

Streamline

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List of Winners and Entrants to the 2001 Upper Parramatta River Environment Awards

This year the Trust sponsored the inaugural Environment Awards to recognise and reward individuals, community groups, schools and local councils for their contributions in helping to improve the local environment in the Upper Parramatta River Catchment. The winners shared \$10,000 in prize money that will be used for future environmental projects.

George Whitehouse, Chairman of the Trust, congratulated all entrants for their outstanding contributions, remarking that "it is through their work that we benefit by being able to enjoy healthier bushland and cleaner water in our creeks."

The awards were presented at a special ceremony on 8 June 2001 at Old Government House, Parramatta, attended by over 100 people. The entrants and winners were:

Overall Winner

- *Jasper Road Public School at Baulkham Hills* for 'Regeneration of Local Reserves and Environmental Education of Students' (\$5,000)

Individuals Category

- 1st Place – *Elizabeth Hunter of Toongabbie* for 'Restoration and Preservation of Greystanes Creek Remnant Cumberland Plain and Floodplain Vegetation' (\$1,000)
- 2nd Place – *Mathew Ferguson of Marist Brothers High School, Westmead* for his 'Kids for Creeks' program (\$250)
- *Kieren Po of James Ruse Agricultural School* for 'Leadership of the School Streamwatch Group
- John Read teacher at Girraween High School for 'Environmental Education
- *Marilyn Smith of West Pennant Hills* for 'Volunteer Bushcare.'

Schools Category

- 1st Place - *Jasper Road Public School at Baulkham Hills* for 'Regeneration of Local

Reserves and Environmental Education of Students' (\$1,000)

- 2nd Place - *Girraween High School at Girraween* for 'Environmental Education Policies and Strategies' (\$250)
- *Muirfield Technology High School at North Rocks* for 'Streamwatch at Muirfield – development through the years'
- *Crestwood High School at Baulkham Hills* for 'Friends of the Environment'.

Community Category

- 1st Place – *Baulkham Hills Bushland Conservation Committee* for 'Bidjivong Community Nursery' at Baulkham Hills (\$1,000)
- 2nd Place - *Quarry Branch South Bushcare Group* for 'Regeneration of Quarry Branch South' at Northmead (\$250)
- *Banks Reserve Park Committee* for 'Regeneration of Banks Reserve Park' at Kings Langley
- *Robin Hood Park Committee* for 'Environmental Bushcare in Robin Hood Park' at Old Toongabbie.



Winners of the Environment Awards



Jasper Road Public School

Councils Category

- 1st Place - *Parramatta City Council* for the 'Trainee Bushcare Program' (\$1,000)
- 2nd Place - *Baulkham Hills Shire Council* for 'Bidjivong Community Nursery' at Baulkham Hills (\$250)
- *Parramatta City Council* for 'Excellence in Recycled Organics'
- *Parramatta City Council* for 'Main Street – Clean Street' program
- *Holroyd City Council* for 'Stormwater Management Implementation Strategies'
- *Parramatta City Council* for 'All Saints Church – City of Trees Project.'

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Winners of the Environment Awards

Jasper Road Public School - Regeneration of local reserves and environmental education of students: 1st Overall, 1st School Category

In 1991 the School established a native vegetation nursery with support from Greening Australia and Winston Hills Rotary. During the past ten years, over 50,000 trees have been germinated, potted and nurtured, involving the whole school - from kindergarten to year six - under the leadership of the Arbors.



Students collecting water bugs in Quarry Creek

Over 200 students in years 5 and 6 have been members of the Arbors, who are elected annually. These students are also responsible for enhancing the school's environment by creating a rainforest, dry creek bed, raised garden beds and the 'butterfly' garden. The group regularly leads students in planting trees on nearby creek banks.

The program also caters for students with disabilities and the group has developed close links with Baukham Hills Shire Council.

The students are taught about water quality through Streamwatch, Water Bug surveys and Murder Under the Microscope. Recently they started establishing links with two local primary schools - to give other students experience in native tree planting, Streamwatch and Water Bug Watch. Through this program the school has also developed links with Baukham Hills High School, Crestwood High School and the Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust.

Baukham Hills Bushland Conservation Committee - Bidjwong Community Nursery: 1st Community Group Category

Ten years ago, the Bidjwong Community Nursery was established at Ted Horwood Reserve in Baukham Hills, with the objective of growing and promoting the use of locally indigenous plants within the Baukham Hills Shire and in all local bush regeneration projects.

Baukham Hills Shire Council established the nursery in response to community demand and continues to support it by improving facilities for seed collection and record keeping, and providing technical knowledge. Council manages the nursery in partnership with the Baukham Hills Bushland Conservation Committee, a voluntary committee.

