

# WATER IN THE LANDSCAPE

*Final Report – USP Project no. 2008/usw/0018*



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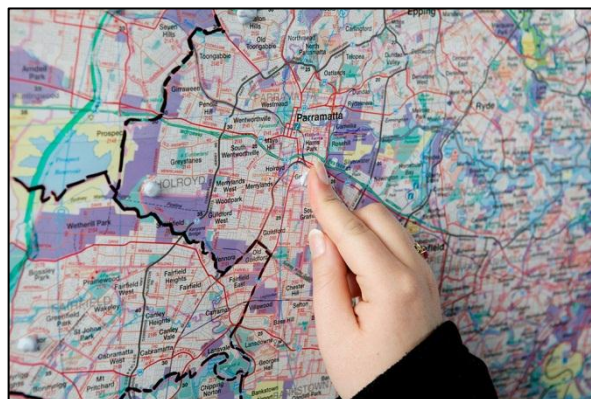
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## Summary

Water in The Landscape is a three year environmental community engagement Program run by the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) and funded by the NSW Environmental Trust. The Program ran from 2010 – 2012 and aimed to engage the Western Sydney community in water management issues.

The Program draws upon WSROC's long history as an organisation for effective advocacy both within the region, amongst its member councils and other regional stakeholders, and at the State and National government level.



It is all about Western Sydney

The Program developed an innovative approach to environmental community engagement which combined deliberative consultation forums with funded cultural projects to connect with a new, unengaged segment of the Western Sydney community on water and water management issues. The Program has been a resounding success. Approximately 13,500 people have been directly involved in the Program through the forums and cultural projects. And through the reach of social and traditional media the Program connected with another 40,000 Western Sydney residents.

The Program delivered:

- 18 cultural projects with approximately 13,100 individual participants
- 5 local forums with approximately 100 participants,
- A Regional forum with an attendance of approximately 250 people.
- Total reach of communication activities (website, social media, digital newsletter, and traditional media, photographic competition): approximately 40,000 people.

The eighteen cultural projects pioneered a new way of engaging people and communities by using artistic and cultural projects to deliver environmental messages to the community. Five local forums and a major Regional Summit have also led the way for the public participation Program, which has created a new benchmark for local councils to listen to and work with their local communities on water management.

### THE IDEA

The WiTL concept of achieving community engagement in urban catchment management through a combination of creative and consultative processes goes back to 1996 when Fairfield Council undertook the 'Restoring the Waters' project. WiTL expanded the concept to encompass a multiplicity of sites or 'places' across the Western Sydney region. The two key elements of WiTL, the cultural projects and forums, promoted innovative community-based education for sustainability.

*Water in The Landscape Evaluation – p. 12*



Restoring the Waters - Memory Line  
<http://turpincrawford.com/project/memory-line-0>

## Cultural Projects

Following a comprehensive selection process, 18 Cultural projects were selected for the Program. From dance performances and trading cards to public space design and documentary making, the projects varied greatly in form, location and audience. They were developed by local councils, NGOs, individual artists and schools and focussed on local water management issues.

A detailed overview of the projects is provided in this report (refer to Section 2.2.3).

The evaluation process and reporting of the individual projects have revealed a number of unanticipated positive outcomes to many of the cultural projects. Perhaps most notably is that fact that almost all projects have continued in some form beyond their official end date and many delivered unexpected additional add-ons to their projects. A few examples are the 48 Green Hours Film Competition which has become an international annual event, the Crosscurrents Festival which has established itself as an biannual event and the dance performances developed for WiTL that will continue to be performed.

From the Program evaluation it is apparent that the projects were able to reach a very broad and diverse section of the Western Sydney community.

### ACHIEVEMENTS CULTURAL PROJECTS

Overall, the evidence indicates that the Cultural projects achieved a high degree of engagement from people of all ages and representative of the diversity of Western Sydney population. All of the projects implemented approaches that fulfilled the requirements of the WiTL funding by using what they described as, 'cultural tools'. They were able to embed their projects with a number of key messages designed to inspire people to find out more about urban water catchment management issues. This was in preference to the approach most often used of providing scientific or technical analyses of environmental issues.

There was strong evidence of positive social outcomes for participants in relation to enhancing community connection through intercultural and/or intergenerational dialogue.

*Water in The Landscape Evaluation – p. 4*

## Research partnership

A research partnership was forged with the University of Western Sydney during the development of the cultural projects to assess the effectiveness of the Program in developing education and community awareness projects. The study included an action research component in which all cultural projects were encouraged to reflect on the role of environmental engagement through their medium of arts and culture.

Sixteen of the 40 organisations who submitted their EOI for cultural project funding participated in the research which assisted in developing their capacity to a) strengthen their proposal; b) build on their understanding of environmental community engagement; c) plan for and evaluate eco-social outcomes.

## Public Participation

The public participation component of the Program was designed in close co-operation with local councils to run community forums on specific water management issues, with a strong emphasis on capacity building and professional development of council officers involved in the process. This

component of the Program delivered five local forums in four of the ten WSROC member councils - Blacktown, Holroyd, Fairfield and Blue Mountains - on a diverse range of local water management issues. The fifth forum was a joint forum between Blacktown City Council and Holroyd City Council.

WSROC also held a professional development session on community engagement for those council officers who were involved in the forums, and others of the WSROC member councils who wanted to learn more about the public participation process.

The local forums culminated in a major Regional Summit on August 18, 2012 where participants from both the cultural projects and the community forums came together to share their experiences and to provide a perspective for future environmental community engagement in Western Sydney.

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS**

The facilitated public participation processes that WSROC designed in consultation with Straight Talk and Councils were highly successful in engaging both local residents and the relevant Local Council officers in dialogue about specific urban water catchment management issues.

*Water in The Landscape Evaluation – p. 5*

#### **Communication activities**

Communication and liaison were a major component of the Water in The Landscape Program. The strategy used for the Program's communication included:

- The development of close relationships with project partners and stakeholders to highlight synergies and organise and synchronise communication activities.
- Ways of optimising the management of the information load (eg through targeted, tailored, relevant and accessible information).
- Finding innovative ways to connect with a broad audience (e.g. photo competition and through the cultural projects).
- Managing the information loop – this reflected a major emphasis on interactive engagement by developing a two-way channel for disseminating information and having avenues for stakeholders and the community to communicate with the WiTL team.
- Using the website as a key vehicle to collate and showcase information on the different components of the Program and water management issues in Western Sydney.
- Use of local media.

#### **ONLINE DIALOGUE AND PARTICIPATION**

WiTL has successfully trialled, integrated and learnt from the use of all currently available online and social media tools. This represents significant learning and capacity building on the part of WSROC. It also provides a lighthouse example for both Local and State Government initiatives seeking to reach out to and engage diverse communities. There is significant potential for these learnings to be showcased and transferred to other Environmental Trust grant recipients in order to strengthen initiatives in environmental sustainability.

*Water in The Landscape Evaluation – p. 5*

#### **Program outcomes**

For the final year of Water in the Landscape, an independent evaluator, Lorraine J. Larri of Renshaw-Hitchens and Associates was engaged to carry out the evaluation of the Water in the Landscape project.



Key findings and recommendations following from the evaluation are listed in the box below.

#### **OVERALL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

WSROC has successfully demonstrated that WiTL has significant ability to reach substantial numbers of people through cultural projects, local community consultation forums and use of online social media tools. Most importantly, the processes used in both Forums and the Cultural projects successfully engendered strong emotional relationships of participants to waterways and urban catchment management issues across multiple Western Sydney locations. Taken as a whole, this provides an excellent platform for further development.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. Promoting the use of cultural tools**

WSROC and the NSW Environmental Trust promote the use of cultural tools and the model established by WiTL in relation to engaging communities in decision making processes around environmental sustainability issues. This could be done by providing information about possible sources of funding and disseminating information about the products and key learnings of WiTL to relevant community based organisations and local government networks.

**2. Promoting the use of WiTL products**

WSROC promote the use of WiTL products as educational resources by approaching Education Services Australia. There may also be other opportunities in the post-secondary and tertiary sectors. Additionally, WSROC should consider showcasing some of the videos in 2013 through venues and events in western Sydney and possibly other regions.

**3. Strategic forward planning with councils (a)**

WSROC continue to work with its councils in strategic forward planning to link catchment management improvement activities with community engagement processes that include the use of cultural tools. Ideally this would funnel participants from different coordinated activities and stages into participative decision-making forums.

**4. Strategic forward planning with councils (b)**

WSROC continue to work with its constituent Councils to promote greater understanding of facilitated public participation in policy development and decision-making. The vehicle of environmental issues is a strategic way of doing this when linked with cultural tools such as those developed through Water in The Landscape. The lessons learned by using independent facilitators such as Straight Talk to manage the consultative processes should be showcased.

**5. Capacity building in impact evaluation**

Whilst cultural projects were able to provide evidence of strong engagement in activities, they were not able to undertake longer-term impact evaluation. WSROC and the NSW Environmental Trust will need to consider the degree to which they require this data and the appropriate resourcing commitment. Consideration should be given to funding evaluation support early in the project to undertake post-event longitudinal follow-up.

**6. Showcasing use of online social media**

The learnings from WiTL's use of online and social media tools be disseminated and showcased so that other similar Programs can benefit.

**7. Ongoing partnership development**

WSROC give consideration to developing a toolkit of resources and case study examples to help council staff and future cultural projects in partnership development around environmental sustainability.

*Water in The Landscape Evaluation*



# 1. Background to and objectives of the Water in The Landscape project

The Water in The Landscape Program was developed in response to the need identified by WSROC in 2007 for increased community education on water management.

Water management affects regional amenity linked to water resources (i.e. waterways, stormwater and groundwater) and the environments and land uses sustained by these resources (i.e. aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity, endangered ecosystems, groundwater dependent ecosystems, riparian zones, irrigation for food production and parklands, aquatic food supplies, etc.).

Local councils are primarily responsible for water management, including stormwater runoff, in their LGAs. The WSROC Program recognised that community understanding of and engagement in water management issues were pivotal to building a sense of shared responsibility and ownership of these local waterways, and helping to develop co-operative and sustainable management practices for these important environmental resources.

A background study of national and international studies revealed that communicating straight scientific information can be relatively ineffective for a majority of people. In contrast, the studies showed that an approach which draws upon the everyday experiences of people in relation to their local water resources, focusing on the social and cultural values of water and the places that are sustained by water, is more likely to achieve education and awareness outcomes.

As a result of these findings, the Water in The Landscape Program deliberately set out to adopt a social and cultural approach to environmental awareness, rather than a technical instruction approach. And so the development of a series of cultural projects to carry environmental messages relevant to the community became the defining characteristic of the Program.

*“Water in The Landscape is a project that is near to my heart, being a water scientist but also looking at creative, cultural, artistic ways to communicate the hard science.*

*WiTL presented that unique opportunity to engage the communities in innovative ways to get them really up their stewardship and ownership of their local waterways.”*

Geoffrey Smith  
Program Leader-Environmental Sustainability  
Blue Mountains City Council



The Program acknowledged that these processes of community engagement were innovative and so entailed a degree of uncertainty. To address this, the Program entered into a partnership with the University of Western Sydney to investigate the capacity of artistic and cultural practitioners to develop and convey effective environmental messages.

The Program also sought to implement current best practice in public participation through the development of a series of local deliberative forums.

## Program Vision and Objectives

### Vision:

*A well informed public which understands and appreciates the value and contribution of clean and adequate water supplies to environmental quality, local amenity, regional economies and cultural wealth exhibited in the Western Sydney region.*

*There is a functioning and effective ongoing process for community participation in public policy for urban water management in Western Sydney that produces improved policy and real benefits to the community in the region.*

*In places across the Western Sydney region there is a culture of local environmental custodianship and enhancement revolving around the protection and sustainable use of water in the landscape.*

Based on the Program's vision, Water in The Landscape developed the following objectives:

1. **Improve community members' and stakeholder understanding** of the issues relating to water management and usage that have implications for the quality of environments and the amenity of the Western Sydney region. These included impacts on open spaces and playing fields, urban agriculture and food production, biodiversity and habitat, aesthetic and microclimate characteristics of residential and CBD areas, recreational use of waterways, safety and protection from property damage due to flooding/runoff from extreme weather events;
2. **Secure community engagement and debate** on these water supply and management issues in Western Sydney;
3. **Highlight and promote the contribution of water in the landscape** to quality of life and regional amenity and encourage innovative local responses to water use and amenity in local environments;
4. **Assist in the development of policy and advocacy** supported by informed public opinion and diverse cultural perspectives; and
5. **Influence local government and other urban water managers** to develop consistency and integration in their water management strategies.

On the following pages are schematic diagrams illustrating the respective roles of the Water in The Landscape Program components: engagement research; cultural projects; local forums; website and communications; regional forums and WSROC's advocacy activities with member councils and other stakeholders.

