding as recurrent grant from the cluster department - Department of Planning and Environment. Refer note 3(a).

15. EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

The Trust's current appointment as a BioBanking Trust Fund Manager will conclude with the establishment of the Biodiversity Conservation Trust, expected in the 2017-18 financial year. Under its legislation, the Biodiversity Conservation Trust will be the fund manager for the BioBanking Trust Fund (refer note 1a). This future transfer will not have any material impact on the financial performance and financial position of the Trust as its operations are not consolidated with the BioBanking Trust Fund.

There are no other known events that would impact on the state of affairs of the Trust or have a material impact on the financial statements.

End of Audited Financial Statements

Appendices



Administration of the Trust

Statement of affairs

Indicators of activity of administering the Trust

	2015–16	2016–17
Total expenditure on environmental initiatives and support	\$67 million	\$62 million
Number of contestable programs and other small grant programs running	25	23
Number of major programs and projects running	24	27
Number of new contestable grant projects approved	306	197
Number of applications / expressions of interest processed	928	779
Number of grant payments processed	577	601
Number of pollution clean-up payments and grants	36	44

Under the Environmental Trust Act, grants should be expended within three years after they are made. Projects may be delayed, however, due to environmental conditions, complexities of approvals, personal circumstances of grantees and opportunities that may arise from extending a project. In cases such as these, the Trust may grant an extension to maximise environmental outcomes. These extensions are approved by the Trust or under delegation.

This year, under section 15(5) of the Environmental Trust Act, the Trust waived the condition of requiring a grant to be expended within three years for the following grants:

- Bathurst Regional Council – Headcut to stability: Hawthornden Creek rehabilitation
- Boral Cement Limited – Boral Berrima cement kiln alternative fuel
- Environment Protection Authority – Reform of forestry regulation and mapping of threatened ecological communities and koala habitat
- Friends of Lane Cove National Park – Restoration and rehabilitation of the Tharbogang Swamp
- Lake Macquarie City Council – All food scraps are good to Go!
- Lake Macquarie City Council – Awaba alternative waste treatment facility for organics processing
- Lord Howe Island Board – Eradicating rodents from World Heritage Lord Howe Island
- Murray and Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations – Murray Country: Sharing indigenous environmental values
- National Parks Association of NSW Inc. – Building a sustainable connectivity approach for the Great Eastern Ranges
- ResourceCo RRF PL – ResourceCo Resource Recovery Facility
- Rockdale City Council – Restoring grey-headed flying-fox habitat on Wolli Creek
- Shellharbour City Council – Dunmore resource recovery redevelopment
- Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils – ROCovering organics: Organics recovery across the SSROC region
- Tweed Shire Council – Tweed organics processing facility
- Veolia Environmental Services (Australia) – Camellia recycling centre
- Western Sydney University – Psyllid-induced dieback of grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) on the Cumberland Plain
- Wingecarribee Shire Council – Former Bowral gasworks remediation.

Structure and management of the Trust

The Trust is guided by the governance structures outlined in the Environmental Trust Act. It is comprised of three parts: Trust members, Trust committees and Trust staff who are housed within OEH. The Trust funds the costs of administering its grant programs, including staff salaries, while OEH provides all support services for the Trust such as information technology, finance and human resources.

The Grants Unit within the Regional Operations Division of OEH is responsible for day-to-day management of the Trust's programs and activities. The major functions of the unit are:

- researching, designing and implementing new programs for the Trust
- promoting and managing the Trust's grant programs
- developing and managing governance arrangements for programs
- providing technical and other assistance to grantees

- coordinating assessments by the Trust's technical committees
- servicing Trust meetings, technical committees and subcommittees to facilitate good decision-making
- negotiating grants and agreements, project plans and making payments
- monitoring and acquitting funded projects
- disseminating and promoting successful Trust-funded projects
- managing pollution clean-up programs
- reviewing and evaluating the Trust's programs and procedures.

Grants administration

All Trust grants include a number of conditions that must be met, covering matters such as project timetables, payment schedules, progress and final project reports, financial reports, project variations and other administrative requirements. Except where a project is of a short duration or small amount, the Trust pays the grants in instalments in advance or through milestone payments.

