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Councils Combine to Protect Parramatta River Catchment

Birds, bees, bugs and trees don't pay rates, but they are important residents of the Parramatta River catchment.

To meet the special environmental needs of these, and other residents, 11 Councils and six NSW Government agencies have joined forces to improve the health of the Parramatta River.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed by members of the Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) setting out how to co-ordinate natural resource management on a catchment-wide basis.

Member organisations of the Parramatta River Catchment Group are the local Councils of Ashfield, Auburn, Bankstown, Blacktown, Canada Bay, Holroyd, Hunters Hill, Leichhardt, Parramatta, Ryde and Strathfield Councils, as well as Sydney Water, Parramatta Park Trust, NSW Maritime, NSW Fire Brigades, Office of Water and the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority.

The Memorandum of Understanding outlines how these members will work together.

In addition to the signatories of the MoU, the PRCG includes representatives from Indigenous and environmental community groups.

The benefits of working together on a catchment-wide basis include cost-efficiencies; pooling of other resources such as staff time and technical expertise; exchange of professional information; a stronger collective voice; an effective basis to apply for funding and closer links with affiliated agencies.

A combined approach will also assist local councils and agencies to meet their obligations towards targets for natural resource management as outlined in the NSW State Plan and the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority's Catchment Action Plan.

The PRCG undertakes regional, collaborative projects that assist in addressing one or more issues affecting the local environment, for example, stormwater pollution, enhancing biodiversity corridors or environmental education initiatives. Depending on the focus of each project, a wide variety of stakeholders may be involved, including council officers, residents, businesses or specific community groups.

Many natural resource management issues exist across the catchment or across a region and therefore a collaborative approach is essential. For example, biodiversity corridors need to allow for movement of species into and beyond local government areas. Weed species need to be managed across council areas.

In addition, water quality needs to be managed throughout our waterways. This is particularly important as the Parramatta River is a major tributary to our iconic Sydney Harbour.

For more information on the PRCG, visit <http://parramattariver.org.au>

CONTACT: Lesley Diver, Parramatta River Catchment Group: 9895 6282