Figure 1: Water in The Landscape - Program components and their role in delivering the Program's objectives

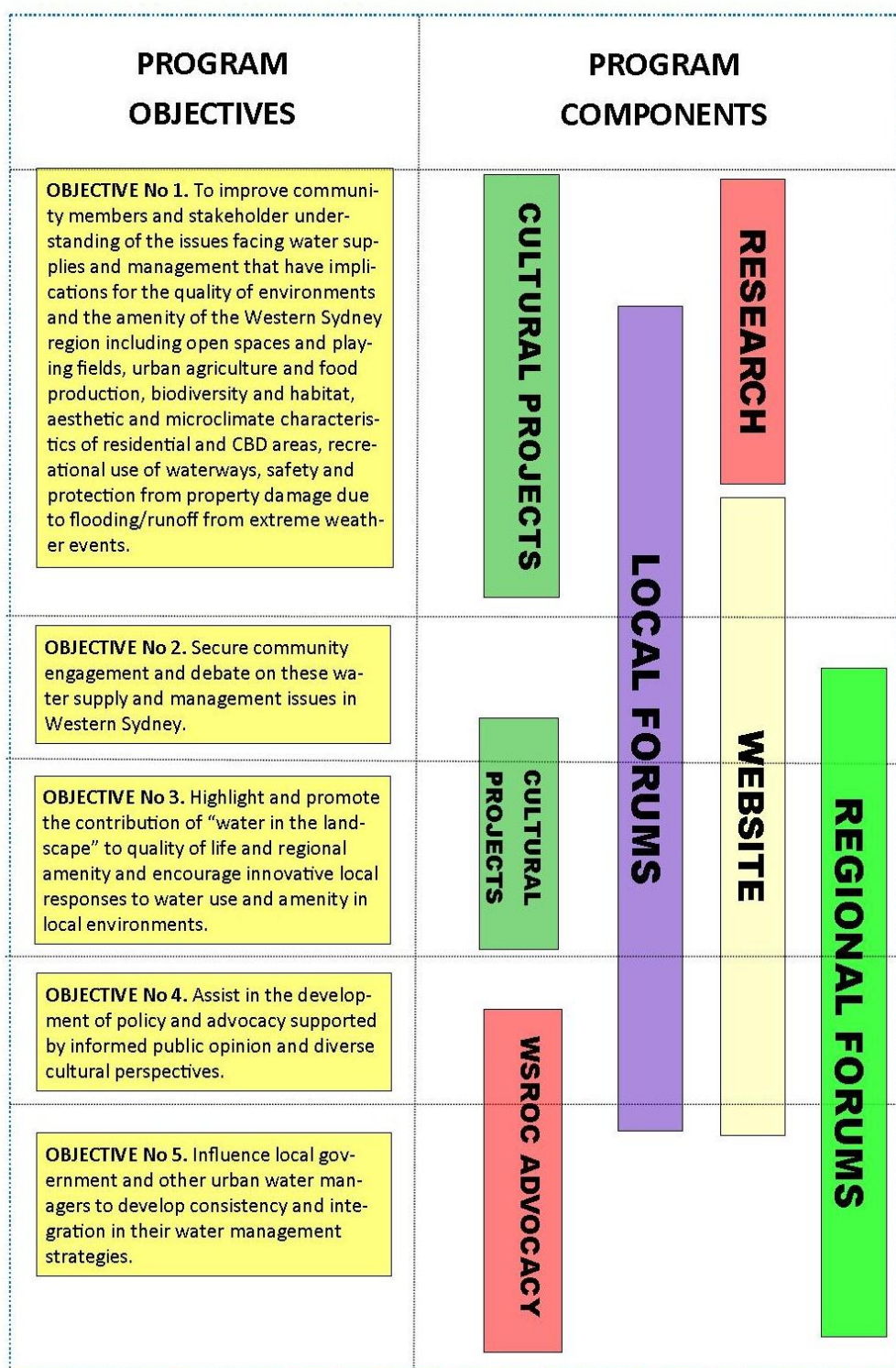
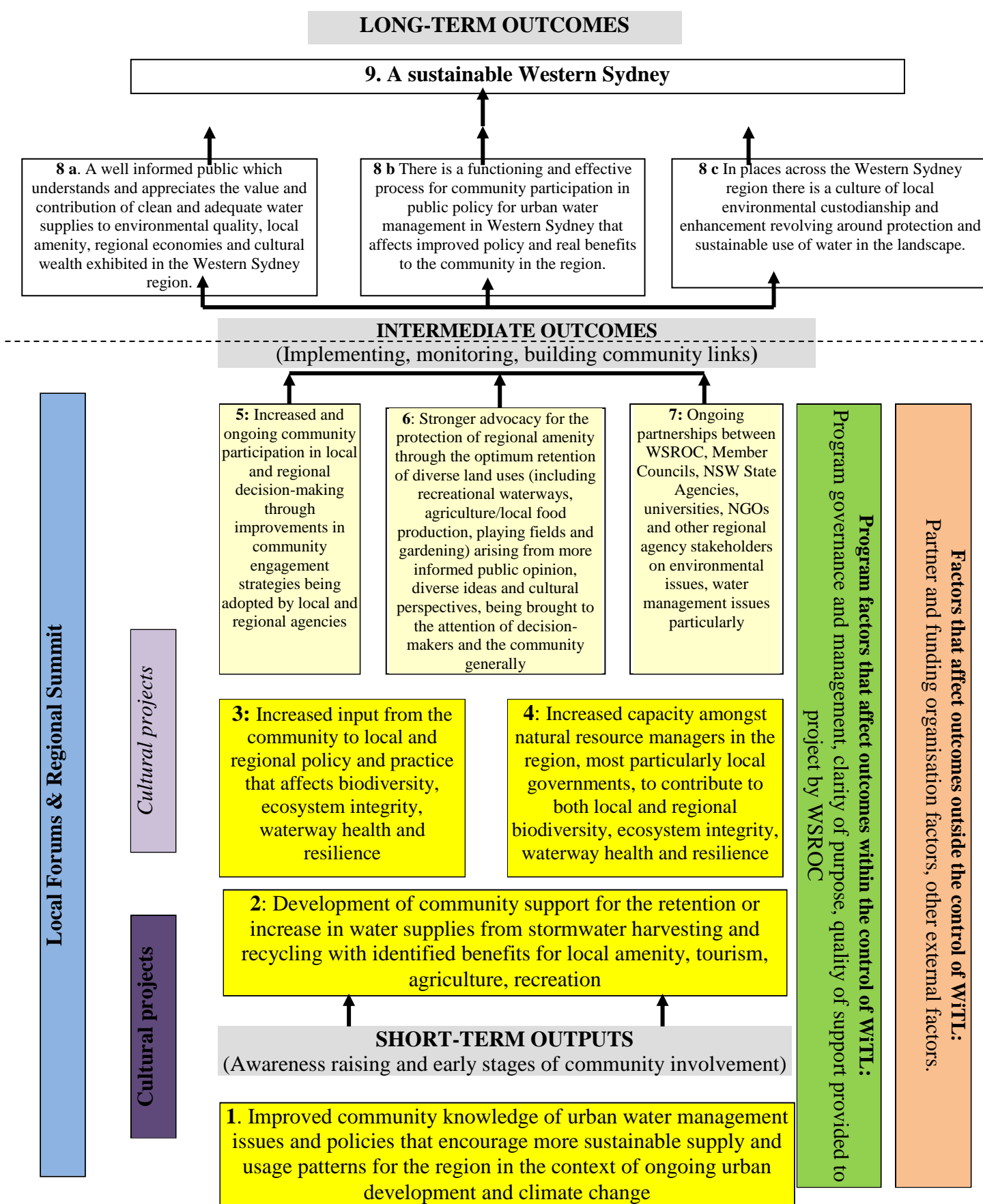


Figure 2: Water in The Landscape hierarchy of intended outcomes



## **2. Project Activities Undertaken**

The project activities which have been undertaken comprise six main components. These are outlined in this section and include:

- 2.1 Community Engagement Research
- 2.2 Cultural projects
- 2.3 Public Participation Process
- 2.4 Photo Competition
- 2.5 Website (a key component of Stakeholder Communications)
- 2.6 Stakeholder Participation

### **2.1 Community Engagement Research**

#### **2.1.1 Overview**

A research partnership with the University of Western Sydney (UWS) was developed in 2009 and implemented in 2010 – 2011 to support the cultural projects component of the Water in the Landscape Program. The research was led by Professor Shelley Burgin and Dr. Tony Webb of the School of Natural Sciences. Associate researchers were Tom Colley and Helen Bassett.

The overall objective of the partnership was to explore how best to support organisations (including Government agencies and NGOs) and people involved in developing cultural and artistic projects to engage the wider community in water management and other related sustainability issues. The aim of the projects was to encourage people to think about and act on improving water environments and usage outside the home. The findings of the research assisted in informing the WiTL business plan and its overall project management.

The research Program aimed to assist the WiTL Program to:

- Document, analyse and report on the effectiveness of the WITL process for engaging Councils and community groups in the cultural project development process;
- Develop the capacity among council staff and community agencies and networks in relation to community environmental engagement and evaluating their own practices;
- Undertake an analysis of community attitudes and identify appropriate community-cultural approaches to engagement in water management issues.

#### **2.1.2 Methodology**

Initially the research looked for opportunities to work with council staff who had an interest in environmental education and community development issues, and to collaborate in developing potential cultural projects. It was intended that these council officers could be mobilised to tap into the local community and community arts-groups and assist these organisations to develop their funding proposals.

Unfortunately there was little interest from councils to either develop their own cultural projects or assist their community groups in the development of their proposals. As a result the research methodology was changed to allow the research team to liaise directly with the community groups.

The first step in the sourcing cultural projects was to distribute a two-page Community Information Package through WSROC's networks. Interested parties were invited to submit a short Expression of Interest (EOI) outlining how their proposed project would meet the following requirements:

- *Be about a relevant water management issue for the local area*
- *Explain how the project will engage the interest and/or participation of people*
- *Demonstrate the ability to deliver the intended outcomes; and*
- *Describe the nature and size of the anticipated audience*

A total of 46 submissions were received from 40 different agencies. All EOIs were assessed by the Cultural projects and Forums Sub-Committee. Feedback was provided to all applicants, with an invitation for applicants to re-submit incorporating the feedback given. (For more information on the EOI process, see Section 2.2.2).

All cultural projects were then offered the opportunity to work with the UWS research team in incorporating engagement and evaluation processes into their cultural project. The methodology used to do this was an action research process which took the shape of semi-structured interviews called 'Action Conversations'. The opportunity to work with the research team was taken up by 16 of the 46 projects that went through to the detailed report phase, ten of which were from community-based, non-government organisations.



Blue Mountains Grammar School students and teacher Lori Gerrard worked with the UWS research team on their proposal for a vertical garden in the school's play-ground.

### 2.1.3 Final Outcomes

- Sixteen cultural projects participated in the action research conversations which assisted in developing their capacity to a) strengthen their proposal; b) build on their understanding of environmental community engagement; c) plan for and evaluate eco-social outcomes.
- As planned, the research sat within a larger body of work by the UWS researchers which examined engagement of communities in social planning processes for resource



sustainability such as water. In this context an interim report and two research papers have been published:

- Final report *Water in The Landscape Community Engagement Research* (see appendix 3 -iii)
- *A multifaceted cultural Approach to Community Engagement: Case Studies in Urban Water Management* (see appendix 3 - ii). This paper was developed in late 2011 and submitted to the Singapore Water Convention, a platform for industry experts, regulators and academics to interact and share ideas on a wide range of water challenges.
- *Defining Eco-Social Capacity Building and its Evaluation: A case study in environmental community engagement in Western Sydney* by the research team. (See Appendix 3 - i)
- An unexpected outcome was an approach from five inner-city councils to undertake a project on water management, which led to funding of a grounded research initiative exploring the interface between scientific knowledge and the social engagement of council staff.
- The research laid the foundations for further research and capacity building within a number of the community groups.
- One member of the UWS Research team is now undertaking a PhD study which further explores the outcomes and questions raised by the initial research.
- The research project has encouraged the development of bridging internal resources within an organisation with the external capital and support provided through WiTL. This bridging is seen to be critical to developing effective social and community capacity building.
- Of significance was the positive response from participants to the involvement of a research team which enabled them to reflect on and consider all aspects of community engagement including evaluation and how best to present their ideas in a project proposal format.
- Learning about evaluation processes and how to measure the outcomes of their projects in their own terms (as well meeting the WiTL funding expectations) proved to be the most fruitful area of exploration for the participating cultural groups.
- This research revealed both the underlying values and current thinking about community engagement, and led to a constructive dialogue about the scope for community engagement flowing from their projects.
- Groups welcomed the more collaborative relationship with the funding body through the funding application process as well as the support offered and given through the action research process.

## 2.1.4 Challenges

The research encountered the following challenges:

- Delays in commencing the research due to contractual issues at UWS and management changes at WSROC.
- The planned local action-research groups with members from local government had very little uptake from council officers. Many had already indicated that whilst they saw merit in the project, their commitments at the time did not enable them to participate in the process.
- Use of language: many participants initially saw water in terms of domestic use, firstly within the home and secondly within the home garden environment.
- Most community groups had initial difficulties in defining how they would assess their engagement outcomes.



- There was a clear lack of evaluation knowledge and how to measure the eco-social outcomes. Many community groups had difficulty in providing certainty about the link between their proposed projects and the community engagement outcomes they sought.