The Trust's technical review committee representatives and independent reviewers assess and recommend grant projects and review project progress and final reports. This process keeps the Trust progressively informed about the quality of the work and the outcomes of each project. Where appropriate, a copy of the final report is placed in the OEH Library.

All major programs are overseen by program-specific Trust subcommittees. These subcommittees are comprised of technical experts in the relevant field. They provide input into the development of program business plans, monitor program implementation and progress, and provide ongoing advice to the Trust. Some subcommittees oversee a number of projects.

As an added level of governance for the infrastructure programs of the Waste Less, Recycle More initiative, applicants are required to provide a cost-benefit analysis for their projects, based on NSW Treasury's *NSW Government Guidelines for Economic Appraisal*. These analyses are then reviewed by independent experts who report their findings to the technical review committee to assist with the overall assessment of proposals. A Probity Auditor has also been appointed to review all program documentation and attend all technical review committee meetings as an observer to ensure the decision-making process is in accord with the highest standards of probity and integrity.

Organisational performance

Trust support staff are employed within OEH and are subject to the administration and organisational performance programs of that office. These include the disability inclusion action plan, workforce diversity, multicultural policies and services program, work health and safety, etc. Further information on these policies and other organisational issues can be found in the *Office of Environment and Heritage Annual Report 2016–17*.

Assets

Since it uses the resources of OEH, the Trust does not have any physical assets that require risk management or associated insurance activities.

Risk management and insurance

The Trust's risk management includes independent grant assessment processes, formal authorisation and payment procedures under explicit delegated authority, written grant agreements and approved business plans with grantees. A clause in grant agreements indemnifies the Trust, and there are processes for tracking the progress of grants and payments of grants, along with a procedures manual and regular audits of procedures.

Further information on risk management policies and guidelines, fraud and corruption control strategies and the internal audit program applicable to the Trust can also be found in the OEH Annual Report 2016–17.

A range of insurances are carried out by OEH with the NSW Treasury Managed Fund. This coverage extends to the operations of the Trust.

Digital information attestation

The NSW Government Digital Information Security Policy requires each department and statutory body annually to attest to the adequacy of its digital information and information systems security.

The information systems used by the Trust and all digital information held by the Trust is managed by OEH. For a copy of the Digital Information Attestation Statement, refer to the OEH Annual Report 2016–17.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

The Trust's Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) Program is intended to guide grantees with their project delivery, at the same time enabling the Trust to gauge environmental outcomes achieved through the projects it funds. The MER Program helps grantees to track their progress against their objectives, and to measure and report on their achievements. The aim is to increase the likelihood of project success by providing a framework that integrates clear processes to monitor and evaluate outcomes from the beginning of a project. This ongoing assessment allows grantees to learn from their experiences and adjust their activities if things are not working as expected. Since its introduction, the MER system has been continually improved and streamlined for the benefit of both Trust administration and grantees.

A full-time MER Officer is employed by the Trust to reinforce the MER Program and to manage the reporting data. For some grant programs, this position also liaises with grantees, providing feedback and guidance on the grantee's respective project plans and projections. Webinars on project management and reporting are offered as part of this support.

Grantees report on key performance indicators relating to measurable environmental outcomes tailored to each program. The Trust uses this information to assess progress

towards environmental goals on a project, program and statewide basis. Some of the results that have been achieved to date are included under the relevant program headings in this report.

External reviews

The Trust is subject to a range of independent audits, including annual review of its financial statements by the Audit Office of New South Wales. The Trust also implements a five-year evaluation plan for each of its competitive grant programs, and independently evaluates each major project grant, to ensure Trust funding is achieving the best possible results for the environment.

External reviews were conducted this year for the Sustainability Program (which concluded in 2015–16), the Dissemination Program, the Restoration and Rehabilitation Program and the Contaminated Land Management Program.

Sustainability

In July 2016, the administration of the Sustainability Program was transferred to OEH. An independent mid-term evaluation of the program was undertaken to support this transition. The evaluation examined the five key subprograms that comprise most of the funded activities: Sustainability Advantage (business), Sustainable Government (behaviour), Collaborative Sustainable Housing Initiative, Local Green Economies, and Communities Caring for their own Environment.