The volunteers are the driving force behind the nursery. They carry out much of the maintenance, propagate locally derived native



species, increase knowledge and expertise of volunteers and increase community awareness of indigenous vegetation.

By supporting Bidjwong Community Nursery the community has been able to contribute towards protecting the region's biodiversity.

Elizabeth Hunter - Restoration and preservation of Greystanes Creek remnant Cumberland Plain/Floodplain Vegetation: 1st Individual Category

Elizabeth Hunter is an active bush regenerator, the driving member and the Secretary of the Greystanes Creek Management Committee since its inception in 1993. Through this group Elizabeth has



Elizabeth Hunter receiving her award with Cr Mark Pigram, Mayor of Holroyd City Council

devoted countless hours to ensure the preservation and improvement of the local area, particularly Greystanes Creek and its adjoining reserves.

Elizabeth has represented environmental interests for the local area on numerous local planning committees run by Holroyd City Council, Blacktown City Council and the Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust. Her input into these committees resulted in a successful campaign to commission a plan of management for Greystanes Creek. This plan of management provides the framework to guide all future works.

Recently the group, in partnership with Holroyd City Council, gained funding from the Natural Heritage Trust to undertake revegetation and regeneration works to help preserve and restore the remnant vegetation.

Parramatta City Council - Trainee Bush Regeneration Program: 1st Council Category

In April 2000, Parramatta City Council developed and started a new initiative called the Trainee Bush Regeneration Program. The program provides supervised field training for bush regeneration certificate students two days a week along Toongabbie Creek at Northmead and in Lake Parramatta Reserve.



Trainees clearing lantana and balloon vine to make a fire break.

The program has resulted in locally trained bush regenerators undertaking at least half a hectare of primary restoration. The areas regenerated were unable to be treated by Council's own programs or by bushcare groups. This work has improved the health of the bushland by reducing the competition of weeds. Native vegetation planting has occurred in degraded areas, further improving the local biodiversity.

Retarding, Detention and Retention!

Is there a Difference?

Flooding in western Sydney is a major problem that threatens homes, property and lives. It occurs because past urban development increased the proportion of rainfall that becomes stormwater runoff (by reducing infiltration), whilst gutters, paving and drains deliver the increased runoff to the nearest drain or creeks more quickly. As well as addressing this existing flooding problem, the Trust and the four local councils in the catchment need to ensure that future developments and re-developments do not make the flood problem worse.

Flood retarding and **detention structures** temporarily detain (or store) stormwater runoff to reduce downstream flooding. Flood retarding basins are big structures that control runoff from large areas. On-site stormwater detention (OSD) systems are smaller structures that control the runoff from individual properties or groups of properties.

In each case stormwater drains into a space like a tank, car park or depression in the ground with an outflow pipe, culvert or other opening of limited size at its lowest point. The outflow opening is sized so that, during heavy rainfall, more water flows into the space than drains out, and the space fills up with water. However, once the rainfall eases or stops, inflow becomes less than the outflow, and the storage starts to empty. This takes a few minutes to a few hours.

Thirteen large flood retarding basins have been constructed in this catchment over the past 15 years to reduce the existing flooding problem. These include the Loyalty Road flood retarding basin on Darling Mills Creek at North Rocks, which is the largest in NSW. Go to www.uprct.nsw.gov.au for locations of these basins.

Almost 1500 OSD systems have been built in this catchment to avoid creating future flooding problems. They can be found on most developments constructed over the last ten years, both private and public. For example, the M2 and M4 Motorways, and new buildings at the Westmead and New Children's Hospital, all include OSD systems. Although the OSD storage is not always obvious, if you look closely you will be sure to find one on any new development near you.

Whilst flood retarding basins and OSD systems both reduce the peak flood flows downstream, the same volume of stormwater discharged is unchanged.

In contrast, a **flood retention basin** and an **on-site stormwater retention (OSR) system** permanently remove stormwater from the system by storing it in a rainwater tank or allowing it to infiltrate into the ground.

The Trust is currently examining the possible use of rainwater tanks as part of OSD systems. Rainwater tanks also reduce the consumption of water, saving on household and business water bills. The water can be used for non-potable purposes, such as toilet flushing, hot water, showers, washing and garden watering.

Retained water can be infiltrated into the ground using infiltration trenches, grass swales and other measures. However, in western Sydney, the heavy clay soils mean that there is only limited scope for infiltration.

Sierra Place Flood Basin Enlargement Nears Completion

Works by the Trust to enlarge the flood mitigation capacity of an existing flood retarding basin on Toongabbie Creek at Sierra Place, West Baulkham Hills, are almost finished. Costing a total of \$1.2M, the works will prevent the basin overtopping in a 100 year flood and help protect 300 homes further downstream in Toongabbie.