### **2.1.5 Recommendations**

The summary below lists the recommendations from the research partnership:

- Change the model of delivery of funding from top-down through government agencies to establishing systems and processes which work with local grass-roots communities to add value to and draw out their ideas regarding resource sustainability issues and partner them with experts in those issues.
- Understanding the importance of language in communicating the messages about water in the landscape.
- Engage council officers in the design of the Water in the Landscape Program before the funding application was submitted. This would likely have enabled a greater understanding and commitment to the Program as well as greater benefits including value for money in the implementation of the Program.
- Assist applicants to understand how to build in eco-social capacity outcome and evaluation of those outcomes into their project from the outset of the process.
- Clearly communicate to the applicants exactly what constitutes effective engagement in environmental/ water sustainability issues and how to evaluate this effectively.
- Establish a framework of environmental literacy which would assist the groups applying for funding to design their project and measure their outcomes against this framework.
- Devolving action research skills into the community will build support within the community for the engagement activities that emerge. There is potential for the action research conversation model to be used by participants in conversations in their everyday life to further explore issues around sustainability.

## **2.2 Cultural projects**

### **2.2.1 Overview**

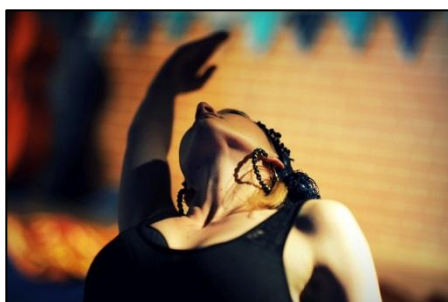
The use of cultural projects to carry environmental messages and influence attitudinal change is a defining aspect of the Water in The Landscape Program. It was informed by the work of international environmental education research, particularly the work of Professor Sam Ham of the University of Idaho. This work emphasises the need to influence people's attitudes and beliefs as a precursor to their receptivity to absorbing unfamiliar information.

WSROC took this approach throughout the cultural projects process, in deciding not to focus on the technical information regarding water management, but instead to highlight the emotional, social and cultural aspects of water and how it relates to people's lives and local environments. This concept was further explored and articulated in one of the key documents for the application process which was sent to all parties who applied for funding entitled *Provocative and Relevant* (See Appendix 1 - i).

The cultural projects played a key role in fulfilling the first and third objectives of the WiTL Program:

1. To improve community members' and stakeholder understanding of the issues facing water supplies and management that have implications for the quality of environments and the amenity of the Western Sydney region.
3. To highlight and promote the contribution of water in the landscape to quality of life and regional amenity and encourage innovative local responses to water use and amenity in local environments.

The cultural projects were expected to use community cultural development strategies which can be defined as: "Conscious practice towards change, with community, through culture." (ccd.net 2012 cited in Colley et al. 2012).



*"As artists, it was deeply fascinating to link our work as artists to the concepts of sustainability. We felt this added a dimension to our work that we had previously not experienced. .... It opened many new possibilities for us, in an artistic sense, as well as a practical one - in terms of the diversity of audiences we were able to reach, and the quantifiable educational relevance it gave to our performances.*



*The benefits went both ways. The humour, beauty and intrigue of the music, dance and storytelling not only made the sustainability messages entertaining, it also gave them symbolic significance and made them significant to audience members in personal ways. This meant that audience members frequently responded very emotively to the story, and engaged very deeply in the interactive discussions and activities that took place after the performances.*

*Overall, we feel the WiTL Project has been a very enriching, successful experience for us personally and professionally, as well as an enriching, enjoyable experience for the many audiences we shared The Half Girl & the River with."*

Emily Cooper, Hands Heart and Feet

## 2.2.2 Methodology Employed

The process for the cultural project selection began in early March 2010. The specific methodology to develop and implement local projects involved a sequence of Expressions of Interests (EOI), full proposal development and consultancy contract negotiations that included the following steps:

Figure 3: Process for cultural project selection

1.	<b>Information dissemination and call for EOIs.</b>	A Cultural projects and Forums sub-committee was convened for the assessment of EOIs and applications in addition to the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the cultural projects and forums. A specialist Cultural projects Development Officer contacted relevant organisations to disseminate the information about the Program and the application process.
2.	<b>Assessment by committee of the eligibility of projects proposed.</b>	The sub-committee reviewed both the eligibility and the scope and scale (geographic and issue) of the EOIs received.
3.	<b>Feedback to proponents for more detail in their EOIs.</b>	Feedback and the opportunity to clarify parts of the proposals that were not clear.
4.	<b>Re-assessment of EOIs and selection of project proponents to submit full proposals.</b>	A selection by the committee was made of approximately 20 projects for which a full proposal was sought.
5.	<b>Liaison and support provided by UWS.</b>	Support provided by the UWS team on key issues for proposals (i.e. project design, budget, milestones, outcomes, monitoring and evaluation, etc.).
6.	<b>Receipt of proposals and negotiation of key elements.</b>	Refining of proposals.
7.	<b>Negotiation of consultancy contracts to include key elements of proposals.</b>	Clarifying the operation of the consultancy contract (rather than a grant Program model), especially the milestones, evaluation and payment schedules.

Forty-six Expressions of Interest (EOIs) were received. After assessment, 20 EOIs that were identified for potential funding were asked to develop their project proposal further according to feedback from the sub-committee. From these more detailed proposals, 18 were selected for funding.

In January 2011, a decision was made by WSROC not to continue with three of the cultural projects. However, following a review, in July 2011 all three projects were invited to re-engage with the project. Only one project accepted this offer.

A fourth project decided to withdraw from the Program due to personal timing considerations.

As a result of the discontinuation of the three projects, an amount of funding remained in the allocation for cultural Programs and the decision was made to offer a second funding round to those 28 projects which had missed out on first round of funding.

Twelve projects resubmitted their proposal and out of this second round, three projects were funded. An overview of the final 18 cultural projects can be found in Section 2.2.3 below.

### **2.2.2.1 Risk Management**

Given that a new process was being trialed through WiTL cultural projects, a risk management framework was developed and implemented. It included:

- Contractual model for funding the Cultural projects
- Evaluation and assessment of all submissions by a range of people working in this field including representatives from the academic, environmental, council, cultural and community fields.

- Support from UWS' research partnership to assist groups in developing their projects.

### 2.2.3 Activities: details of 18 cultural projects

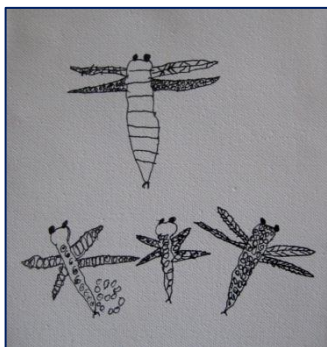
The table below shows all projects funded and delivered as part of the Water in The Landscape Program.

Figure 4: Overview of Water in The Landscape Cultural projects

Project	Delivery	Total funding
<b>Crossing waters- Bibby Place</b> <i>Fairfield City Council</i> Involving the diverse local CALD community in the water sensitive design of public space in Bonnyrigg, Fairfield.	February 2011 - May 2011	\$30,000.00
<b>48 Green Hours Film</b> <i>48 Hour Film Project</i> National short film competition with entries focused on Water in the Landscape. Filmmakers were given 48 hours to produce a short film based on a line of dialogue, a character and a single prop.	November 2010 - June 2011	\$25,000.00
<b>Upstream to Home</b> <i>Information and Cultural Exchange</i> Using "digital storytelling", the project worked with recently-arrived groups of refugees and migrants to share personal stories highlighting different perspectives on water in urban / suburban settings and the natural environment.	March 2011 - July 2011	\$15,000.00
<b>Vox pops</b> <i>Onyx Management</i> Creation of "Vox Pops" (short videos where people share their opinion) on water management or other related issues at different cultural project events.	January 2011 - January 2012	\$6,000.00
<b>Documenting Places through CrowdTV</b> <i>Institute For Sustainable Futures and Australian Documentaries</i> Professionally produced documentary collaboratively constructed by the Western Sydney community via online sessions. A world first.	February 2011 - January 2012	\$50,000.00
<b>Our Water Our Future – It's up to us</b> <i>Nepean Community &amp; Neighbourhood Services</i> Photo and video artwork "looking to the future" created by young people from Glenmore Park, focusing on the Glenmore Loch.	February 2011 - January 2012	\$10,000.00
<b>Regional Catchment Field Day</b> <i>Blacktown and Penrith City Councils</i> Two catchment field days for stage 3 school students of Penrith and Blacktown, highlighting the role each member of the community plays in catchment health.	October 2011 and November 2012	\$8,800.00
<b>YOUth LEADing Australia</b> <i>OzGreen</i> 3 day conference event led by and for young people of Western Sydney, using a sustainability learning and leadership Program by OzGreen.	April 2011 - April 2012	\$35,000.00
<b>Living Streams</b> <i>Liverpool City Council</i> Project virtually (online and 3G) links physical features of the environment to oral and visual historical records, archival audio, oral histories and music related to local cultural contexts to explore the living history of the Georges River.	July 2011 - May 2012	\$45,950.00
<b>The Half Girl and The River</b> <i>Hands, Heart and Feet</i> Performances, including audience participation, developed and staged involving story, drumming and dance.	March 2011 - March 2012	\$15,000.00

<b>Water Wise Trading Cards</b> <i>Holroyd City Council</i> Development and implementation of a tool kit linked to Council's sustainability education, which includes a series of trading cards to engage primary school children.	September 2011 – December 2011	\$8,000.00
<b>Vertical Garden</b> <i>Blue Mountains Grammar School</i> A vertical garden which functions as a tool for units of study about the micro-organisms and 'mini-beasts' living within it.	August 2011 - May 2012	\$8,000.00
<b>The Water Closest to You</b> <i>Annie Bolitho and Associates</i> Workshops to create handmade books which are documented online. The books form a striking documentation of chosen water and landscape assets, and bring to light elements of an urban catchment through close, personal relationships of individuals with water and place.	January 2012 - August 2012	\$6,020.00
<b>Auburn Central place-making</b> <i>Auburn Community Development Network</i> Community consultation through pop-up tea salons and art work created from local rubbish.	September 2012 and October 2012	\$13,310.00
<b>Crosscurrents</b> <i>Bankstown City Council</i> Workshops followed by a festival on the Georges River involving local CALD community in a range of interactive and educational activities around the theme of water.	January 2012 - November 2012	\$40,000.00
<b>South Creek Project</b> <i>Greening Australia</i> Kingswood High School students and their teachers worked with Greening Australia and the University of Sydney's Centre for Research on Computer supported learning and Cognition (CoCo) to develop teaching and learning materials about water management.	April 2012 - October 2012	\$35,000.00
<b>Keep the Dragonflies Dancing</b> <i>Jo Clancy</i> An Indigenous dance performance about Blue Mountains ecosystems. 6 School performances and 2 onsite performances.	March 2012	\$23,980.00
<b>Water Journeys</b> <i>Cabramatta Community Centre</i> Two training gardens to provide training in horticulture incorporating multicultural water management practices. Training is aimed at students and refugees interested in pursuing a career in horticulture. The garden will be established at two sites: Hoxton Park Community Farm and Fairfield High School	May - November 2012	\$35,000.00
<b>Total funding</b>		<b>\$410,060.00</b>

Please refer to appendix 1 for a detailed description of the activities, delivery and evaluation of the cultural projects.



Left: 'Jo & her Dancers'  
By Belle, aged 8

This drawing was sent to Aboriginal dancer Jo Clancy after Belle saw the show *Keep The Dragonflies Dancing*.

Right: Photo of Jo and her dancers



## 2.2.4 Linkages and Capacity Building

As with all the Water in The Landscape activities, capacity building for the cultural project partners has been a key element throughout the Program. Several opportunities were offered to the project partners to assist them in developing their ability to engage their community more deeply with maximum impact including:

- **Opportunity to work with the UWS research team**

At the initial EOI phase of the projects, all groups were invited to collaborate with the UWS research team to strengthen the design and implementation of their project. Sixteen projects took up this opportunity (for more information see Section 2.1). Together with the researchers, groups explored ways to deepen community engagement on relevant environmental issues and ways to evaluate their work.

- **Networking workshop at start of project**

An initial cultural projects workshop was held on February 9, 2011 at Information and Community Exchange in Parramatta. Sixteen of the 18 selected cultural projects attended this workshop which was designed to provide:

- An official welcome and introduction to the larger WiTL project
- An opportunity to identify potential collaborations and synergies
- Potential to further develop their proposals and embed evaluation into their projects.

- **Regional Summit**

The Regional Summit, held on 18 August, 2012, brought together all components of the Water in The Landscape Program and provided an opportunity for all project partners, including the cultural projects, to network and to share experiences and synthesise what they had learned from the Program. (For more information on the Regional Summit, refer to Section 2.3.4)

- **Evaluation workshop**

An evaluation workshop, held on 16 September, 2012, offered all cultural project partners the opportunity to work with the independent WiTL evaluator. (For more information on the workshop, refer to Section 2.2.5.1).

