September 2006

An electronic update for Local Government on NRM and environmental policies, projects and events in Tasmania

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If you have any queries about the content of this newsletter, or ideas for contributions to future newsletters, please contact me on the details below…
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Funding Opportunities

Green Corps Assistance with Council Projects
Expressions of interest are open until mid-October to seek assistance with environment and heritage projects from Green Corps. Green Corps is a youth development and environment training programme set up by the Australian Government for young people aged 17-20. By contacting one of the Green Corps Service providers, Councils can nominate (or develop) a project to start in February 2007 that will give local Green Corp volunteers the chance to work on natural environment and cultural heritage in their region. It’s a great opportunity for Councils to support young people in their communities, while progressing valuable environmental initiatives. The Green Corps service providers are happy to come and discuss potential projects with any interested Council, and if you don’t feel you’ll have a project ready in time for this round… the next round of project nominations will need to be in by March. For more information about Green Corps, or how to get in touch with a service provider, visit the Green Corps website.

Renewable Energy Grants Open All Hours!
The Australian Government’s Renewable Energy Grants are now open for applications at any time. Applicants for the $100 million Renewable Energy Development Initiative (REDI) will no longer have to wait for designated rounds of the programme, but can submit applications at anytime throughout the year. For more information on what types of activities can attract REDI funding, check out the REDI website.

Exchange Incentive Fund
The Exchange Incentive Fund is now calling for proposals from regional groups and researchers. The fund provides small grants to help regional practitioners better manage their natural resources by: increasing their access to current information on native vegetation, and generating new knowledge through links to other organisations. The fund will provide assistance to practitioners conducting events or activities between now and January 2008. For more information about these grants, visit the Land & Water Australia website.

Resources and Tools

Shorebird Conservation Toolkit Released
WWF have released a shorebird conservation toolkit to help land managers protect and enhance shorebird habitat across Australia. Developed with the assistance of funding from the Natural Heritage Trust, the kit provides a guide to identifying and assessing site management needs and implementing management actions for shorebird sites. The kit is available online or on CD, by contacting WWF on (03) 6225 1394.

It’s Weedbuster Week! 7 – 14 October
News

Ministerial Water and Sewage Taskforce for Tasmania
The State Government has announced its intention to establish a Ministerial Water and Sewage Taskforce to plan for Tasmania’s future needs in these areas. The taskforce will be charged with identifying ways to achieve long-term improvement in Tasmania’s water and sewage services and infrastructure, and then developing a plan for the future provision of these services. In conducting its assessment, the taskforce will consult with all interested parties, particularly local government, before reporting to Cabinet in March 2007.

Changes to State Aerial Spraying Regulations
The Tasmanian Government is drafting new regulations for aerial spraying that will establish exclusion zones to be kept free from the effects of aerial spraying. Previously regulations on aerial spraying have attempted to regulate how spraying occurs, rather than where spraying should occur. But under the new regulations, an offence will be committed if the spray drifts into an exclusion zone (such as school zones, water bodies or organic farms). The onus is on the sprayer to ensure that they spray from a distance that ensures no impact will be felt within any nearby exclusion zones.

National Foods Milk Ltd Fined for Environmental Pollution
National Foods Milk Limited was last week ordered to pay $13000 in fines for causing material environmental harm. The company, and a contractor engaged by the company, faced charges in relation to the discharge of ammonia from a factory in Lenah Valley in October 2005. Water contaminated with ammonia flowed into the stormwater system and entered the Newtown Rivulet, killing hundreds of fish.

New Office of Water Resources
The Australian Government has announced its intention to establish an office of water resources. The new office will be linked to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and will complement the activities of the National Water Commission. The main role of the Office of Water Resources will be to provide coordinated policy advice across Commonwealth Agencies, and overseeing the implementation of water initiatives such as the COAG National Water Initiative, and the Living Murray Initiative. The establishment of the new office sends a loud signal as to the importance of improving water quality and water efficiency in Australia.

A National Code for Wind Energy Installations?
Representatives from the Australian Government, Local Government, industry, community groups and non-government organisations met in September to discuss the development of a national code for wind energy installations. Such a code would seek to establish a guiding framework for wind energy developers, based on community engagement and attention to cultural and environmental values. The participants of the roundtable discussion acknowledged the important role that renewable energy generation plays in addressing climate change and other energy issues in Australia. As such, the group has endorsed the need for a national code for wind energy installations.