The evaluation has proposed a number of options regarding the future management of the program which are currently being considered by OEH.

Dissemination

The purpose of this year's evaluation was to determine to what degree the Dissemination Program is meeting its intended outcomes and deliverables. This included assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the program as a tool for knowledge sharing, capacity building, and increasing the value and learnings of Trust-funded projects. At a time when grantees and organisations are increasingly time-poor, the evaluation has looked at the challenges and opportunities for the program and considered whether the current model of communication and project delivery meets the changing needs of grantees and the Trust. The emergence of new communication methods and capabilities, combined with the findings of the recent Trust Stakeholder Engagement Survey, suggests there is scope for a new approach to dissemination.

The Trust will review the findings and best practice recommendations made by the independent evaluators and use these to shape the future direction of the program.

Contaminated Land Management Program

Over the past six years the Trust has provided \$12 million to investigate and remediate specific types of contaminated sites. The Trust has also funded capacity building and education programs, and a program to gather information on sites notified to the EPA.

The Natural Resources Commission was engaged to evaluate the most recent six-year period of the program, which was delivered under two business plans. The evaluation

considered how the program was delivered against these plans, as well as how the program strategically aligns with Trust objects and principles, and fits within the broader contaminated land context.

Restoration and Rehabilitation

The first grants were awarded through the Restoration and Rehabilitation Program in 1991. Since this time the program has sought to achieve long-term beneficial outcomes for the NSW environment by encouraging and enabling community and government organisations to protect, conserve and restore the natural environment.

Trust administration engaged the Natural Resources Commission to undertake an evaluation of the program covering the period 2010 to 2015 (financial years 2010–11 to 2014–15). The results of the review will be released in 2017–18.

Stakeholder engagement

The Trust commissioned a stakeholder engagement survey to better understand its effectiveness in engaging, communicating with and building the capacity of target audiences. It also sought to determine the value and reach of its Dissemination Program which involves the sharing of learning and tools generated by successful grants.

In addition to measuring the effectiveness of the Trust's current engagement activities, the project has provided insights into grantees awareness levels of the grant programs, their perceptions of the Trust's role, their motivations to seek funding, and preferences for communication with the Trust.

A total of 866 people responded to the survey which was conducted online. Following the online survey, 20 phone interviews were undertaken with a range of stakeholders from different regions and associations to enhance the learning from the survey and fill any gaps in knowledge and expectations.

The survey revealed a high level of awareness of the Trust, with 96% of respondents having previously heard of the Trust, and 88% having previously applied for a Trust grant. Three-quarters of respondents were aware of Trust-funded projects other than their own.

The majority of stakeholders rely on emails (60%) and the website (50%) for information on the Trust. Workshops are the most highly valued form of contact with the Trust. Project case studies are seen as valuable resources, but grantees feel these could be more actively promoted and made more prominent on the website.

Four in five respondents agreed the NSW Environmental Trust '... provides important support for environmental projects across NSW', and that it '... helps their organisation make a positive difference to the environment'. However, some stakeholders did not feel the Trust addresses priority environmental problems, and felt that communication with grantees could be improved.

The results of the survey are being used by Trust administration to identify opportunities for improving communication and capacity-building initiatives, and to take advantage of new and social engagement technologies.

Internal Audit and Risk Management Statement

Internal Audit and Risk Management Attestation Statement for the 2016-2017 Financial Year for the Environmental Trust

I, the Secretary of the Environmental Trust, am of the opinion that the Environmental Trust has internal audit and risk management processes in operation that are, excluding the exceptions or transitional arrangements described below, compliant with the eight (8) core requirements set out in the *Internal Audit and Risk Management Policy for the NSW Public Sector*, specifically:

Core Requirements		Compliant, non-compliant, or in transition
Risk Management Framework		
1.1	The agency head is ultimately responsible and accountable for risk management in the agency	Compliant
1.2	A risk management framework that is appropriate to the agency has been established and maintained and the framework is consistent with AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009	Compliant
Internal Audit Function		
2.1	An internal audit function has been established and maintained	Non-compliant
2.2	The operation of the internal audit function is consistent with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing	Compliant
2.3	The agency has an Internal Audit Charter that is consistent with the content of the 'model charter'	Compliant
Audit and Risk Committee		
3.1	An independent Audit and Risk Committee with appropriate expertise has been established	Non-compliant
3.2	The Audit and Risk Committee is an advisory committee providing assistance to the agency head on the agency's governance processes, risk management and control frameworks, and its external accountability obligations	Compliant
3.3	The Audit and Risk Committee has a Charter that is consistent with the content of the 'model charter'	Compliant

Membership

The chair and members of the Audit and Risk Committee are:

- Independent Chair, Mr Bruce Turner AM, appointed 1 March 2014 to 28 February 2018. Resigned effective from 31 December 2016.
- Independent Member 1, Ms Geraldine Brus, appointed 1 March 2014 to 28 February 2018. Resigned effective from 31 January 2017.
- Independent Member 2, Ms Elizabeth Crouch, appointed 26 May 2014 to 25 May 2018. Appointment ceased 1 February 2017 to accept appointment as Independent Chair, please see below.
- Independent Chair Ms Elizabeth Crouch appointed 2 February 2017 to 2 February 2021
- Independent Member 1, Mr Alan Zammit AO appointed 31 January 2017 to 31 January 2021
- Non-independent Member 1, Dr Kate Wilson, appointed 20 February 2015 and the original appointment was ongoing. However, in accordance with transitional requirements, membership ceased on 30 June 2017.

Departures from Core Requirements

I, the Secretary of the Environmental Trust, advise that:

- the internal audit and risk management processes for the Environmental Trust depart from the following core requirements set out in the *Internal Audit and Risk Management Policy for the NSW Public Sector*; and
- the departure from the core requirements is due to the agency implementing measures to achieve compliance with new policy requirements consistent with the permitted transitional arrangement; or
- the circumstances giving rise to these departures have been determined by the Portfolio Minister, and the Environmental Trust has implemented the following practicable alternative measures to meet the core requirements:

Departure	Reason for departure and description of practicable alternative measures implemented/being implemented
Non-Compliance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 2.1 – An internal audit function has been established and maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Chief Audit Executive is not an employee of the Environmental Trust. The Environmental Trust is unable to share the Office of Environment and Heritage's Chief Audit Executive under NSW Treasury policy as the Office of Environment and Heritage is not a principal department.▪ The Portfolio Minister has approved the Office of Environment and Heritage's Chief Audit Executive to fulfil the role of Chief Audit Executive for the Environmental Trust. The Environmental Trust is included in the Office of Environment and Heritage's internal audit program with dedicated internal audit coverage each year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 3.1 – An independent Audit and Risk Committee with appropriate expertise has been established	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Environmental Trust does not have a standalone Audit and Risk Committee. The Environmental Trust is unable to share the Office of Environment and Heritage's Audit and Risk Committee under NSW Treasury policy as the prerequisites cannot be met.▪ The Portfolio Minister has approved the Office of Environment and Heritage's Audit and Risk Committee to provide independent oversight and advice for the operations of the Environmental Trust. The close relationship between the Office of Environment and Heritage and the Environmental Trust allows a single audit and risk committee to have increased insight into the management of risks in and between the agencies.

These processes, including the practicable alternative measures implemented, demonstrate that the Environmental Trust has established and maintained frameworks, including systems, processes and procedures for appropriately managing audit and risk within the Environmental Trust.



Anthony Lean
Secretary
Environmental Trust

Date: 18th OCTOBER 2017

Agency Contact Officer
Simonne Daly
Acting Director Governance
Chief Audit Executive
02 9585 6184

Membership of the NSW Environmental Trust

As defined in section 6 of the Environmental Trust Act, the Trust consists of five members. They are:

- Minister for the Environment (as Chairperson)
- Secretary of NSW Treasury
- Chief Executive of Office of Environment and Heritage

- a person appointed by the Minister from a panel of three nominated by the Nature Conservation Council (NCC) of NSW
- a person appointed by the Minister from a panel of three nominated by Local Government NSW (LGNSW).

The Trust met three times in 2016–17.