- **Ongoing liaison with the WiTL project team**

Throughout the course of the WiTL Program, the Program management team regularly liaised with all project partners to identify and facilitate possible partnerships and synergies, or assist in overcoming obstacles where necessary.

## 2.2.5 Monitoring and Evaluation of Cultural projects

The monitoring and evaluation process for the cultural projects has been developed in a variety of ways including:

- Close consultation and work with the WiTL Program team throughout the planning, implementation and evaluation of the projects.
- Close monitoring and overseeing of the Cultural projects by the Cultural projects and Forums Subcommittee and the Water in the Landscape Steering Committee.

- The completion of formal evaluations for each cultural project (see Appendix 1 – xxi for project evaluations).
- Milestone reports which required updated data and reporting based on the outcomes of their reports, linked to payment schedules.
- An option to participate in the action research process undertaken by UWS.
- An option to participate in workshops to develop their ability to deliver their current and future projects including the cultural projects networking workshop held at the start of the Program and an evaluation workshop in October, 2012 (see below for more details on the evaluation workshop) and the Regional Summit (see Section 2.3.4 for more details).
- Participation in formal evaluation of the WiTL Program through an external evaluation contractor, Lorraine Larri, of Renshaw-Hitchen & Associates.

Showing Fairfield City Council's waterways at a bus tour organized for Crossing Waters - Bibby's Place



### **2.2.5.1 Evaluation workshop**

Together with evaluation consultant Lorraine Larri, of Renshaw-Hitchen & Associates , WSROC developed an evaluation workshop for the cultural project partners of the Program.

The workshop focused on identifying intermediate outcomes, overall assessment of the Program and potential for expanding the Program and ensuring its ongoing sustainability.

Specific objectives for the workshop were:

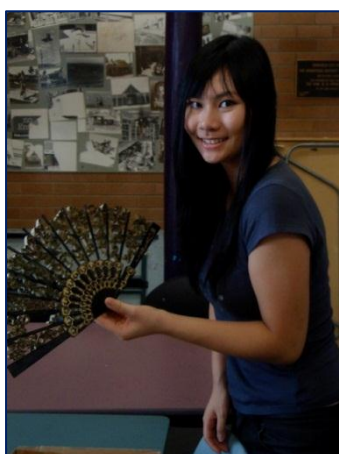
- To build the cultural project partners' capacity to embed evaluation into future environmental education/awareness projects;
- To share their learnings from their involvement in the WiTL Program;
- To identify benefits of the WiTL approach linking environment with culture and consider ideas for the future (e.g. What did it mean for you? What did it mean for others who were also involved? How would you incorporate the WiTL approach in future activities?);
- To enhance their ability to incorporate engagement in environmental issues in future cultural projects.



The workshop consisted of three different sessions:

- 1) **Sharing experiences** – exceptional experiences during the project, what participants valued most about their projects and using water and environment as a focus and ways in which this might grow as a viable approach to engagement in water and/or environmental issues.
- 2) **Themes and visions** - identifying themes and visions for linking ‘environment’ with ‘culture’ towards community engagement.
- 3) **Doing Evaluation Better** – Evaluation tools and tips delivered in a very practical way.

The WiTL evaluation workshop was attended by ten cultural project partners.



**The many faces of Western Sydney**  
The Cultural projects touched many Western Sydney residents



## 2.2.6 Outcomes

The Water in The Landscape cultural projects have been very successful. An overview of the outcomes includes:

- **Delivery:** 18 projects were conceived and produced which engaged the Western Sydney community with water management in a new way.
- **Engagement:** more than 13,100 people were directly engaged through the cultural projects.
- **Innovation:** the use of artistic and cultural messages to communicate environmental issues was new and had not been done before in Western Sydney. For many arts and cultural organisations it was the first time they worked in the environmental field and vice versa; for many environmental organisations the use of arts and culture to engage communities was considered new.
- **Reaching different audiences:** the difference in shape and form of each of the projects ensured that a very wide section of the Western Sydney community was engaged during the Program – including audiences that are usually considered difficult to engage such as youth, CALD communities and students.

- Great legacy: most cultural projects will continue long after the Water in The Landscape Program has finalised. Examples are the 48 Hours Green Film, which has now become an annual film competition (48 Eco Challenge) and Crosscurrents, which has partnered with the Georges River Combined Council Committee (GRCCC) and has now become a bi-annual event. (see Appendix 1 for more information)

The Water in The Landscape evaluation lists the following outcomes for the Cultural projects:

#### **CULTURAL PROJECT OUTCOMES**

##### **Short-term outputs – Project activities and participant characteristics**

A total of approximately 13,100 people across an extensive range of locations throughout Western Sydney participated in the WiTL cultural projects. They represented a significant range of ages (from primary school to senior years), and included strong representation of indigenous Australians, and the many diverse CALD backgrounds of people in Western Sydney. An estimation of the numbers of people made aware of WiTL indicates that 5 projects had an 'extensive' reach of over 1,000 people; 9 projects had a 'mid-range' reach of between 200 and up to 1,000 people and the remaining 3 projects had a 'limited' reach of under 200 people. Thus, it is likely that an estimated further 14,600 people were made aware of WiTL and the activities.

##### **Intermediate outcomes – The ways in which projects changed people**

All projects reported successfully integrating environmental messages into their processes. A majority of projects (12) included WiTL messages in a broad approach; the remaining focused on targeted specific messages. Reporting of shifts in behaviour as a result of participation in WiTL projects was not well documented. Only half of the projects reported some evidence, 6 of these were quantified and able to be assessed as either small changes (4) or significant changes (2); 3 more projects mentioned changes that have been noted as 'anecdotal'. This lack of data does not necessarily mean that shifts did not occur.

The majority of projects (15) used cultural tools primarily for awareness raising of urban water management issues. Crossing Waters – Bibby's Place and Youth Leading Australia 3-Day Congress were the two projects that integrated cultural tools with participatory community consultation and collaborative decision-making processes. This is ultimately the purpose of the WiTL model. It is likely that most of the processes developed through the 15 'non-integrated' projects have potential usefulness in a more strategic way that leads to addressing local water catchment issues.

A majority of the projects (12) clearly documented evidence of social outcomes in relation to enhancing community connection through intercultural and/or intergenerational dialogue. Whilst the remaining projects did not provide evidence, this does not necessarily mean that shifts did not occur.

##### **Intermediate outcomes – Partnerships and results for project proponents and WSROC**

Every cultural project involved the establishment of new partnerships as well as many reporting that they had deepened relationships with existing partners. Partnerships were a key factor in the successful implementation of the projects.

The projects achieved significant innovation in two main ways.

The first was to take a pre-existing capability within the organisation and customise it in some way to reflect WiTL objectives. This resulted in a high degree of organisational capacity building for 11 of the projects. Examples of this were: Crossing Waters – Bibby's Place; 48 Hour Film through the creation of a 'Green' focus; Upstream to Home; Our Water Our future; Regional Catchment Field Day; Youth Leading Australia; Remember the Story; Water Wise Trading Cards; The Water Closest to You; Crosscurrents; Keep the Dragonflies Dancing.

The second approach was to develop a unique response that significantly challenged accepted practice and was ground-breaking. As a result the capabilities of the organisation and its partners were extended significantly. The results could not have been achieved without a high degree of collaboration that drew upon multi-disciplinary specialist expertise. Examples of these were: Documenting Places through CROWDTV; Locative River History – Georges River; Vertical Garden; Auburn Central place-making; South Creek Project; Water Journeys.

*Water in The Landscape Evaluation, p. 25 and 25*

## 2.2.7 Recommendations

In the Water in The Landscape Evaluation report, independent evaluator Lorraine Larri identified the following recommendations concerning the Cultural projects:

### RECOMMENDATIONS WATER IN THE LANDSCAPE CULTURAL PROJECTS

#### 1. Promoting the use of cultural tools

WSROC and the NSW Environmental Trust promote the use of cultural tools and the model established by WiTL in relation to engaging communities in decision making processes around environmental sustainability issues. This could be done by providing information about possible sources of funding and disseminating information about the products and key learnings of WiTL to relevant community based organisations and local government networks.

#### 2. Promoting the use of WiTL products

WSROC promote the use of WiTL products as educational resources by approaching Education Services Australia. There may also be other opportunities in the post-secondary and tertiary sectors. Additionally, WSROC should consider showcasing some of the videos in 2013 through venues and events in western Sydney and possibly other regions.

#### 3. Strategic forward planning with councils

WSROC continue to work with its councils in strategic forward planning to link catchment management improvement activities with community engagement processes that include the use of cultural tools. Ideally this would funnel participants from different coordinated activities and stages into participative decision-making forums.

#### 4. Capacity building in impact evaluation

Whilst cultural projects were able to provide evidence of strong engagement in activities, they were not able to undertake longer-term impact evaluation. WSROC and the NSW Environmental Trust will need to consider the degree to which they require this data and the appropriate resourcing commitment. Consideration should be given to funding evaluation support early in the project to undertake post-event longitudinal follow-up.

*Water in The Landscape Evaluation. p. 7 and 8*

## **2.3. Public Participation Process**

### **2.3.1 Overview**

The public participation process was developed to address the Program Objectives 1,2,3 and 4, particularly:

- 2) Secure community engagement and debate on these water supply and management issues in Western Sydney; and
- 4) Assist in the development of policy and advocacy supported by informed public opinion and diverse cultural perspectives.

The primary aim of the forums was to engage and involve local residents in a process of awareness raising, discussion, deliberation and participation in public policy with regard to the management of water in the environment (i.e. stormwater, irrigation, environmental flows, pollution control, salinity, etc.) and how this management affects the amenity and value of local places and environmental assets for people of the region.

Specific objectives for the process were:

- Engage relevant communities to provide input into the development of specific water management policies and plans via participatory and, where appropriate, deliberative processes
- Link tangible policy actions and practical water management outcomes
- Engage participating council staff to build on and enhance their current skills in community engagement and public participation processes
- Motivate broader community participation in ongoing water management action and advocacy in partnership with local councils
- Promote community awareness of water quality, supply, management and protection issues.

The design of the public participation process underwent several revisions and there was a change in the contractors appointed to carry out the process from TCM to Straight Talk. The final version of the forum process was developed in conjunction with the contractors, Straight Talk.

The public participation process comprised of three core phases: 1) the local community forums, 2) an Environment and Sustainability Officers workshop, 3) A Regional Summit.

For an overview of the public participation process and activities refer to Section 2.3.4.

### **2.3.2 Methodology**

Commitment from Councils to participate in the forum process was sought in the latter half of 2011 and during the first few months of 2012. Due to the innovative nature of the process and the tight timeframe, WSROC experienced some difficulties in getting councils to take part in the process. The main issues for councils were:

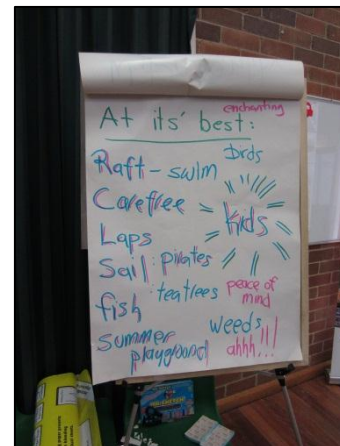
- 1) This level of engagement which is high on the IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum is considered risky, innovative and has not been widely implemented in WSROC Councils before.

- 2) It raises the level of expectation from the community regarding community engagement and consultation between council and the community. This level of expectation needed to be managed so that councils felt they were committing to something which could be realistically delivered and which would not build up false hopes by the community members involved.
- 3) The short lead-up time for the Program implementation. This time frame did not align with many of Councils' current operational plans. All Councils which agreed to participate needed to develop and implement the forum in a time frame of six months which included:
  - a) identifying the issue and how it would link in with long-term council policies and plans;
  - b) developing their project plan in conjunction with WSROC and Straight Talk; and
  - c) implementing the forum including recruitment of participants.

All ten WSROC councils were approached to participate in the forum process. Four councils took up the opportunity to participate, which led to the design and implementation of five local forums. The fifth forum was a joint workshop between two of WSROC's member councils, Holroyd and Blacktown to develop a catchment management strategy for Greystanes Creek which traverses both LGAs. This was the first time WSROC councils had collaborated in this way on a shared issue and set a positive precedent for ongoing future collaboration.



Water in The Landscape  
Community Forums



### **2.3.2.1 Success Factors for Implementation**

Key to the success of the public participation process was the degree of planning and preparation that was undertaken in the lead up to each forum. WSROC worked closely with Straight Talk and individual councils to develop specific council project plans (identifying issues and working through the methodology for their forums) which each council signed off on. The process of working closely with each council was designed to: a) deliver a comprehensive forum which would deliver upon the outcomes and outputs according to the needs of the individual councils and b) to assist council officers in developing the process of planning for a community engagement forum in such a way that they would be able to replicate and transfer it to future environmental community engagement processes. Continued feedback to all parties throughout the development and implementation stage was essential to ensure that all parties were satisfied with the final product.



