

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

BRIEFING PAPER

PROJECT TITLE:

Sustainable Stormwater Management Capacity Building Program -
A package for councils and catchment managers across NSW.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT:

Contract Administrator: Hunter Councils Inc

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Project Management: Project Reference Panel & Peer Review Group.

RATIONALE:

The Lower Hunter & Central Coast Regional Environmental Management Strategy (LHCCREMS) is an innovative regional initiative currently being implemented by the seven Councils that comprise the Lower Hunter and Central Coast Region – Cessnock, Maitland, Port Stephens, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Wyong and Gosford. LHCCREMS was developed to assist, support and resource local government to more efficiently develop and implement environmental management programs.

This project seeks to build on learnings and outcomes from a range of effective capacity building programs, as well as Stormwater Trust projects, recent research and development initiatives, and case studies from a number of states. The primary objective is to produce a state of the art, comprehensive, interactive resource package that can support Councils in NSW with the delivery of more sustainable stormwater management.

LHCCREMS work has been highly successful in raising awareness and engaging officers from the full spectrum of disciplines in Councils, and facilitating commitment to further investigation and trial in the Lower Hunter and Central Coast. However it is clear from research and work conducted to date that there is an absence of in-house skills and ready access to expertise to go a step further in trials and implementation.

In addition, while there is: (i) a lot of Council activity across the state in relation to exploring more innovative water cycle management approaches, and (ii) a lot of valuable research work and product development being undertaken by a variety of organisations – access to it is uncoordinated, fragmented, and to some extent quite difficult for practitioners in the field. This

project seeks to provide a “one–stop-shop” approach to assisting the awareness raising and delivery. However more than this, the Toolkit will be a facilitated learning tool – providing users with a decision support guide to identifying the problem, the potential solution, and the resources and contacts available to address the issue.

BACKGROUND:

This project seeks to develop, in collaboration with the NSW Environment Protection Authority, a comprehensive, pragmatic, interactive capacity building package (in CD and web-based access format) to promote more sustainable stormwater management and urban water cycle solutions that:

- minimise life cycle costs to the community,
- meet public health and safety standards,
- reduce the demand for water from river systems,
- effectively minimise deleterious impacts on the environment.

The project has been designed in response to:

- The considerable array of capacity building programs being undertaken within the state which need a vehicle for extending the learnings.
- The wide range of treatment train and source control measures, tools, education materials, technical manuals, research and innovation which have been (or are currently being) developed – but for which communication by the developers, and access by the Councils around the state, is a challenge.
- The need to produce a resource kit based around an understanding of the practical needs of NSW Councils – given their often fragmented or “non-integrated” internal structures – to achieve more sustainable stormwater management practices, programs and outcomes.
- The LHCCREMS Capacity Building Program, has identified the need to provide councils with a catchment audit, evaluation and decision support tools, as well as the need to address organisational structure and change issues in advancing sustainable stormwater management.
- The opportunity to time the production and delivery of the toolkit around the operation of the state-wide EPA Stormwater Extension Officer program.
- The opportunity to deliver a product that is complimentary to the EPA’s statewide capacity building strategy.

PROJECT AIM:

The primary objective is to produce a state of the art, comprehensive, interactive resource package that can support Councils in NSW with the delivery of more sustainable stormwater management. The proposed package will:

- Be specifically targeted at elected representatives, senior management, and Catchment managers in Councils.
- Be designed as a facilitated learning tool able to be trialed by the EPA Stormwater Extension Officers, and utilised by senior management and catchment management officers of Councils.
- Provide much needed in-house decision support and analysis tools to council management and staff in order to provide a cost effective means of promoting and implementing more sustainable stormwater management solutions at both the local and regional scale.
- Provide a vehicle for access to, and utilisation of, the vast array of capacity building products available including those currently being produced by the EPA.
- Assist the Stormwater Trust funded Stormwater Extension Officers and council/catchment managers to communicate, promote and encourage the philosophies, applications and benefits of a broader urban water cycle management approach to stormwater management.
- Assist councils and catchment managers to pilot innovation.

OBJECTIVES:

Key issues this project will address include:

- Assisting councils and Catchment managers to pilot innovation in sustainable urban water cycle and stormwater management practices.
- Provision of the appropriate tools and mechanisms for local government, to support cost-effective implementation of these solutions at a regional and local scale.
- Enhancing the stormwater management plans of Councils, and facilitating an integrated regional approach to the priority issues.
- Enhancing in-house technical expertise.
- Providing tools to assist in leveraging organisational, political and management support for best practice and innovation.
- Tools to support council advocates responsible for promoting and better managing these issues.
- Addressing change management challenges.