Members of the Trust and meeting attendance

Member	Position	Meetings attended by member or deputy	Meetings eligible to attend
The Hon. Mark Speakman MP	(Chairperson) Minister for the Environment (statutory appointment) (to 29 January 2017)	2	2
The Hon. Gabrielle Upton MP	(Chairperson) Minister for the Environment (statutory appointment) (from 30 January 2017)	1	1
Mr Rob Whitfield	Secretary of NSW Treasury (statutory appointment)	0	3
Permanent Deputy: Mr Bill Stanhope	Senior Financial Analyst, NSW Treasury (to 27 November 2016)	1	1
Permanent Deputy: Ms Jenny Merkley	Director, Transport, Planning and Environment, NSW Treasury (from 28 November 2016)	2	2
Mr Terry Bailey	Chief Executive, Office of Environment and Heritage (to 21 October 2016)	1	1
Mr Michael Wright	Acting Chief Executive, Office of Environment and Heritage (22 October 2016 to 19 March 2017)	1	1
Mr Anthony Lean	Chief Executive, Office of Environment and Heritage (from 20 March 2017)	1	1
Mr Rob Pallin	Representing Nature Conservation Council of NSW (to 31 October 2016)	1	1
Deputy: Professor Don White	Chairperson Nature Conservation Council of NSW	1	1
Professor Don White	Representing Nature Conservation Council of NSW (from 1 December 2016 to 14 November 2019)	1	1
Councillor Keith Rhoades	President Representing Local Government NSW (to 14 December 2017)	3	3

Membership of Trust Subcommittees

Trust subcommittees provide input into the development of program business plans in consultation with external stakeholders, oversee program governance arrangements and provide ongoing advice to the Trust. During 2016–17 there were eight subcommittees in operation under section 9 of the Environmental Trust Act to assist the Trust with the management of its grant programs. The membership of each subcommittee that met in 2016–17 follows.

Biodiversity and Green Corridors Subcommittee

Dr Carolyn Davies (Chairperson)

Director, Private Land Conservation Branch, OEH

Ms Deborah Bate

Manager, Land Services, Central West Local Land Services

Ms Susy Cenedese

Strategy Manager, Environment, Local Government NSW

Mr Peter Dixon

Director Grants, NSW Environmental Trust

Ms Karen Eardley

Project Officer, Reserve Establishment, NPWS, OEH

Mr Tim Low

Project Officer, Invasive Species Council

Dr Peter Mitchell

Community representative

Dr Ross Peacock

Code Review Coordinator, Operations, NSW Rural Fire Service

Ms Bronwyn Petrie

Representing NSW Farmers

Dr Peter Turner (delegate Ms Hillary Cherry)

Senior Weeds Officer, NPWS, OEH

Community and Sustainability Subcommittee

Dr Tony Wilkins (Chairperson)

Head of Environment, News Corp Australia

Ms Susy Cenedese

Strategy Manager, Environment, Local Government NSW

Ms Rebecca Simpson

Senior Team Leader, Major Projects, NSW Environmental Trust

Ms Madelaine Townsend

Director, Conservation Volunteers Australia

Dr Greg Walkerden

Lecturer, Environmental Management, Macquarie University

Professor Don White

Chairperson, Nature Conservation Council of NSW

Environmental Hazards Subcommittee

Professor Cameron Hazelhurst (Chairperson)

Foundation Principal, The Ethicos Group

Mr Jeff Angel

Executive Director, Total Environment Centre

Ms Phillippa Biswell

Environmental Project Officer, Sutherland Shire Council

Ms Eleanor Carswell

Community representative

Mr Ian Gregson

Principal Environmental Consultant, GHD

Ms Nicole Lawler

Health Safety & Environment Manager, Boral Limited

Dr Alex Pulkownik

School of the Environment, University of Technology Sydney

Ms Rebecca Simpson

Senior Team Leader, Major Projects, NSW Environmental Trust

Flying-fox Netting Subsidy Program Subcommittee

Dr Carolyn Davies (Chairperson)

Director Private Land Conservation Branch, OEH

Mr Glenn Fahey

Representing NSW Farmers

Mr Leigh James

Senior Land Services Officer (Horticulture), Local Land Services

Mr Myles Parker

Leader Horticulture Development, NSW Department of Primary Industries

Mr Evan Quartermain (alternate Ms Nancy Pallin)