### 2.3.4 Activities: Forums, ESO workshop and Regional Summit

The public participation component of the WiTL Program delivered the following activities:

#### ➤ 5 Local Community Forums in four Local Government Areas

Council	Issue	Date and Location	Participants
Blacktown	Sub-catchment management plan- Bungarribee Creek Catchment	Wednesday May 16 Blacktown International Sports park, Doonside	19 participants with over 180 years of local knowledge. All were residents living in neighbouring streets to the Bungarribee Creek catchment area
Blacktown and Holroyd	Sub-catchment management plan- Greystanes Creek, Toongabbie	Thursday May 31 Toongabbie Community Centre, Toongabbie	17 participants with over 380 years of local knowledge. All were residents living in neighbouring streets to the Greystanes Creek catchment area.
Holroyd	Water Quality	Tuesday June 5 Holroyd Centre, Holroyd	19 participants representing over 600 years of local knowledge. All were Holroyd residents
Fairfield	Flood Resiliency	Thursday June 21 Fairfield School of Arts, Fairfield	18 Fairfield residents representing nearly 500 years of local knowledge
Blue Mountains	Water quality and noxious weed in Glenbrook Lagoon	Saturday June 30 Blaxland East Primary School, Blaxland	24 Blue Mountains residents with nearly 700 years of local knowledge. All were residents living within a 1km radius of Glenbrook Lagoon

All forums focused on education, awareness raising, ideas generation, policy prioritisation and preferred actions. They cumulatively involved 99 community members. See Appendix 2 for a report on the findings from each forum.

*“What you people are doing here today, it’s magic!”*

Mr Steward Kaye-Smith who participated in the Greystanes Creek forum was so impressed by the process that he refused to take the incentive payment.



#### ➤ Environmental Sustainability Officer Workshop

Water in the Landscape developed a workshop for the WSROC Councils’ Environment and Sustainability Officers (ESOs). The aim of this workshop was to build capacity of council staff in community engagement by assessing the outcomes of the different forums and sharing learnings with other councils.

The workshop was divided into two sessions:

- 1) The morning session** was developed for the ESOs involved in the local forum process. The workshop discussed the findings of each individual forum and assisted Council officers to integrate these findings into their longer term policies and plans; this had been discussed from the outset of the process to ensure that the forums informed a longer-term vision and process by each Council.

Prior to the workshop, the Council officers involved in the forums were required to think through their forum process more deeply by responding to a set of reflective questions (see Appendix 2 - F). From their work on their individual forums, the group was then led into creating a vision for an ongoing 'Water in the Landscape' community engagement plan. This plan was presented to ESOs from other Councils in the afternoon session.

- 2) The afternoon session** was open to all WSROC ESOs and was attended by fourteen officers including the five officers from the morning session. This workshop explored ways of sharing outcomes, capacity building and sustained education through community engagement. Nine councils were represented: Auburn, Bankstown, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Holroyd, Parramatta and Penrith.

See Appendix 2 - F for a report on this workshop.

### ➤ **Regional Summit**

A Regional Summit was designed to be the pinnacle and celebration of the Water in The Landscape Program. Its aim was to showcase, share, deepen learning and participation, make linkages and strengthen networks of all the participants and stakeholders in the Water in the Landscape Program. The Summit was held on the August 18, 2012 at the Joan Sutherland Centre, Penrith and was attended by the NSW Minister for the Environment.

The aims of the Regional Summit were:

- To deepen the conversation on managing water in the landscape with representative LGA participants;
- To continue to build the links between community and council in this process;
- To build capacity of the NGO's involved in the cultural projects to replicate and transfer the knowledge gained in the projects of WiTL to future projects;
- To showcase and celebrate the Water in the Landscape project;
- To create links between government and environmental agencies and the community;

The Summit was divided into three sections, each of which were developed for specific purposes:

#### **1) Morning Session – Workshop One**

The morning session from 9.30 – 11am was part of the feedback mechanism for the public participation process. All 99 forum participants were invited to attend the Summit to hear an update from their relevant local council on how their input had informed and was assisting to develop council policies and plans. It was also an opportunity for the participants to communicate to council their thoughts on what they had done so far and how they would like to continue to stay involved. Workshop One was attended by 34 forum participants, six council staff and 16 partners and stakeholders.

#### **2) Middle Session – Workshop Two**

The middle session was an opportunity to showcase the 18 cultural projects and the local forums. It involved all community members, project partners, government and non-government bodies who were involved in WiTL.



Up to this point the two main components of WiTL, the cultural projects and local forums, had been running almost independently of each other. The main aim of this session was to allow for all the projects to be shared amongst each other and to allow for cross-fertilisation and sharing of ideas between these two components.

This workshop was attended by Workshop One participants together with 59 people involved in the cultural projects and other partners and stakeholders. In total 93 people were involved in Workshop Two.

### 3) Afternoon Session

The afternoon session was the official celebration of WiTL. It was light-hearted event which consisted of performances, videos and speeches highlighting the achievements of WiTL. The Hon Robyn Parker, Minister for the Environment and Heritage gave the keynote address. 150 attendees participated in the afternoon session.

See Appendix 2 for the Program outline.

The Regional Summit united approximately 150 people representing all the components of the Water in the Landscape Program including 34 participants from the Community Forums, and 81 Program partners (representing key water agencies, cultural projects and local councils). The evaluation feedback from all stakeholders involved indicates that the event was highly successful and worthwhile. (see appendix 4)



#### Water in The Landscape Regional Summit

Workshops, performances, a visit  
from The Hon. Minister Robyn Parker  
and much more.

The following figure demonstrates the schematic of the public participation process, specifically developed for the Water in the Landscape Program by the Program management team at WSROC, and Straight Talk.

Figure 5: Water in The Landscape Public Participation Process

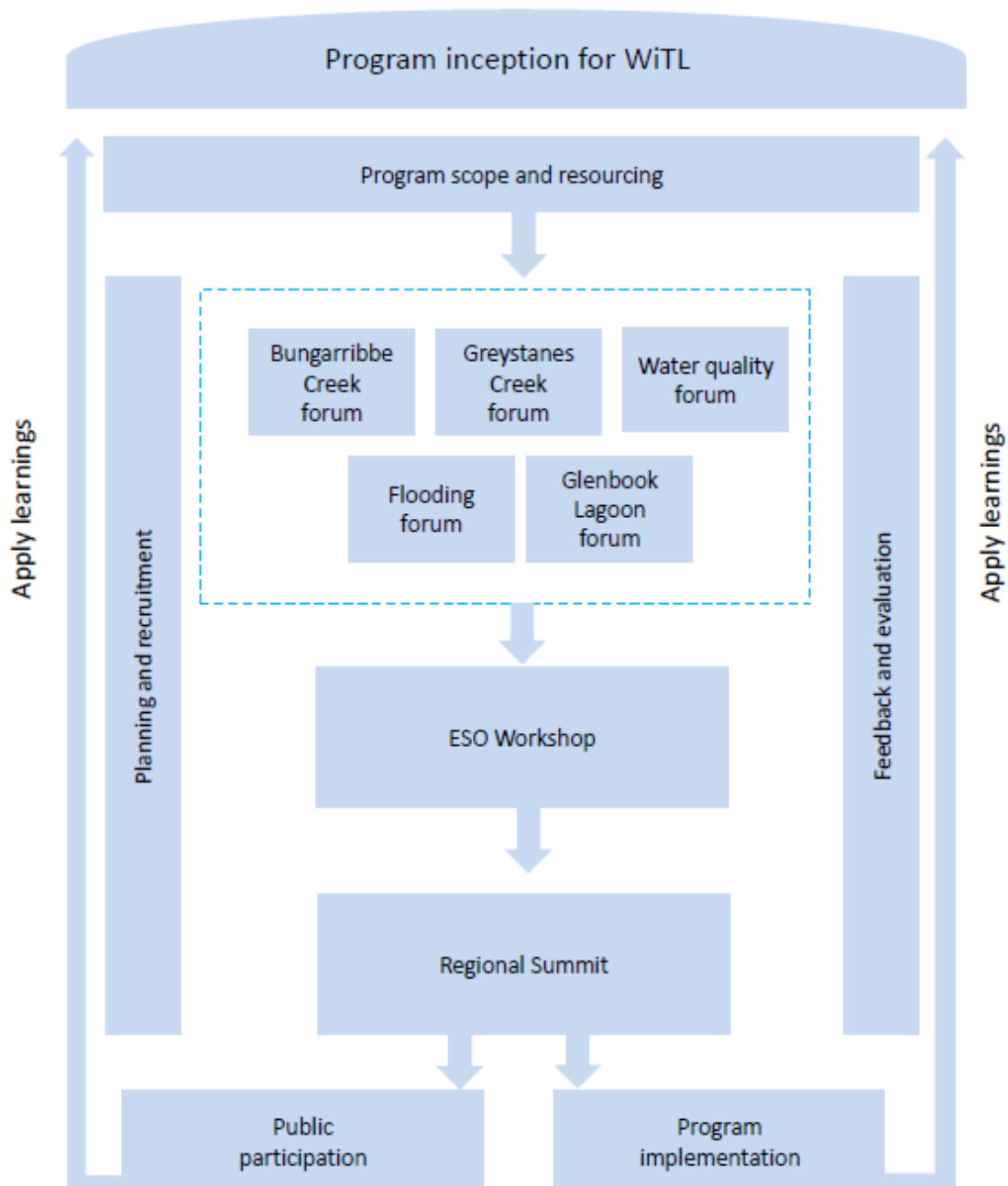


Figure 6: Overview of activities undertaken in the WiTL Public Participation Program

Design	Delivery	Follow-up
<b>1) Local Forums</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of issues and preparation of individual project plans outlining aims, objectives and desired outputs</li> <li>• Meetings between Straight Talk, WSROC and each council officer involved to design the process to ensure it would deliver the desired outputs</li> <li>• Recruitment of participants via telephone recruitment and door to door knocking</li> </ul>	<p>A series of five local Community Forums, made up of community members, were held with WSROC member councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blacktown City Council – Bungarribee Creek catchment</li> <li>• Blacktown City Council and Holroyd City Council combined forum – Greystanes Creek Catchment</li> <li>• Holroyd City Council – Holroyd LGA catchments</li> <li>• Fairfield City Council – Attitudes to flooding, motivation and barriers to flood preparedness in Fairfield LGA</li> <li>• Blue Mountains City Council – Glenbrook Lagoon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants invited to attend community summit in August 2012</li> <li>• WSROC made personalised phone calls to encourage participation in Summit</li> <li>• Independent evaluator in touch with individual participants to gain feedback</li> <li>• Straight Talk prepared a report and succinct outcomes summary for each of the forums including key findings and recommendations</li> <li>• The independent evaluator produced an evaluation summary for each forum</li> </ul>
<b>2) Environmental Sustainability Officers Workshop</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of issues and preparation of project plan outlining aims, objectives and desired outputs</li> <li>• Meetings between Straight Talk and WSROC to design the process to ensure it would deliver outputs</li> <li>• WSROC informed member councils via email and telephone calls to encourage participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Environmental Sustainability Officer (ESO) Workshop was attended by officers from each of the above forums, plus several from councils that did not participate in the forum process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council officers invited to attend Summit and provided with Community Engagement Plan Framework to promote future engagement</li> <li>• Straight Talk prepared a report and a succinct outcomes summary for the ESO workshop including key findings</li> <li>• The independent evaluator produced an evaluation summary for this workshop</li> </ul>
<b>3) Regional Summit</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of issues and preparation of project plan outlining aims, objectives and desired outputs</li> <li>• Meetings between Straight Talk and WSROC to design the process to ensure it would deliver outputs</li> <li>• WSROC informed community members, Council and project officers via media, website, letters, emails and telephone calls to encourage participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The process culminated in a large scale Regional Summit which was attended by participants from the cultural projects and local forums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Straight Talk prepared a report and succinct outcomes summary for the Community Summit including key findings and recommendations</li> <li>• The independent evaluator produced an evaluation summary for the Regional Summit</li> </ul>

### 2.3.5 Linkages and Capacity Building

Where appropriate and possible, council officers and community participants in the forum process were linked with other elements within WiTL and relevant other parties. Planned opportunities included:

- **Up skilling in Public Participation:** council officers worked closely with WSROC and Straight Talk to align the forums to the IAP2 Spectrum. The idea was to develop council officers' ability to understand how to develop public participation processes and apply them for future environmental community engagement work.
- **ESO workshop:** The Environment and Sustainability Officers workshop aimed to assist councils to share learnings and deepen their understanding of the outcomes from the forums and how they would apply those learnings to future environmental community engagement. In addition, it also aimed to expand upon what each council is doing individually in this area and explore a common Western Sydney WiTL game plan for future environmental community engagement around water management.
- **Regional Summit:** The design of the Regional Summit allowed for further skill development in working with local communities and sharing and making links with other water-related projects, NGO's and Government agencies. The Summit also aimed to build the capacity of community members through exposing them to a wide range of water-related projects, resources and agencies working together to achieve clean and sustainable waterways.
- **Website:** Community members were directed to the website to engage with WiTL in a variety of ways including:
  - Creating their own water stories
  - Participating in the online forums
  - Uploading their photos for the Water in the Landscape photo competitionCouncils were encouraged to use the website platforms to continue the engagement with their communities before, during and after the forum.

