September 2007

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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After almost two years in the position of Local Government NRM Facilitator I will be leaving the Local Government Association of Tasmania to take up a position with the Victorian Government's Department of Sustainability and Environment. I have greatly enjoyed working with Local Government and within the Natural Resource Management framework in Tasmania, and I'll be leaving with very fond memories. The Association is looking to fill this position, and hopefully there won't be too much of a gap before a new NRM Facilitator is on-board. I'll be finishing up in this position on Friday 19 October, so if you have any questions you can try and catch me before that date on the details above.

Take care,
Jenni

➢ Funding Opportunities

Echo Green Fellowships for Social Innovation
Echo Green offers first-stage funding to turn bold ideas for social change into innovative projects – in any location! Fellows can come from any country, with funding available for projects in any country. Applications are now open (until 3 December 2007) for projects to be undertaken in 2008. For more information visit the Echo Green website.

➢ Resources and Tools

Launch of New Water Innovation Business
The Tasmanian Government this month re-launched the new ‘rethinking tomorrow’ infrastructure business of the Stornoway Group in Relbia (near Launceston). The new venture provides a range of innovative wastewater treatment systems and water recycling stations.

New Guide to Tackling Willow Weeds
A free guide was released this month, offering practical solutions for controlling one of Australia’s worst weeds – the willow tree. The Willows Best Practice Management Guide draws together the expertise of researchers, waterway managers and weed controllers to detail management and control options relevant to a wide range of circumstances. The guide, jointly funded by the Australian and Victorian Governments, is available on-line from the Weed CRC’s website.

New Weed Management Guides on Weeds CRC Website
The Weeds CRC has released new weed management guides with an emphasis on managing weeds for biodiversity. Two new guides – African Boxthorn (Lycium ferocissimum) and Coolatai grass (Hyparrhenia hirta) – have just been released, as the first of eight in a new series, so keep an eye on the Weed CRC’s website.

Weeds In Australia – New Website
The Australian Government this month launched a new website to help people identify which plants can be a problem in their local area – and to provide advice on how to manage them. The new website - http://www.weeds.gov.au/ - helps backyard gardeners play a significant role in reducing the spread of weeds.

New Guidelines for creating or sustaining bird habitat in domestic gardens now available at: http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/spaces/guidelines.cfm
Review of Tasmania’s NRM Framework and Legislation
The Department of Primary Industries and Water are currently conducting a review of Tasmania’s NRM Framework and legislation. A six-week public comment period commenced with the launch of the Review Discussion Paper on Friday 14 September. The Discussion Paper provides background information about the Tasmanian NRM Framework, and presents several focus questions based around the terms of reference of the review. To submit your comments (by 26 October), visit the DPIW website or contact the project team on 6233 2742 for a hard copy of the review.

Comment Invited on World Heritage Area Plan
Public comment is currently being sought on a recent update to the 1999 Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Management Plan. Copies of the plan are available from Service Tasmania and the PWS website, with the period for public comment closing on 29 October 2007. The Australian and Tasmanian Governments are also seeking a cultural heritage representative for the TWWHA Consultative Committee. The Consultative Committee is part of the joint management arrangements between the two levels of government, and advises on the protection, conservation and management of TWWHA values.

Tasmanian Water Quality Monitoring
The latest round of water quality monitoring of Tasmanian waterways found traces of herbicide at three different locations. The herbicide MCPA – commonly used to treat broadleaf weeds in agricultural areas – was found in one location, whilst Simazine – commonly used in the establishment of forestry plantations – was found at two sites along the Macquarie River in the Northern Midlands. The report is available on the DPIW website.

Groundwater Action Plan
The Australian Government has released details of its $52 million Groundwater Action Plan, which includes a $50 million National Groundwater Assessment Initiative and a $2 million knowledge and capacity building strategy targeting groundwater managers, groundwater users and the science community. Approximately 30% of our water resources are sourced from groundwater, producing implications for our rivers and ground-water dependent ecosystems. For more information on the groundwater action plan, visit the NWC website.

Additional Drought Assistance Announced
The Australian Government this month announced an additional $430 million in drought assistance – extending the exceptional circumstances (EC) declarations in 38 areas that were due to expire in March 2008, and declaring interim EC assistance for farmers in Tasmania who are set to endure a second consecutive failed year.

Review into Tasmanian Forest Contracting Industry
The Australian Government has announced a review into the issues facing Tasmania’s forest contractors. Independent experts will be commissioned to assess what impacts recent issues have had on Tasmanian forest contractors, and outlining options to ensure long-term viability.