Senior Program Manager, Humane Society International

Ms Rebecca Simpson

Senior Team Leader, Major Projects, NSW Environmental Trust

Grow Sustainable Nature Based Tourism Subcommittee

Ms Rebecca Simpson (Acting Chairperson)

Senior Team Leader, Major Projects, NSW Environmental Trust

Ms Samantha Crosby

Education and Community Programs Coordinator, Centennial Parklands

Ms Julie Hegarty (alternate)

Chair, NPWS Advisory Council

Mr Rod Hillman
Chief Executive, Ecotourism Australia

Ms Sonia McIvor
Director, Marketing, Destination NSW

Offsets Subcommittee

Mr David Trewin (Chairperson) (alternate Ms Alex Graham)
Regional Manager Greater Sydney, OEH

Mr Paul Bennett
Manager Land Services, Greater Sydney Local Land Services

Mr Michael Dyson
Associate Director, Knight Frank Valuations

Mr Minh Nguyen
Principal Financial Analyst, Planning and Environment,
NSW Treasury

Mr Adam Littman (alternate)
Principal Planning Officer – District Planning, Department of
Planning and Environment

Ms Rebecca Simpson
Senior Team Leader, Major Projects, NSW Environmental Trust

Ms Rachel Walmsley
Policy and Law Reform Director, Environmental Defenders
Office NSW

South Coast Forests Subcommittee

Mr Peter Dixon (Chairperson)
Director Grants, NSW Environmental Trust

Ms Sally Bayley
Industry representative

Ms Alison Gibbins
Senior Manager, Nature Conservation, NPWS

Mr Michael Hood
Director Forestry, EPA

Mr Miladen Kovac
Director Economics, OEH

Ms Maria Matthes
Ecological consultant

Waste and Recycling Subcommittee

Mr Stephen Beaman (Chairperson)
Executive Director, Waste and Resource Recovery, EPA

Ms Tracy Chalk
Waste and Resource Recovery Manager, Penrith City Council

Dr Paul Hogan
Director Industry Development, NSW Department of Industry

Mr Paul Klymenko
Chief Executive Officer, Planet Ark

Mr Miles Lochhead
Convenor, Community Recycling Network Australia

Professor Adam Read
Practice Director, Ricardo-AEA

Professor Don White
Chairperson, Nature Conservation Council of NSW

Dr Tony Wilkins
Head of Environment, News Corp Australia

Membership of Trust Technical Review Committees

The Trust has established several technical review committees under section 9 of the Environmental Trust Act. These committees assess and recommend grant applications, provide guidance in program implementation and may review progress and final reports. The membership of each committee that met during 2016–17 is set out below.

Eco Schools Program

Mark Caddey (Chairperson)

Senior Project Officer Sustainable Communities, OEH
(On behalf of Maria Rickert, Senior Team Leader, Sustainable Communities, OEH)

Ms Brigitte Herrmann

Support Teacher Transition, NSW Department of Education

Ms Sue Martin

Treasurer and Public Officer
Australian Association for Environmental Education

Ms Alex Montgomery (alternate Lisa Wilkins)

Primary Curriculum Advisor, Early Learning & Primary Education, NSW Department of Education

Mr Brian Williams

Procurement Manager, Catholic Education Office

Environmental Education Program

Ms Roz Hall (Chairperson)

Director, Business and Community Programs, OEH

Ms Karen Paroissien

Senior Programs Officer, Conservation Programs, OEH

Ms Rebecca Raap

Principal Consultant, RfR Consulting

Ms Jane Smith

Executive Officer, Community Environment Network

Ms Erika Van Schellebeck (Community Program)

Sustainability Officer, Coffs Harbour City Council

Ms Sarah Warner (Government Program)

Environmental Planner, Lake Macquarie City Council

Environmental Research Program

Dr Klaus Koop (Chairperson)

Ex-Director, Environmental Protection Science, OEH

Dr Graeme Batley

Chief Research Scientist, Centre for Environmental Contaminants Research, CSIRO Land and Water