Australia Not Keeping so Beautiful
Following their latest National Litter Index survey, Keep Australia Beautiful has found rubbish levels nationally are up by over one third! Major sources of rubbish include paper, snack/confectionary wrappers, plastic, straws and bottle tops. But topping the list of litter sources are cigarette butts, which frequently find their way from our streets into our waterways. Cigarette butts are a significant issue for councils, and the Australian Local Government Association is working with Commonwealth agencies on anti-smoking strategies. Other approaches to the problem include education campaigns targeting smokers with the message to ‘do the right thing’. However education campaigns (such as that promoted by the Butt Littering Trust) have been criticised by many agencies due to the sponsorship from tobacco companies. Opponents claim that the best way to reduce butt litter is to reduce the prevalence of smoking – a message that is not promoted through education campaigns such as that by the Butt Littering Trust. On the other hand, while people are still smoking, environmental stewardship from tobacco companies should not be discouraged!

What’s On

National Weedbuster Week
National Weedbuster Week, which runs from October 7 – 14, will see over 50 weedbuster events sprout up around the state! A key event this year is the ‘Boneseed Blitz’ – a state-wide effort to raise awareness and promote control of boneseed. The National launch of Weedbuster Week will be opened by Senator the Hon Eric Abetz this Friday October 6 at Rosny Park, Tasmania, which will also include a working bee and site tour. Events are being organised by Councils and community groups in most municipalities, so check out the website to see what’s happening in your region through the Weedbuster website.
Workshops

Strategic Funding Workshops
In early November workshops will be held in each of the regions to discuss strategic funding opportunities in NRM related areas. The workshops will give an overview on Australian Government grants, and how to develop projects for various funding opportunities, before looking at effective grant writing for various grants (eg: Envirofund and Community Water Grants). The sessions will also give feedback on previous rounds, and outline the support that is available to people, including Council staff, who are developing projects and/or writing funding applications. For more information about these sessions, contact Jenni Rigby at LGAT. There will be afternoon sessions in the South and North-west, for facilitators and Council staff, and more general information sessions for the public will be held from 5 pm.

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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>Mon 6 November</td>
<td>Phillip Smith Centre, Glebe</td>
<td>2-4pm (5-7pm public session)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Devonport</td>
<td>Wed 8 November</td>
<td>D’port Entertainment Centre</td>
<td>2-4pm (5-7pm public session)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>Thurs 9 November</td>
<td>Inveresk Tramsheds</td>
<td>5-7pm public session only</td>
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Climate Change Adaptation for Planning Practitioners
The Planning Institute of Australian, in association with the Australian Greenhouse office, are presenting a series of seminars around Australia on ‘climate change adaptation for planning practitioners’. A seminar will be held at the Country Club Casino in Launceston on 9 November. Further details about the seminar will be available soon.

Controlled Waste Producers – Familiarisation Workshops
A series of workshops will be held around the state to inform controlled waste producers about their responsibilities under the new regulations scheduled to be in place by November. The first workshop will be held in Burnie on 16 October, and a second workshop in Launceston on 17 October. Dates and venues for southern workshops are yet to be finalised. For more information, or to RSVP to the workshops, contact Carolyn Knight.

Conferences

International Biennial Forest Growers Conference 2006
The International Biennial Forest Growers Conference will this year be held at the Tram Sheds in Launceston from 22 – 25 October. The conference offers an outstanding social and business programme, including over 55 speakers, four full day and three half-day technical tours. This is an excellent opportunity to explore forest growing and share experiences with people from around the country and beyond in a local venue. Further details on the programme and how to register are available from the Australian Forest Growers website.

International Landcare Conference
The International Landcare Conference is on in Melbourne from 8 – 11 October, based around the theme of ‘landscapes, lifestyles and livelihoods’. And, although it’s just around the corner, it might still be worth checking out what’s happening by visiting the conference website.

Biodiversity: Balancing Conservation and Production - Advanced Notice
Tamar NRM, in association with the Centre for Environment, University of Tasmania, is presenting a biodiversity conference next year to highlight the balance between conservation and production. The conference will focus on case studies that have been successful in achieving this balance, from around Tasmania and beyond. The conference will run from the 26-28 June 2007 at the Launceston Campus of the University of Tasmania. If you have a case study that may be suitable for the conference, contact the conference manager.

Local Government Sustainable Development Beyond 2030 Conference
The inaugural Local Government Sustainable Development Beyond 2030 conference, hosted by Environs Australia in Sydney during September, was a huge success. The conference presented case studies of innovative and effective environmental projects and initiatives undertaken by Councils from around Australia. The final day of the conference involved the Local Government NRM Facilitator Network conducting a workshop with conference participants on how to integrate NRM into Corporate and Strategic Plans. The conference proceedings are available from the Conference website.