With the assistance of grants from the Department of Land and Water Conservation, the Trust's contractor, Trimcoll Pty Ltd of Kellyville, has raised the main basin wall by 2.5 metres; and raised and extended a secondary



Trustees inspecting raised Sierra Place Basin wall.

wall to protect several residences nearby in Valerie Avenue. As well, the basin's culvert has been modified to improve the flood mitigation performance and make it easier to remove flood debris. Associated works include weed removal, bush regeneration, landscaping and improved access paths. In conjunction with Baulkham Hills Shire Council, the Trust has commissioned a consultant to prepare a landscape Masterplan for the Sierra Place Reserve. Residents will have the opportunity to comment on the future plans for the whole reserve as well as the areas to be improved in conjunction with the retarding basin enlargement.

Prospect to get New Flood Retarding Basin.

Aided by a \$500,000 grant from the Trust, Blacktown City Council has started work on a new flood retarding basin behind the new Woolworths' store on Flushcombe Road, Prospect. The completed basin, in conjunction with the amplification of the trunk drainage system, will help protect 95 homes in the Ollier Crescent/Myrtle Street area from major flooding. The total project will cost \$1.4M and should be completed by late this year.



PROJECT *Snapshots*

Central Gardens Goes Bush

Since 1998 bushland at Central Gardens Merrylands has been getting a facelift. The many weeds that were threatening to choke this ancient 'living museum' have almost been banished from the reserve, and native plants are coming back with a vengeance.



The next stage of works will involve installing a viewing platform and some signs naming the main trees, shrubs and groundcovers. Over \$50,000 dollars have been spent so far, with Holroyd City Council and the Trust aiming to continue this successful project in coming years.

River Management Service Charges

The Trust funds its many flood, water quality and vegetation projects through an annual charge on all rateable properties in the catchment, called the River Management Service Charge. The charge varies depending on land use and the size of the property if it is non-residential. The charges in 2001/02 will be:

Residential flats and vacant land	\$14.30
Residential properties	\$28.70
Industrial and commercial strata properties (1 ha or less)	\$35.60
Industrial and commercial properties	
1 ha or less	\$71.20
1.001-10.000 ha	\$357.20
10.001 – 50.000 ha	\$2,142.90
50.001 – 100.000 ha	\$4,920.70
over 100.001 ha	\$7,142.30

The service charges are billed and collected by Sydney Water on behalf of the Trust. The charges are exempt from GST. For more information please call the Trust on 9891 4633

In 2001/02 the Trust plans to spend \$800,000 to help solve existing flooding problems; \$500,000 to contain the future flood threat; \$450,000 to improve water quality; \$360,000 to help manage bushland and the creek banks; \$70,000 to promote water conservation and re-use; and \$300,000 on community education and consultation.

Huge Amounts of Pollutants Washed out of Catchment

Over the past six months 1500 tonnes of sediment, 13 tonnes of nitrogen and 4 tonnes of phosphorus has been washed out of the catchment and into Sydney Harbour.

The largest pollution load was measured during a 5-day storm last November when 680 tonnes of sediment, 5 tonnes of nitrogen and 2 tonnes of phosphorus was swept into Sydney Harbour.

These measurements were made on behalf of the Trust by, consultants AWT. They are testing the water quality near the outlet of the Upper Parramatta River catchments during wet weather to measure the amounts of these pollutants exported from the catchment. Virtually all pollution transport occurs during wet weather. The measurements will provide a direct indication of how successful, or not, we are in reducing pollution in local creeks under the catchment's Stormwater Management Plan, which all councils have promised to help implement.

The Weed that ate Domain Creek Meets its Match

For several years now, Domain Creek next to the Wisteria Gardens at Cumberland Hospital, Parramatta, has been infested with a very aggressive weed called water hyacinth. This noxious water weed choked the creek so much that you could no longer see the water.



With a grant from the Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust, Parramatta Park Trust recently employed a contractor Stormwater Systems Pty Ltd to remove the weed. A mobile boom was dragged across the creek to collect the weed. The weed was then scooped up with a truck-mounted bucket.

Trustees Tour the Catchment

On Saturday 19 May, the Trustees and Trust technical advisors inspected the progress of Trust projects throughout the catchment. The Trustees visited flood mitigation works such as the Sierra Place flood retarding basin and the start of the new basin at Prospect. They also saw how remnant vegetation is being protected and enhanced along Greystanes Creek at Toongabbie.



Clr Peter Herlinger, a long serving Trustee was also recognised on the day by Holroyd City Council for his long dedication to serving the local community. A plaque in his honour was unveiled by Ms Pam Allan MP at The Portico in Toonagabbie Shopping Centre. The Trust congratulates Peter for his achievements.

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