Through these portals for engagement, it was envisaged that community members would not only participate in the section relevant to their forum, but also interact and learn from the other projects operating under the banner of Water in The Landscape.

### 2.3.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

As each component of the local forums was planned and implemented in close partnership with WSROC, the monitoring of the forums was continuous. WSROC managed the communication between the contractor, Straight Talk and individual councils and this close relationship ensured that all parties were working in alignment to achieve the outcomes as stated in individual project plans.

Further, WiTL's independent evaluator, Lorraine Larri, was closely involved in the implementation of the forums and evaluation of the public participation process. Data collection and evaluation assisted in informing the different stages of the public participation process.

In addition to this monitoring, other formal mechanisms were established including:

- Input from the independent evaluator throughout the planning and development of the public participation process.
- Oversight of the process by the Cultural projects and Forums Sub-Committee and the WiTL Steering Committee
- Completion of project plans, reflection questions and input into the final reports by each council.
- Completion of evaluation forms and involvement in the evaluation process by the Independent Evaluator including post-forum debriefs and discussion at ESO workshop.
- Completion of evaluation forms after the forums and Regional Summit by the community participants and the opportunity for forum participants to follow up with the independent evaluator when desired.
- Completion of evaluation forms after the ESO workshop and Regional Summit by council officers.
- An evaluation survey on the overall WiTL experience (sent to council officers and forum participants after the forum process and Summit).

A broad range of observations and outputs corresponding to the public participation Program's objectives have been achieved and are documented in the report in Appendices 2 and 4.

#### **WORKING TOGETHER**

Community and council feedback, captured through these methods, clearly indicates councils and their communities can work constructively in environmental awareness and action. In every situation community engagement was requested to be increased and continued. Furthermore, participants requested their ideas be made visible and taken into consideration or implemented.

*Straight Talk Report*

### **2.3.7 Final Outcomes and recommendations**

The investment outlaid through the public participation process must be followed up with further support and coordination by a similar process. Failure to do so will inevitably diminish the good work and foundations that have been laid during this process and can potentially lead to cynicism from those people involved. Continuing to build on these foundations will develop the trust and goodwill between councils and their respective communities. All participating councils have committed to future steps for continued engagement with their community to work to achieve longer-term sustainable outcomes.

It would also be advantageous to have follow-up funding to support councils in building upon this work and not lose the momentum developed as well as funding which could be drawn upon to evaluate the impact of the project in years to come.

The final outcomes are summarised as:

- **There is a need to amplify the community's sense of responsibility**  
While there was a strong feeling of wanting to act to improve the water in their landscape, many participants did not commit to action beyond their participation in the forum or Summit. Many were of the opinion that it was the role of local government to initiate action on environmental issues. A range of recommendations to address this include deeper

community engagement through education and communication campaigns, and for Councils to continue to work with the group of community members who participated in the forums to build their capacity to collaborate with councils in working towards addressing environmental issues.

- **Increased awareness of water management issues will encourage behaviour that improves and preserves water quality**

Many participants were unaware of their catchment/local waterway or flood plain and how their behaviour can directly affect it. Education which informs the community on ways in which their actions and attitudes impacts on their local environment is critical.

- **The community has realistic expectations and is prepared to accept there are limitations to what is possible**

There was hesitation initially by councils that the community would have unrealistic expectations as to what was possible in addressing the issues raised in the forums. It was clear however that community members were aware of and understood the parameters of the forums such as the need to prioritise funding allocation within council. Where possible, it was recommended to Councils that they implement what was recommended by the community and that the relationship established between Council and the community would benefit from a series of 'quick wins' in which the community can see that Council is working towards achieving their goal.

- **Ongoing community engagement is highly valued**

In every situation community engagement was requested to be increased and continued. In each forum, participants were glad to have their voices heard and wanted that dialogue to continue. It is also recommended that Councils develop their own community engagement framework based on the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) Spectrum, if they have not already developed one, to ensure ongoing community engagement.

- **Continue WiTL 2012 with a deeper more involved WiTL # 2 Program**

WiTL has pioneered a way of developing meaningful and effective engagement with residents on local environmental issues. The good work developed so far needs to be built upon and extended to ensure it has a deep and long-lasting impact in the community and the way in which councils engage, educate and communicate with their local communities.

For more detailed analysis of recommendations, see Straight Talk's report in Appendix 2.

## 2.4 Photo competition

As part of the community engagement activities, the Water in The Landscape Program ran a photographic competition which challenged aspiring photographers to capture Western Sydney's local natural and urban waterways.

The competition ran from 18 June - 30 July 2012, and was open to any photo that captured water outdoors in a natural or urban environment in the Greater Western Sydney region.



Photo competition entries on display at the Regional Summit



The aim of the competition was to encourage Western Sydney locals to consider the water in their area from new perspectives. In addition to submitting a photo, entrants were required to write about why the place they selected was important to them. This was designed to encourage entrants to explain the story behind their photograph which would allow their experience to be shared amongst other people.

The competition was organised and promoted through the WiTL website so entrants could see other elements of the Program and understand how their photos related to the Water in The Landscape as a whole.

A total of 131 entries were received in three categories:

- 15 Years and under: 12 entries (plus 15 school entries which were eligible for judging under the 15 years and under category as well);
- 16 years and over: 94 entries;
- Schools: 25 entries.

Judges for the competition were: Anne-Marie Poirrier (NSW Environmental Trust), Alison McLaren (WSROC president) and Marian Abboud (professional photographer).

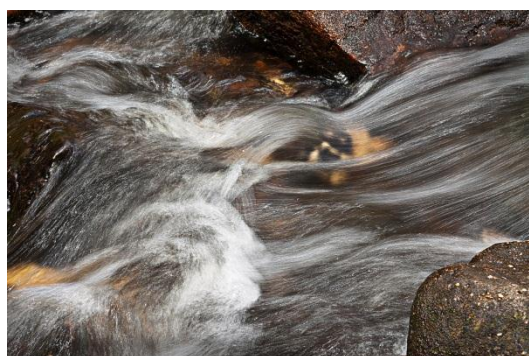
WiTL received \$1,000 sponsorship money from the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Authority to put towards the schools category. The competition also received two Featherdale Wildlife adult passes which were added to the second and third prize of the category 16 years and over. Winners were announced at the Regional Summit.

A breakdown of the prizes is listed below:

- Category 15 years and under: 1st prize: \$500 (Wish gift card); 2nd prize: \$250 (Wish gift card); 3rd Prize: \$100 (Wish gift card).
- Category 16 years and over: 1st prize: \$500 (cash); 2nd prize: \$250 (cash) plus one Featherdale wildlife pass (adult); 3rd Prize: \$100 (cash) plus one Featherdale wildlife pass (adult).
- Category Schools: 1st prize: \$1000 (cash); 2nd prize: \$550 (cash); 3rd Prize: \$250 (cash).

The prizes for each category were awarded at the Regional Summit on August 18, 2012, except for the 3<sup>rd</sup> prize for the school which was awarded at the relevant school's assembly as they were unable to attend the Summit. The photos were also exhibited at Parramatta Library from 12 November to 9 December 2012.

See Appendix 5 – vi for an overview of the winners and their photos.



*"You have made a really valuable contribution promoting Western Sydney and showcasing ways to value our water. As someone who loves photographing water in its many forms can I say to you all: 'Thank you'."*

Kay Gordon

Winner, Water in The Landscape photo competition



## 2.5 Partner/ Stakeholder Communication

### 2.5.1 Media

In 2011, a Communications and Liaison officer was appointed to the WiTL team and a Communication and Media strategy was developed in close consultation with partners and stakeholders. Key components of this strategy include:

- The development of close relationships with project partners and stakeholders to highlight synergies and organise and synchronise communication activities.
- Ways of optimising the management of the information load (e.g. through targeted, tailored, relevant and accessible information).
- Finding innovative ways to connect with a broad audience (e.g. photo competition and through the cultural projects).
- Managing the information loop – this reflected a major emphasis on interactive engagement by developing a two-way channel for disseminating information and having avenues for stakeholders and the community to communicate with the WiTL team.
- Using the website as a key vehicle to collate and showcase information on the different components of the Program and water management issues in Western Sydney.
- Use of local media.

To view the strategy, see Appendix 5 - i.



*"Water tells us who we are; salt water, fresh water, muddy water, all told us who we were."*

Jacinta Tobin, Darug woman, shares her water story on the Water in The Landscape website

A range of media were utilised throughout the Program, including but not limited to:

- **Program website**  
An interactive website ([www.waterinthelandscape.org.au](http://www.waterinthelandscape.org.au)) was developed and functioned as a central component of the strategy. Its aim was to be a collaborative information stream; working with the Western Sydney community in populating it, as opposed to developing it for them. The website supported interactive features such as:
  - Online forums which allowed participants from the 'real life' forums to continue the discussion before and after their forum;

- Sharing of photos and stories through the Water Stories page;
- The Water in The Landscape photo competition (see Appendix 5 – vi);
- An individual web page for each cultural project where all project materials were displayed (including photo and video materials);
- A knowledge stream relaying information on water management in Western Sydney from government agencies and NGO's. This was developed in conjunction with the Water in The Landscape Reference Group.
- Links to the Program's social media platforms.

An initial version of the website was developed early in the Program, with a view that it would evolve as the Program progressed and incorporate the necessary features. Due to staffing issues, there were ongoing delays in the completion of the website. A new website that was significantly enhanced and upgraded was delivered in early 2012 which incorporated all the new features as outlined above.

On completion of the WiTL Program, the website will be incorporated into the current WSROC website for ease of management and to ensure the website will continue to be a valuable resource for Western Sydney residents.

#### **WEBSITE STATISTICS**

At least 3,709 individuals visited the WiTL website, and a high percentage, 42% returned multiple times. When people first looked at the site, they spent an average of 1:53 minutes and looked at around 2.5 pages each. Those who returned to the site stayed considerably longer, around 6:21 minutes and looked at an average of 6 pages each. The WiTL website was accessed from 518 separate locations in 78 countries across the world. A total of 4,344 visits were able to be attributed to specific locations. Of these, 3,658 (84%) of the visits were from locations primarily in Western Sydney.

*Water in The Landscape Evaluation – p. 5*

- **Partner and group networks** (online and face-to-face – see Section 2.5.2)

- **Local media**

The Western Sydney local papers have been a great partner in the process, and WSROC has built a strong relationship with them for the effective coverage for many of its events (an overview of media coverage of the Program is listed in Appendix 5 – iv).

- **Social media and E-newsletter**

The Program used different social media platforms to engage with both partners and the community such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube. The latter has by far been the most successful, it lists more than 78 videos and has to date received 5,362 views.

In terms of project partner engagement, the WiTL e-newsletter has proven to be the most successful medium. The digital newsletter has approximately 400 subscribers and went out regularly with articles on WiTL news and events. In total 25 newsletters were sent out over a period of 19 months.

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

The WiTL YouTube channel achieved a very high degree of engagement and was very successful with 5,362 views of videos; over 108 hours of viewing and an average of 1.2 minutes per item. WSROC established a Facebook and Twitter presence; and used MailChimp to deliver regular e-newsletters. It is now well-placed to achieve greater strategic linkage of these tools.

*Water in The Landscape Evaluation – p. 5*

## 2.5.2 Western Sydney Networks

The WiTL project team has been a member of the following networks which enabled the Program to communicate and share its activities and to establish new connections and partnerships:

- **The NSW Department of Education's Western Sydney Environmental Education Group (WSEEG).** This group links the project to a coordinated Department of Education regional environmental education plan with all schools across Western Sydney.
- **Parramatta Learning Community for Sustainability (PLCfs).** This network is run by the Catholic Education Office in the Diocese of Parramatta for all schools and teachers within Catholic schools from Parramatta to the Blue Mountains, focusing on environmental education and sustainability.
- **UWS stakeholder meetings for their Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) in Sustainability Education.** The University of Western Sydney has a coordinated approach to linking and leveraging community groups, government agencies and education institutions to further develop education for sustainability in the Western Sydney region, under the banner of the status of the RCE which is endorsed by the United Nations University. These stakeholder meetings enable information sharing about the WiTL Program as well as identification of potential areas for further collaboration and partnership building.
- **UWS Project - Water and Irrigation Strategy Enhancement through Regional Partnership in Western Sydney (WISER).** WSROC and the WiTL Program have been working in partnership with the WISER group on the issues of water demand and supply in the South Creek catchment. The WISER group and, up until June 2010, the Irrigation Futures CRC for Western Sydney, have been working on a systems analysis of the hydrology of South Creek as a case study for peri-urban agriculture in suburban settings.
- **Western Sydney Environmental Education Network (WSEEN).** This group meets regularly and its membership includes council-employed Environmental Educators, Sustainability Officers and other environmental staff, with the purpose of sharing expertise and developing collaborative projects in environmental education at a regional level.