ICLEI Biodiesel Report Released
The International Centre for Local Environment Initiatives (ICLEI) project on Biodiesel has released a report on Biodiesel in Australia: Benefits, Issues and Opportunities for Local Government. The report looks at the current activities of the industry, and how these interact with Local Government, particularly in relation to council car fleets. The report can be accessed via the ICLEI website and in the NRM Toolkit on the LGAT website.

Launch of Australian Forestry Standard
Standards Australia has recognised the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) as a full standard under the International Standards Organisation (ISO) after a 3-year comprehensive review process. The AFS is a voluntary standard that applies to both native forest and plantations, and is recognised nationally and internationally.

Climate Corner

Bushfire Weather in Southeast Australia Report
A recent report that looks at trends and projected impacts of climate change and the risk of bushfires has been released this month. The report, conducted by the CSIRO, BOM and the Bushfire CRC for the Climate Institute of Australia, discusses general national trends, and regionally specific trends of climate change and the implications that this has for bushfire risks. The report can be downloaded from the Climate Institute website, or found within the research section of the Climate Change Toolkit on the LGAT website.

National ‘Clean’ Energy Target Announced
With the issue of climate change still dominating in the lead up to the federal election, the Australian Government has announced plans to replace state and territory clean energy targets with a new national target. The new national targets will allow nuclear energy and coal-fired power generation with geological sequestration of carbon dioxide as clean energy for the purposes of the target.

9 out of 10 Australians believe that 25% of their electricity should come from renewable sources by 2020 according to recent Newspoll figures.
Workshops

Planning for Peak Oil
Sustainable Living Tasmania, Hydro Tasmania and ASPO Australia are presenting a workshop with Phil Hart – Petroleum engineer and member of the Australian Association for the Study of Peak Oil (APSO Australia) at the Hydro Hands on Energy Discovery Centre in Hobart on Monday 22 October from 3 – 5pm. The workshop will look at how close we are to the peak of world oil production, and what the impacts are likely to be globally and in Tasmania. The workshop will also include local presenters who will discuss the likely impact of peak oil for their organisations. To register contact Sustainable Living Tasmania on 6234 5566 or email.

Transfer Station Training
This one-day training program developed by Sustainability Victoria is designed specifically for waste transfer station operators. It will improve understanding of OH&S and environmental obligations, risk management processes and waste management opportunities, as well as looking at the management of the public interface of business. The next course will be held in Melbourne on Tuesday 20 November. For more information, visit the website.

FPA’s Forest Botany Course
The Forest Practices Authority will be conducting Forest Botany Courses in the Northeast, Northwest and Southeast from 12 - 14 November from 9am – 4:30pm. The courses offer skills in plant identification, understanding how plants and plant communities function, and forest management and conservation issues. To find out where and when a course will be held in your region, contact Nina Roberts at FPA.

Conferences

EP3 – The Third Wave of Environmental Practice
2007 marks the 20th year of the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand as the peak professional body for environmental practitioners in Australasia. To celebrate this 20th Anniversary, the Institute is proud to present EP3 - The Third Wave in Environmental Practice. EP3 is a series of eleven, one day forums across Australia and New Zealand. These forums have been designed to inform environment professionals on the changing industry of the Environment with a focus on the knowledge, experience and skills practitioners will need to deliver best practice in the years to come. Visit the website for more information.

Climate Change and Human Health Conference
The human and social implications of climate change are only just beginning to be recognised. This conference will explore current knowledge about human health and social impacts of climate change and seek to identify immediate and longer-term priorities for the health and human services sector in Australia. The conference will be held at the Park Hyatt in Melbourne from 16 – 17 October. For more information visit the conference website.

Waste Conference and Expo 2007
The 2007 Waste Conference and Expo will be held from 17 – 18 October in Coffs Harbour. This year’s conference will include a presentation on the Integrated Waste Program in place in the region of Durham, Ontario, Canada. For more information about the conference, visit the website.

Old Forests, New Management Conference
Forestry Tasmania and the CRC for Forestry are hosting the Old Forests, New Management Conference in Hobart from 17-21 February 2008 at the Grand Chancellor in Hobart. The conference is expected to attract over 150 delegates from Australia and overseas. Abstract submissions are now being accepted on-line. For more information about this conference, visit the website.

EcoForum – Environmental Management Conference
The EcoForum environmental management conference will be held at Conrad Jupiters on the Gold Coast from 27 – 29 February 2008. The conference will be arranged around four themes of environmental management: managing the macro environment, managing contaminated sites, managing water systems, and managing communities. EcoForum is accepting submissions for conference papers until 31 October. For more information visit the website.

If you no longer wish to receive this electronic newsletter, please e-mail Jenni at the Local Government Association of Tasmania.

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