



Central Coast Council

Waterways Report Card

2023-2024



central coast
waterways

Central
Coast
Council

Managing our Waterways for a healthy future

Council is currently preparing a series of Coastal Management Programs (CMPs) which will form the foundation of long-term strategies for the coordinated management of all the lakes, lagoons, estuarine rivers and creeks, and the ocean beaches of the Central Coast. Due to the extensive waterways of the Central Coast, five different CMPs are in progress.

- Lake Macquarie CMP – in conjunction with Lake Macquarie Council
- Tuggerah Lakes CMP
- Open Coast CMP
- Coastal Lagoons CMP
- Hawkesbury Nepean CMP – in conjunction with 5 Greater Sydney Councils that border the estuarine section of the Hawkesbury Nepean River system.

The development of a CMP is a five-step process that Council is directed to follow by the State Government and will result in a management program with identified actions for implementation over the next 10 years. As each CMP moves through the stages of development, Council will be looking for input and feedback from the community, industry, and stakeholder agencies. This consultation provides the opportunity for the community to help identify issues and potential management actions that will assist in the long-term management of the Central Coast's beautiful waterways.



Tuggerah Lake

Lake Macquarie CMP

The Lake Macquarie CMP outlines 14 management actions for implementation by Central Coast Council in the Lake Macquarie estuary. These actions range from ongoing community engagement to foster climate resilient communities to reducing stormwater impacts on water quality and estuary health.

While Council will be taking the lead on most actions, it is acknowledged that local and active community groups play a crucial role in positive and long-lasting protection and enhancement of natural places. In recognition of this, one action in the Lake Macquarie CMP is to support community stewardship of natural areas through ongoing support of Landcare and other environmental volunteer programs. The Summerland Point/Gwandalan and Mannering Park Tidy Towns groups are two such groups that Council will continue to promote and support in their endeavour to improve the catchment and foreshore areas of Lake Macquarie through actions such as litter pickups, tree planting, foreshore management and weed control.

Tuggerah Lakes CMP

An important component of this CMP, The Tuggerah Lakes Wrack Management Strategy has been completed. In recognition that wrack management is a priority issue for the community, a co-design approach was adopted with Council, the community and other key stakeholders working closely together to develop this strategy. Ecological health, recreational, and economic values of the lakes are key drivers of this strategy.

Key features are:

- A focus on priority locations for wrack management and an adaptable service schedule based on community importance and improving ecological health.
- An action table which is scalable and sets out clear timeframes for delivery over a 10-year period addressing key issues of community concern and environmental impact.
- A monitoring and evaluation plan to measure the success of the strategy or amend wrack operations if required.



Coastal Lagoons CMP

In order to better understand the ongoing poor water quality of Avoca lagoon and possible contributors to it, an extensive process study was completed during Stage 2 of developing this CMP. The aim was to gain a better understanding of the nutrient dynamics currently occurring in the lagoon. One factor identified as a negative impact on water quality was the dredge hole that lies south of Bareena Island, a legacy of 1980's mineral sand mining. The study has identified that this depression in the lagoon floor acts as a sink hole to heavier saltwater entering when the lagoon entrance is open, resulting in water stratification and reduced oxygen levels or hypoxia in the deeper water. This in turn can change how nutrients are cycled through the system resulting in large amounts of nitrogen and phosphate being released impacting on the flora and fauna balance of the lagoon. The sink hole may also be trapping organic material from being flushed out when the lagoon opens adding to the nutrient load of the lagoon and promoting algal blooms. Catchment runoff was also strongly identified as impacting on water quality, in particular high sediment loads entering the lagoon's southern arm.

Hawkesbury Nepean CMP

The Hawkesbury Nepean CMP is being prepared in collaboration with five greater Sydney Councils that all border the estuarine section of this river system. For the Central Coast, this CMP will include management actions for the lower Hawkesbury River, the Broken Bay embayment, and Brisbane Water.

Collaboration between the six Councils during the preparation of this CMP is vitally important, especially for the Central Coast which receives the water coming down the river from further up in the catchment. The recent floods, which brought highly polluted water and substantial amounts of flood debris to our beaches, bays and waterways, highlights the need for strong and co-ordinated management actions along the whole of the river, feeder creeks and catchments areas. Community input and feedback is vital in developing a CMP that achieves the best outcomes for the estuary and the community. To give our community opportunity to have their say on what they believe is important regarding the protection and management of this beautiful waterway, extensive community engagement events were built into development of the CMP, these events were taking place around the time of publication of this document in late 2024.



Healthy Catchments, Healthy Waterways

Looking after and improving the ecological health of our lakes, lagoons, estuaries, and rivers is a major focus of Council. Through implementation of our existing Coastal Zone Management Plans, business as usual operational activities, targeted grant funded programs and emergency works, Council has undertaken a large and varied amount of important work during 2023-24 aimed at stabilising, protecting, and improving the health of our waterways and their catchments.



484 storm water improvement devices (SQID) in place



1344 tonnes of pollutants stopped by SQIDs from entering the waterways



25km gravity sewer mains relined



86 hectares of foreshore, flood plain and wetland **rehabilitated**



43 tonnes of rubbish removed from waterways by Clean4Shore



1070 manholes inspected and 61 rehabilitated



6 hectares of threatened species *Melaleuca bioconvexa* rehabilitated



12 floating landcare days and **105 volunteers**

Managing our waterways in reality means managing:

31km Lake Macquarie foreshore and **90km²** of catchment

70km of Tuggerah Lakes foreshore and **790m²** of catchment

72.3km of Brisbane Water foreshore and **152.5km²** of catchment

1.86km² of coastal lagoon waterway and **34.56km²** of catchment

Many kilometres of **rivers and creeks**

More Information

centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/environment/coastlines/estuaries-lagoons-and-wetlands

loveourwaterways.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au

environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/water/water-quality/about-water-quality

waterquality.gov.au/anz-guidelines/resources/previous-guidelines/anzecc-armcanz-2000

Contact

Central Coast Council

P: 02 4306 7900

E: waterways@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au



Photo Credit Cockrone Lagoon – Doug Beckers, Tuggerah Lake – Andy Smith