### WSROC Member Councils

The Program's progress and planning have been communicated to member councils through a number of avenues:

- Reporting to **Council Executive** via the WSROC Board and regular meetings and reports to General Managers.
- **WSROC's Environmental and Sustainability Officers (ESO) meetings.** This is an ongoing group of council representatives which meets once every three months. Participation is open to any WSROC council officer who works in the environmental field (technical, social, educational).
- **WSROC's Arts and Cultural Development Officers (ACD) meetings.** This is an ongoing group of council representatives which meets once every three months. Participation is open to any WSROC council officer who works in the field of arts and cultural development.
- **The Urban Water Management Network (UWMN).** A WSROC Professional Committee, established to facilitate regional review and coordinated response by member councils to urban water management issues relevant to local government.

## 2.6 Stakeholder Engagement/ Participation

The Water in The Landscape Program utilised a variety of strategies to engage its numerous stakeholders. (See Appendix 4-iii)

### PARTNERSHIPS

Through WiTL, WSROC achieved a diverse range of partnerships as well as strengthening its relationships with its member councils. It has been successful in extending its influence to a broad range of organisations and individuals across the Western Sydney region.

Partnerships were a key factor in successful implementation of the projects. Every cultural project involved the establishment of new partnerships. Many reported that they had deepened relationships with existing partners.

WSROC partnered with some 48 organisations that actively contributed their expertise across environmental, cultural, community and council issues.

Partnership development involved significant allocation of time and commitment. This was strongly encouraged and modelled by WSROC in their implementation of WiTL. WSROC invested significant support to its partner organisations. As the Program developed and confidence in the WiTL concept grew, partner organisations reciprocated with commitment. Collaboration between groups was acknowledged as a feature of WiTL and a requirement of funding from the Environmental Trust. Each organisation considered the processes involved were essential to the successful achievement of objectives.

The approach to partnership development was based on common sense relationship building and getting the job done to achieve objectives. There is further opportunity to build on this by referring to the considerable body of work now available on techniques and approaches to successful partnership development.

*Water in The Landscape Evaluation – p. 76 - 79*

### 2.6.1 Member councils

All WSROC member councils participated in the WiTL Program to varying degrees. Four member councils (Blue Mountains, Blacktown, Holroyd and Fairfield) hosted forums and so were heavily involved in the public participation process. Six councils ran cultural projects (Fairfield, Blacktown, Penrith, Liverpool, Holroyd and Bankstown) while the remaining councils not directly involved in the WiTL activities (Auburn, Parramatta and Hawkesbury) were indirectly involved through the cultural projects (e.g. through sponsorship of an event or having a stall at a festival).

In addition, each member Council was briefed about WiTL at a range of different meetings, from officer level through to Board and Executive.

### 2.6.2 Water in The Landscape Planning Day

A planning day was held at Muru Mittigar in Penrith on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2010. All the Program's partners and stakeholders were invited, including the WSROC councils, cultural projects partners and water and environmental agencies. The aim of the Workshop was to:

- Provide an update on the Program's progress to the stakeholders, particularly with regard to the cultural projects and the local forums, and how the various components would be coordinated;

- Identify opportunities for collaboration and coordination between the Program and these agencies;
- Review the Program's objectives, outcomes and the key issues of focus, in the context of the priorities of these various agencies;
- Refine the local forums strategy with the input and expertise of the Program's stakeholders;
- Discuss the purpose and format of the regional forums, with the view of including, or otherwise accommodating, the information needs/expectations of the stakeholders;
- Contribute to the Program's evaluation strategy;
- Promote the communications and media strategy and seek to coordinate this strategy with the communication activities of the agencies.

The planning workshop had very good representation from key stakeholders including relevant government agencies who provided valuable input on each of these points.

A detailed report on the day has been attached as Appendix 5 - ii.

### **2.6.3 Academic stakeholders**

A number of academic stakeholders were involved in the design and implementation of the Water in The Landscape Program:

- University of Western Sydney – Through the Engagement Research component of Water in the Landscape (see Section 2.1) and involvement in the UWS Regional Centre of Expertise for Education on Sustainable Development;
- Professor Lyn Carson, expert in the fields of deliberative democracy and citizen engagement, assisted in the development of the evaluation strategy and informing the principles and design for the public participation process;
- UTS - Institute of Sustainable Futures- through involvement in the cultural project Documentary making through CrowdTV;
- University of Sydney's Centre for Research on Computer Supported Learning and Cognition (CoCo) through the cultural project South Creek Project.

### **2.6.4 Cultural projects**

The cultural project partners have been involved in a number of opportunities to deepen their engagement in WiTL in addition to running their individual project. These have involved:

- Welcome and introductory network session on 9 February 2011 at Information and Cultural Exchange in Parramatta;
- The UWS 'Action Conversations' (See community engagement research in Section 2.1 of this report for further information);
- Participation in an evaluation workshop on October 18, 2012 held at Blacktown City Council (See Section 2.2.5.1 for more information);
- Regional Summit held on the 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2012 in which Program partners shared their project with the community and all other partners involved in WiTL. The afternoon session of the Summit also showcased each project. (See Section 2.3.4 for more information).

## 2.6.5 Community

The Western Sydney community has been involved through:

- 18 Cultural projects including a Youth Regional Summit (Ozgreen's YOUthe LEADing Australia);
- 5 local forums plus online forums;
- 1 Regional Summit;
- Photo Competition;
- Website and e-newsletter;
- Social media including Facebook, Twitter and Youtube.
- Coverage of WiTL and its events in local media

## 2.6.6 Water in the Landscape Committees

Several key partners and stakeholders were members of the different Water in The Landscape committees:

- **Steering Committee** (representatives from WSROC, NSW Environmental Trust, Sydney CMA, Council and academic stakeholders);
- **Reference Group** (representatives from NSW water authorities and government agencies) This group was established to facilitate the delivery of support to the Program from NSW Government agencies with regard to information on state policies, programs and projects that would be relevant for the Program to highlight in its community information strategies and resources;
- **Cultural projects and forums sub-committee** (representatives from WSROC, NSW Environmental Trust, cultural project partners, local council and academic stakeholders). This committee was responsible for the selection and monitoring of the WiTL cultural projects.

## 3. Monitoring

Please refer to Schedule C in appendix 6.

## 4. Evaluation

Evaluation has been ongoing throughout the implementation of the WiTL Program. An evaluation framework was developed in conjunction with Professor Lyn Carson and included input from the Program's partners provided at the Planning Day (see Appendix 4 - i).

The framework has informed the evaluation process for the project including the appointment of an external independent evaluator, Lorraine Larri from Renshaw Hitchen & Associates in early 2012.

Evaluation was incorporated into each cultural project through the final acquittal of their projects, in which each group completed an evaluation report. All cultural project partners were invited to participate in an evaluation workshop to strengthen their evaluation skills and to add their input into



the overall WiTL evaluation (see Section 2.2.5.1 for more details). Additional outputs and outcomes have been highlighted for each cultural project.

For the forum process, evaluation has been included in each Council project plan (See Appendix 2). A range of evaluation techniques have been employed by the external evaluator for the participants involved as well as the council officers involved.

The Program evaluation structure included the following elements:

- Collation and analysis of data collected and evaluation reporting for each Program component;
- Assessment of the adequacy of component evaluation, particularly with respect to gaps;
- Development of strategies to fill the identified gaps;
- Evaluation of the linkages between each component and to what extent these linkages (and the extended time period for the project) facilitated learning on the part of the participants;
- Evaluation of the response by local governments and other agencies to community views on the issues raised and the processes used for engagement by the Program.

There were three clear cross-cutting issues that were relevant to the development of the above mentioned elements:

- a) The **principles of public participation**, and particularly the degree that the overall Program facilitated deliberation by participants.
- b) **Cultural and institutional diversity** of participants and stakeholders in the Program.
- c) the **response of local governments** and other stakeholders to the community engagement approach used by the Program and how this affected **their preparedness to respond** to community views and willingness to adopt (or adapt) community engagement strategies.

In addition, a number of strategic questions were used to frame the evaluation including:

- Do the monitoring and evaluation plans of each component of the Program identify how they contributed to the Program objectives?
- What criteria and information gathering techniques will be/ were used by each component of the Program to evaluate this contribution?
- What will/ did each component of the Program find difficult to evaluate?
- To what extent did each component of the Program succeed with respect to these objectives?
- Did the anticipated outcomes actually occur?
- If so, what component of the Program achieved these outcomes?
- What other outcomes were delivered that contributed to the objectives?
- How did each component of the WiTL Program link with other components?
- Did the linkages between the components of the Program contribute to the quantity (amount of time?) and quality of engagement with the Program?
- What unanticipated and/or value-added outcomes were achieved by the project?
- What sustainable outcomes are anticipated to be achieved past the end-life of the project?

Based on the framework, an evaluation methodology was developed (see Appendix 4 - ii).

## 4.1 Outcomes

Key findings from the evaluation are outlined in the box below (refer to Appendix 4 – iii for the evaluation report)

### **CULTURAL PROJECTS**

Overall, the evidence indicates that the Cultural projects achieved a high degree of engagement from people of all ages and representative of the diversity of Western Sydney population. All of the projects implemented approaches that fulfilled the requirements of the WiTL funding by using what they described as, 'cultural tools'. They were able to embed their projects with a number of key messages designed to inspire people to find out more about urban water catchment management issues. This was in preference to the approach most often used of providing scientific or technical analyses of environmental issues.

A total of approximately 13,100 people across an extensive range of locations throughout Western Sydney participated in the WiTL 'cultural projects'. They represented a significant range of ages (from primary school to senior years), and included strong representation of indigenous Australians, and the many diverse CALD backgrounds of people in Western Sydney. It is likely that an estimated further 14,600 people were made aware of WiTL and the activities.

The majority of projects used cultural tools primarily for awareness raising of urban water management issues. Two projects, 'Crossing Waters – Bibby's Place' and 'Youth Leading Australia 3 day Congress', demonstrated how the ultimate purpose of WiTL of integrating cultural tools with participatory community consultation and collaborative decision-making processes could be achieved. It is likely that most of the processes developed through the remaining 15 projects have potential usefulness in a more strategic and integrated way that leads to addressing local water catchment issues.

There was strong evidence of positive social outcomes for participants in relation to enhancing community connection through intercultural and/or intergenerational dialogue.

### **FORUMS AND REGIONAL SUMMIT**

The facilitated public participation processes that WSROC designed in consultation with Straight Talk and Councils were highly successful in engaging both local residents and the relevant local council officers in dialogue about specific urban water catchment management issues.

Participants in WiTL local forums felt their views were taken seriously and valued, and that the processes worked well. There was slightly less confidence that councils would incorporate their views into local planning processes. Many commented that they hoped this would happen but would need to wait and see if this was the case. There were many comments from across all the local forums that indicated approval of councils taking this approach to consulting the community.

Critical to the success of this element of WiTL were,

- The degree of planning and preparation undertaken in the lead up to each forum where WSROC worked closely with Straight Talk and individual councils which ensured seamless implementation and secured rich outputs;
- The use of an independent specialist facilitator who created a safe learning environment that yielded a high level of discovery and learning. The facilitator provided a buffer between councils and the community which enabled more independent discussion and safeguard for councils;
- The attendance of council staff at each workshop to provide expertise and build relationships with the community.

#### **ONLINE INFORMATION, DIALOGUE AND EXCHANGE**

WiTL has successfully trialed, integrated and learnt from the use of all currently available online and social media tools. This represents significant learning and capacity building on the part of WSROC. It also provides a lighthouse example for both local and State Government initiatives seeking to reach out to and engage diverse communities. There is significant potential for these learnings to be showcased and transferred to other Environmental Trust grant recipients in order to strengthen initiatives in environmental sustainability.

At least 3,709 individuals visited the WiTL website, and a high percentage, 42% returned multiple times. When people first looked at the site, they spent an average of 1:53 minutes and looked at around 2.5 pages each. Those who returned to the site stayed considerably longer, around 6:21 minutes and looked at an average of 6 pages each. The WiTL website was accessed from 518 separate locations in 78 countries across the world. A total of 4,344 visits were able to be attributed to specific locations. Of these, 3,658 (84%) of the visits were from locations primarily from Western Sydney. The WiTL YouTube channel achieved a very high degree of engagement and was very successful with 5,362 views of videos; over 108 hours of viewing and an average of 1.2 minutes per item. WSROC established a Facebook and Twitter presence; and used MailChimp to deliver regular e-newsletters. It is now well-placed to achieve greater strategic linkage of these tools.

#### **PARTNERSHIPS**

Through WiTL, WSROC achieved a diverse range of partnerships as well as strengthening its relationships with its member Councils. It has been successful in extending its influence to a broad range of organisations and individuals across the Western Sydney region.

Partnerships were a key factor in successful implementation of the projects. Every 'cultural project' involved the establishment of new partnerships. Many reported that they had deepened relationships with existing partners.

WSROC partnered with some 48 organisations that actively contributed their expertise across environmental, cultural, community and Council issues.

Partnership development involved significant allocation of time and commitment. This was strongly encouraged and modeled by WSROC in their implementation of WiTL. WSROC invested significant support to its partner organisations. As the Program developed and confidence in the WiTL concept grew, partner organisations reciprocated with commitment. Collaboration between groups was acknowledged as a feature of WiTL and a requirement of funding from the Environmental Trust. Each organisation considered the processes involved were essential to successful achievement of objectives.