Dr Brent Jacobs

Research Director, Natural Resources & Environment Cluster, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney

Professor Deirdre Lemerle

Director, Graham Centre for Agricultural Innovation, Charles Sturt University

Dr Derek Van Dyk

Ex-Director, Strategic Research Partnerships and Pre-Award, Macquarie University

Restoration and Rehabilitation (Community) Program

Ms Jane Gibbs (Chairperson)

Director, Ecosystem Assessment and Planning, OEH

Mr James Dawson

Senior Team Leader, Ecosystems and Threatened Species – Illawarra, OEH

Ms Kris Hely

Coffs Coast Bush Regeneration Company

Mr Keith Hyde

State Management Committee, Landcare NSW

Ms Mary-Lou Lewis

Committee Member, Australian Association of Bush Regenerators

Mr Charles Lucas

Senior Land Services Officer, Natural Resources Management, Riverina Local Land Services

Mr Justin Sauvage

Stormwater Engineer, Sutherland Shire Council

Mr Marc Worner

Representing the Australian Institute of Landscape Designers and Managers

Restoration and Rehabilitation (Government) Program

Ms Jane Gibbs (Chairperson)

Director, Ecosystem Assessment and Planning, OEH

Ms Louise Brodie

Committee Member, Australian Association of Bush Regenerators

Mr James Dawson

Senior Team Leader, Ecosystems and Threatened Species – Illawarra, OEH

Mr Roger Lembit

President, National Parks Association of NSW

Mr Charles Lucas

Senior Land Services Officer, Natural Resource Management, Riverina Local Land Services

Ms Kirsty McIntyre

Senior Policy Officer, Natural Resource Management, Local Government NSW

Mr Chris Scott

Treasurer, Landcare NSW

Mr Marc Worner

Representing the Australian Institute of Landscape Designers and Managers

Waste Less, Recycle More grant programs

Food Waste Avoidance Education Grants

Ms Kalina Koloff (Chairperson)

Senior Team Leader, Stakeholder Engagement, OEH

Mr Geoff Isaac

Senior Project Officer, EPA

Ms Lynda Newnam

Volunteer, Keep NSW Beautiful

Ms Linda Tohver

Education Coordinator, North East Waste (NE Waste)

Organics Collection Program

(formerly known as Local Government Organics Collection Systems)

Mr John Street (Chairperson)

Chairperson, Hawkesbury Environment Network, representing the Nature Conservation Council of NSW

Mr Justin Lang

Program Manager Local Government, Office of Green Industries SA

Mr Ken Wilson

Sustainable Services Coordinator, Clarence Valley Council

Organics Infrastructure (Large and Small)

Mr John Street (Chairperson)

Chairperson, Hawkesbury Environment Network representing the Nature Conservation Council of NSW

Mr Brock Baker

Independent technical expert in waste and recycling sector

Mr Mark Gorta

Independent technical expert in waste and recycling sector

Mr Lachlan Jeffries

Managing Director, Jeffries Group

Mr James Turnell

Manager Waste and Drainage, Armidale Regional Council

Mr Michael Wood

Director, EnviroMix

Recycling Innovation Fund – Innovation in Priority Problem Wastes Management

Mr Brad Gray (Chairperson)

Campaigns Manager, Planet Ark

Mr Nick Harford

Director, Equilibrium OMG Pty Ltd

Mr Stephen Holland

Operations Manager, Waste Management Association of Australia

Mr Mark McKenzie

Waste Officer, Local Government NSW

Resource Recovery Facility Expansion and Enhancement

Mr Sean O'Malley (Chairperson)

Research and Technical Manager, Planet Ark

Mr Phil Klepzig

Manager Commercial Services, Lismore City Council

Mr Mark Rawson

Managing Director and Principal Consultant, Rawtec Pty Ltd

Contact Information

Public access

Further information on the NSW Environmental Trust can be obtained by contacting:

Grants Administrator
PO Box 644
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124
Telephone (02) 8837 6093
Email: info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au

Information on the Trust's grant programs is also available on the Trust's website at www.environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au.