VISUAL DOCUMENTATION:

The Toolkit will be produced in several formats:

1. **An interactive website** – hosted and maintained for 12 months by LHCCREMS. In this period we will also (i) monitor and evaluate the site, its design and use (ii) explore the potential for ongoing maintenance and hosting of the site either by LHCCREMS or potentially one of the industry organisation partners

2. **A CD Rom and User Manual** – This format will allow distribution to all Councils and a portable tool for the SEOs and other potential facilitators. The User Manual will provide an explanation of how to maximise the potential of the Toolkit, and be a hard copy resource tool for general usage

COMPONENTS OF PROPOSED CAPACITY BUILDING PACKAGE:

The proposed initiative will provide a comprehensive package covering: Advocacy, Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Review. It will be designed with a variety of components and formats to address the multiple audiences needing to be targeted in Councils, catchment management organisations and community networks.

- (1) Design and production of a Video based introduction to water management issues in NSW, councils potential to influence innovation, improved environmental management, and improved return on investments** – live footage and sophisticated 3-d animations to demonstrate (i) water conservation and management issues in both urban and rural NSW (ii) the most current knowledge in sustainable Water Cycle Management principles, applications, case studies and tools capable of addressing these issues (iii) the role Councils can play in delivering innovation. Explanation, Context, Advocacy, and Rationale. Important to set context & provide clear understanding for multiple audiences – particularly in relation to the required systems approach to water cycle and stormwater management. Will include how WSUD relates to Stormwater Management Plans (SMP), how it can be applied at various scales, the rationale and cost benefits. Acceptance of WSUD principles requires a paradigm shift – marketing and education are vital to this process. Research and LHCCREMS experience shown that champions need tools to effect institutional change and gain organisational support: to “sell the message”. Elected representatives, senior management require accurate, summarized, explanatory information with a marketing edge to understand and engage in the concept.

- (2) Design and production of a Guided Catchment Audit System** – an interactive self-audit for catchment managers to assist:
- Councils consider ecosystems approaches to management.
 - In the identification of both direct and indirect impacts of stormwater on downstream ecosystems.
 - In the identification of other key water management and conservation issues.
 - Making informed, systematic judgments about priorities and appropriate responses within their SMP planning and operational activities.
 - Identification of local “drivers” for considering “non-traditional” approaches to stormwater management.

The Audit will be an important tool for council officers and catchment managers to plan and review the needs of their catchment and the efficacy of current policies and practises to address them.

(3) Organisational Change Model

Compile a number of resources, cases studies and models to support managers and officers to consider the organisational structures in which they operate; and devise strategies for promoting change and innovation.

(4) Design and develop a Comprehensive Resource Navigator

The navigator will be an expert decision support tool and comprehensive resource access guide. This component will guide the user through the range of appropriate options available or recommended (as a result of the catchment audit process) to address a variety of water management issues. What “recipes” fit differing situations. These would include tools and support resources under the following headings:

1. Treatment Measures.
2. Source Control Measures and Practises (including wastewater reuse, recycling, and other conservation measures).
3. Urban Design, Planning and Policy.
4. Education/Marketing Tools, Resources and Approaches.
5. Demonstration Project Guide and Case Studies.
6. Risk Management.
7. Monitoring & Evaluation.
8. Relevant Research Programs, Researchers and Research Organisations around Australia.
9. Relevant industry Associations and Networks.

For each issue the navigator will lead the user to the suite of available contacts, tools and/or solutions and provide information such as –

- description,
- who the “experts” are in this field and their contact details,
- where the tools are located and how to access them,
- their status,
- the extent to which they address the issue,
- how much they cost (if applicable),
- what form the tool is in,
- any relevant case studies or evaluations; how to access them,
- any related research, whose undertaking it and how to access it,
- relevant website links.

PROJECT BUDGET:

Approximately \$180,000.

TIMEFRAME OF PROJECT:

The project needs to be completed by January 2004.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST PROCESS

1. Submissions to be received no later than Wednesday 27 August 2003.
2. Submissions may be posted, faxed or emailed to arrive by the specified deadline:

The Director
LHCCREMS
PO Box 189
Hunter Region Mail Centre
NSW

Fax 02 49620918

Email envirodirector@huntercouncils.com.au

3. Expression of Interest submissions need not be long and detailed, however, information on the following is required–
 - Proposed approach to project and likely deliverables for the allocated project budget.
 - Skills and expertise of the proposed team, particularly in relation to – social/behavioral/organisational change; water sensitive urban design or urban water cycle management techniques, policies and practices; catchment auditing; multimedia production including web based design and video production; and other related disciplines..
 - Experience in developing targeted education (capacity building) products.