The approach to partnership development was based on common sense relationship building and getting the job done to achieve objectives. There is further opportunity to build on this by referring to the considerable body of work now available on techniques and approaches to successful partnership development.

#### **LEVERAGING CHANGE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIVE PROCESSES**

There was very positive feedback from both council staff and community forum participants regarding the forums. It is clear from the evidence that WiTL has the ability to leverage positive change in local government consultative processes and that doing this can increase the likelihood of behavioural change in sustainable practices in the community. This should encourage WSROC to promote greater commitment and take-up of these processes by its member Councils.

Through the Forums and the Regional Summit, WiTL has made a highly significant contribution to the acceptance of this. Critical to the success has been,

- the participation of Council staff who presented themselves as credible and authentic in their expertise and genuine concern for community consultation; and
- the regular feedback of information once relationships were established.

#### **PROMOTING INNOVATION IN COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY**

The two key elements of WiTL, the cultural projects and forums, promoted innovative community-based education for sustainability.

The cultural projects achieved significant innovation in two main ways. The first was to take a pre-existing capability within the organisation and customise it in some way to reflect WiTL objectives. The second approach was to develop a unique response that significantly challenged accepted practice and was ground-breaking. As a result the capabilities of the organisation and its partners were extended significantly. The results could not have been achieved without a high degree of collaboration that drew upon multi-disciplinary specialist expertise.

The forums were significant in leveraging change in participatory consultative processes. WSROC and its member councils now have increased their organisational capability and established a strong methodology by which to undertake these activities.

Combining both cultural projects and forums, whilst not new, represents a significant expansion and up-scaling of the concept. Through WiTL, WSROC now has an array of tools and approaches from which to draw on. WiTL has successfully demonstrated the viability of this approach and led the way in identifying opportunities for replication and ongoing refinement.

Another area of innovative practice was the integration of online and social media tools through the WiTL website. This functioned on a number of levels i.e. as an information channel; supporting project co-ordination; expanding opportunities for community engagement and as a repository for the products of WiTL.

*Water in The Landscape 2012 Evaluation p. 4 - 7*

The Program achieved some unanticipated and value-added outcomes:

- The Water in The Landscape project has been nominated for a number of awards: the LGSA Cultural Awards, the LGSA Environmental Awards, the Nature Conservation Council NSW Awards, the IAP2 Awards.
- There has been great interest from agencies in the Program, and the WiTL project team has been asked to do presentations on the WiTL approach for: The Water 4 Life conference and the Australian Evaluation Society.
- Most cultural projects will continue their activities after the end-life of the Program.



Ensuring WiTL outcomes will live long after cessation of the Program through sharing learnings of the different Program activities at the Regional Summit

## 4.2 Recommendations

Key findings and recommendations of the evaluation are listed in the box below.

### OVERALL FINDING:

**WSROC has successfully demonstrated that WiTL has significant ability to reach substantial numbers of people through cultural projects, local community consultation forums and use of online social media tools. Most importantly, the processes used in both Forums and the Cultural projects successfully engendered strong emotional relationships of participants to waterways and urban catchment management issues across multiple Western Sydney locations. Taken as a whole, this provides an excellent platform for further development.**

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### 1. Promoting the use of cultural tools

WSROC and the NSW Environmental Trust promote the use of cultural tools and the model established by WiTL to engage communities in decision-making processes around environmental sustainability issues. This could be done by providing information about possible sources of funding and disseminating information about the products and key learnings of WiTL to relevant community-based organisations and local government networks.

#### 2. Promoting the use of WiTL products

WSROC promote the use of WiTL products as educational resources by approaching Education Services Australia. There may also be other opportunities in the post-secondary and tertiary sectors. Additionally, WSROC should consider showcasing some of the videos in 2013 through venues and events in western Sydney and possibly other regions.

#### 3. Strategic forward planning with councils (a)

WSROC continue to work with its councils in strategic forward planning to link catchment management improvement activities with community engagement processes that include the use of cultural tools. Ideally this would funnel participants from different coordinated activities and stages into participative decision-making forums.

#### 4. Strategic forward planning with councils (b)

WSROC continue to work with its constituent councils to promote greater understanding of facilitated public participation in policy development and decision-making. The vehicle of environmental issues is a strategic way of doing this when linked with cultural tools such as those developed through Water in The Landscape. The lessons learned by using independent facilitators such as Straight Talk to manage the consultative processes should be showcased.

#### 5. Capacity building in impact evaluation

While cultural projects were able to provide evidence of strong engagement in activities, they were not able to undertake longer-term impact evaluation. WSROC and the NSW Environmental Trust will need to consider the degree to which they require this data and the appropriate resourcing commitment. Consideration should be given to funding evaluation support early in the project to undertake post-event longitudinal follow-up.

#### 6. Showcasing use of online and social media

The learnings from WiTL's use of online and social media tools be disseminated and showcased so that other similar Programs can benefit.



#### **7. Ongoing partnership development**

WSROC give consideration to developing a toolkit of resources and case study examples to help council staff and future cultural projects in partnership development around environmental sustainability.

*Water in The Landscape Evaluation, p. 7 and 8*

### **4.3 Next Steps**

#### **Continuing the work - WiTL #2**

The work undertaken in the last three years has developed a pioneering methodology to identify and fulfill a major gap in current environmental education and community engagement practices, particularly in Western Sydney.

It is now critical that this momentum be maintained, not just to maximise return on previous investments but to build on the work which has just begun in a limited capacity. Therefore WSROC would like to explore the potential for an expanded roll-out across the region.

A follow-up Program would incorporate the most successful elements of Water in the Landscape and can be adapted to the needs of councils, their communities, and external stakeholders.

Key reasons to continue the work:

- A new form of engagement has been pioneered and developed with the potential for rolling out nationally.
- Continued need to support local councils and community members to build relationships and engage in shared responsibility for maintaining their environments.
- Community feedback and follow-up will improve and add value to the investment in the communities, councils and NGOs and amplify the outcomes achieved across the board.
- Continued capacity building in community consultation and environmental management among both council staff and the community.
- Assisting councils to implement deliberative consultation processes - a first for most Western Sydney Councils.
- Promote new ways for councils to engage with residents across issues – in this case, water management.
- Further demonstrating how to best engage and work with the community on environmental issues through an arts/ cultural perspective rather than from a technical perspective.
- Engage community members who were previously unengaged and through so doing, counter the dominance of the “squeaky wheels”.

## **Dissemination – the best of WiTL**

Numerous resources have been developed through WiTL. The project team developed a dissemination kit which was distributed to project partners and stakeholders. The pack supported the following resources:

- Overview of the Water in The Landscape cultural projects
- Engagement toolkit (how to develop an engagement plan)
- Water Wise Trading cards (set of trading cards for students, developed by Holroyd City Council)
- Water in The Landscape videos (to engage communities in thinking about water in the local environment)

WSROC will also promote the use of WiTL products as educational resources by approaching educational organisations.

## **5. Embedding Sustainability**

Longevity and sustainability have been major focus points throughout the Water in The Landscape Program. All activities were complimented by workshops and networking sessions to ensure both the cultural projects and the public participation process would continue long after cessation of the WiTL Program.

Examples of embedding sustainability in these elements of the Program:

- Through the public participation process, the project built the capacity of Environment and Sustainability Officers to run similar processes themselves. An example is Blacktown City Council who will take the engagement process and roll it out over their 22 catchments.
- Many cultural projects will continue their activities after their WiTL funding. A few examples are the 48 Green Hours Film competition which is now an annual event, Bankstown's Crosscurrents festival, which is now a bi-annual event and Bibby's Place which will continue to liaise with their newly established community committee around their sustainable street.

WSROC recognizes that the model of Water in The Landscape as developed over the last three years has major potential to continue and to be rolled out over Western Sydney and beyond. Therefore WSROC is currently looking to secure funding for a potential follow-up for the Program to maintain the momentum.

Further, WSROC will continue its liaison and engagement with the WSROC councils' Environmental and Sustainability Officers through their regular professional meetings. And the WiTL website will continue to exist as a knowledge stream for Western Sydney water management issues.

Also, for WSROC, the Water in The Landscape Program has emphasised the importance of running operations and events as sustainably as possible. The WiTL project team has briefed the WSROC office and WSROC councils on running sustainable events.

## 6. Delays/ Difficulties Encountered

The Water in the Landscape Program experienced a number of difficulties and delays:

- **Staff changes**  
Due to staff changes, the Water in The Landscape project was without a dedicated project manager between August and December 2011.
- **Problems in getting the required support from Councils for the Local Forums**  
In late 2010 it became apparent through a series of meetings with the WSROC General Managers Group that they had reservations about participating in the local forum process.

Councils were concerned that the deliberative democracy principals which underpinned the original proposal for the local forums would require them to commit to outcomes over which they had no control or input.

This required the Program staff to liaise with council officers and management at all levels, along with WSROC Board members, to explain the merits of the Program and develop ways in which the local forum project could meet the needs of councils, while at the same time meeting the requirements of the WiTL business plan.

By early 2012 the Program had secured commitment from four councils to participate in the process, resulting in five forums and one Regional Summit (delivered from May – August 2012).

Managing and resolving these issues delayed the original timetable for the local forums. However, by reviewing the forum process, WiTL was able to develop a more robust process with full commitment from the participating councils.

- **Delays in the finalisation of the cultural projects**  
Several of the WiTL cultural projects experienced delays in delivery for a variety of reasons (including difficulties establishing partnerships, difficulties in getting the right contractors or staff for the project, etc.). However, these have not caused any major problems for the Program, and did not affect the overall delivery schedule or project costs. In some cases, overcoming the obstacles that led to these delays resulted in a better outcome.
- **Delays in finalising the WiTL website**  
The process of building and launching the Water in The Landscape website was also subject to a series of delays, due mainly to staffing issues. However, these problems were overcome and a new, updated website was re-launched early 2012.

## 7. Modifications

The modifications to the Water in The Landscape project have been:

- The six- month extension given to accommodate delays in project implementation;
- The revision of the Regional Forums component to include a Forum developed by young people through the OzGreen cultural project, YOUTH LEADIng Australia, in addition to a second Regional Forum, the Summit, which was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2012.

## **8. Timetable**

Please refer to the Water in The Landscape Program's gantt chart in Appendix 7.

## **9. Permits or Approvals**

There were no approvals or permits required for this project.

## **10. Financial Statement**

Please refer to Appendix 8 for the financial statement.

## **11. Visual documentation**

For photos and other visual documentation of the Water in The Landscape project, see appendices:

- Cultural projects (Appendix 1)
- Workshops and Summit (Photos included in this report and in Appendix 2)
- Photo competition (Appendix 5 – vi)
- The Water in The Landscape website: [www.waterinthelandscape.org.au](http://www.waterinthelandscape.org.au)

Other materials:

- DVDs and materials produced by cultural projects can be viewed on the Program's website ([www.waterinthelandscape.org.au](http://www.waterinthelandscape.org.au)) and the Program's youtube channel ([www.youtube.com/user/WiTLwsroc](http://www.youtube.com/user/WiTLwsroc))

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Implementation and delivery Cultural projects (including final reports)

- i. *Provocative and Relevant* – a guide for prospective cultural projects
- ii. Table: Implementation overview of the Water in The Landscape Cultural projects
- iii. Crossing Water- Bibby's Place
- iv. 48 Hours Green Film
- v. Upstream to Home
- vi. Vox Pops
- vii. Our Water, Our Future
- viii. Documenting places through Crowd TV
- ix. Regional Catchment Field Day
- x. Living Streams
- xi. YOUth LEADIng Australia
- xii. Remember the Story
- xiii. Water Wise Trading Cards
- xiv. Vertical Garden
- xv. The Water Closest to You
- xvi. Auburn Central Place Making
- xvii. Cross Currents
- xviii. South Creek project
- xix. Keep the Dragonflies Dancing
- xx. Water Stories
- xxi. Final Reports Water in The Landscape Cultural projects

## Appendix 2: Local and Regional Forums

- i. Straight Talk final report

## Appendix 3: Community Engagement Research Project

- i. *Defining Eco-social Capacity Building and its Evaluation: A case study in environmental community engagement in Western Sydney* –UWS Research Paper
- ii. *A multifaceted, Cultural Approach to Community Engagement: Case Studies in urban Water Management* – UWS Research Paper

- iii. Final Report *Water in The Landscape Community Engagement Research*

## **Appendix 4: Evaluation**

- i. Evaluation Framework
- ii. Evaluation Methodology
- iii. Evaluation Final Report

## **Appendix 5: Communication and Media**

- i. Communication and Media Strategy
- ii. Water in The Landscape Planning Day report
- iii. WiTL media releases
- iv. Media monitor
- v. WiTL newsletter (example) and WiTL website (example)
- vi. Water in The Landscape photo competition

## **Appendix 6: Monitoring**

- i. Schedule C
- ii. Explanatory notes WiTL schedule C

## **Appendix 7: Water in The Landscape time line**

- i. Water in The Landscape Time Line

## **Appendix 8: Financial report**

- i. Notes regarding financial overview
- ii. Accountant Declaration and Financial Statement
- iii. WiTL financial overview