Offices

The Trust office is located at:

Level 4, 10 Valentine Avenue
Parramatta NSW 2150

The office is open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Publications

The following publications are available from the Trust:

- guidelines and grant application forms for all grant programs
- NSW Environmental Trust annual reports from 1992–93 to 2016–17.

This annual report is available to download from the Trust's website: www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/trustreport.htm

A range of case studies highlighting successfully completed grant projects is available from the Trust's dissemination webpage: www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/casestudies.htm

Public access to government information

The NSW Government's *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* concerns rights to public information and relates to personal and non-personal information held by government.

There are four ways in which the Trust makes its information available:

- through mandatory release (such as policies and guidelines available on the Trust's website)
- proactive release, which requires the Trust to release as much government information as possible in an appropriate format free-of-charge (or at lowest reasonable cost)
- through informal requests from members of the public
- through a formal application process, requesting specific information under the Government Information (Public Access) Act. This is the last resort if a member of the public hasn't been able to get information in any other way.

Government agencies are required, under section 20 of the Government Information (Public Access) Act, to make available an information guide outlining the agency's structure and functions, the type of information held by the agency, and how members of the public can access information through that agency. The Trust's operations are covered in OEH Information Guide: the Government Information (Public Access) Act which is available at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/130378oehinfo.htm on the OEH website.

The Trust regularly and proactively releases information through its website. This includes information relating to the management of grant programs, provision of grant applications, applicant guidelines and other supporting documents, as well as publishing lists of successful grantees for each program. The Trust endeavours to release this information as soon as possible once it is available. The Trust publishes other information on an intermittent basis, such as case studies of successful grant projects.

All Government Information (Public Access) requests relating to the Trust are reported by OEH in its annual report.

Abbreviations

CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
EPA	NSW Environment Protection Authority
GER	Great Eastern Ranges
LGA	local government area
LLS	Local Land Services
MER	monitoring, evaluation and reporting
NPWS	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
NSW	New South Wales
OEH	Office of Environment and Heritage
POP	Protecting our Places
SoS	Saving our Species
TSR	travelling stock reserve

Photographs

Page	Caption	Credit
5	Young ibis rise up from the Gwydir Wetlands. The addition of core wetland habitat to the Gwydir Wetlands State Conservation Area will strengthen the protection of this Ramsar-listed site.	John Spencer (OEH)
7	The addition of core wetland habitat to the Gwydir Wetlands State Conservation Area will strengthen the protection of this Ramsar-listed site.	Karen Eardley
9	Restored Norton's box woodland community surrounding Tumut Common.	Snowy Valleys Council
15	Restored riparian vegetation acts as a filter to protect water quality in Ourimbah Creek	Palm Grove Ourimbah Creek Landcare
16	The Brush tailed rock wallaby – an iconic species under threat	Shane Ruming (OEH)
21	Roadside Reserves Environmental Management Framework	Local Government NSW
21	Testing rapid assessment methodology that will be applied to both roadsides and travelling stock reserves	Kirsty McIntyre, Local Government NSW
23	Ngarigo Plant Use in the Snowy River Catchment	Mantis Design
30	Landholders try out the LandSmart App with Land Services Officer Angela Maier	Local Land Services
35	Students at Holroyd School help mulch their new garden beds	Holroyd School
40	Raising awareness of organics recycling at the Sustainable Expo in Bathurst.	Bathurst Regional Council
42	Participants in Hidden Harvest's "More Taste, Less Waste" events in the Illawarra region pledge to reduce their food waste.	Hidden Harvest
45	A Bin Trim rebate is helping Illawarra childcare centres to teach children about recycling.	NSW EPA
46	Young adults have been targeted in a NPWS campaign to increase awareness of national parks and nature experiences.	David Finnegan (OEH)
47	Predictive koala habitat map for the NSW north coast (red is low habitat suitability, blue is high habitat suitability)	NSW EPA
49	The Hardwicke biobank site contains critically endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland which is in good condition.	Kathryn Collins (OEH)
51	Research has found that positive childhood experiences with nature can instill a life-long interest in conservation.	Rosie Nicolai (OEH)
69	The Lord Howe Island Board weed team are now extending their efforts into remote terrain to remove outlying mature weeds.	Lord Howe Island Board

