REVIVE RICHMOND RIVER PLAN

FEBRUARY 2019

THE GREENS

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WHY IS THIS NEEDED?

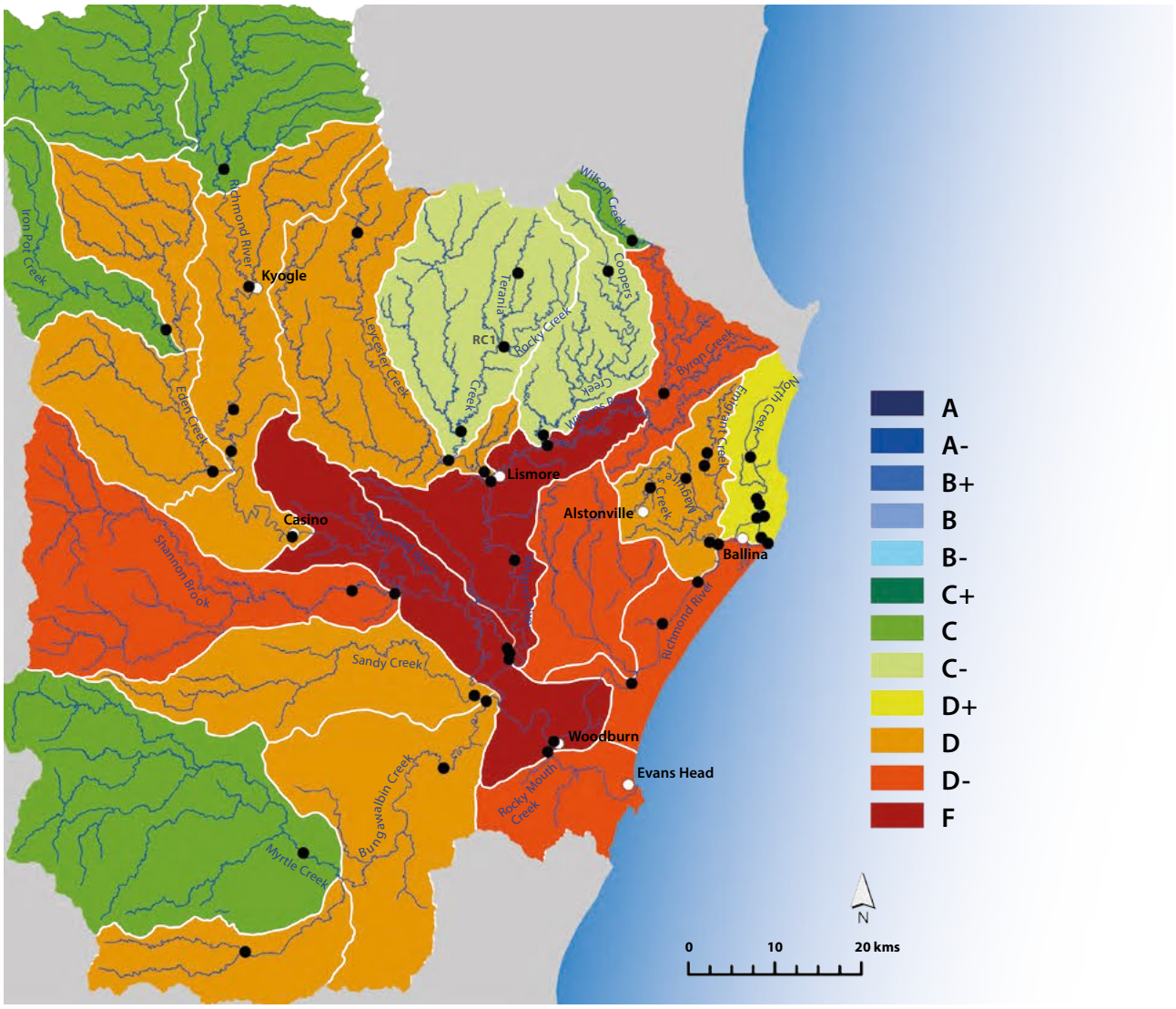
Decades of neglect, broken promises, erosion and pollution have resulted in the Richmond River becoming one of the most degraded river systems on the east coast of Australia.

Decades of logging, unsustainable farming practices and agricultural and urban runoff have destroyed native riparian vegetation, polluted waterways and degraded riverbanks. Excessive sediment load smothers the river bed habitats for native marine animals and plants and reduces water quality.

This has led to a 70% loss of Richmond River's fish habitat. Wild sub-tidal oysters are all but gone, destroying the once thriving fishing and oyster industry, and the green seagrass beds are vanishing.

When a river system like the Richmond River is no longer capable of supporting marine life, something is terribly wrong. The mighty Richmond River is dying, and we need to develop a plan to revive the river - to be implemented after the next election.

OVERALL ECOHEALTH GRADES FOR SUBCATCHMENTS IN THE RICHMOND.



Source: Richmond Catchment Report Card 2014. Produced by the Aquatic Ecology Restoration and Research Group.

The University of New England, in its recent 2014 EcoHealth Report for the Richmond River, graded the waterway's overall health at D-, or poor. While the overall grade was D- for the catchment, grades ranged from an F in the Wilsons River (the lowest rating possible) and upper Richmond estuary up to a C in the headwater streams of the catchment. 12 of the 17 river systems recorded a score of D or less. This Plan is about turning those scores into an A+ for all the streams, making the Wilsons River swimmable again.

The 2012 Coastal Zone Management Plan for the Richmond River Estuary (CZMP) found there is currently no holistic management of the river and a lack of coordination between management entities. The plan also found there has been inconsistent monitoring and evaluation of the health of the catchment.

Extreme flood events, such as those experienced in the Northern Rivers in April 2017, further exacerbate the river system's degradation. The historic broad-scale land clearing and floodplain drainage have exposed acid sulfate soils, leading to blackwater surges with disastrous impacts on the river system.

The major fish kills – especially in 2001 and 2008 – have massive flow-on economic impacts on fishing, tourism and community health. The deaths of thousands of oysters in the estuary has decimated the entire oyster farming industry.

TIMELINE OF (IN)ACTION ON THE RICHMOND RIVER

In the past 30 years there have been at least 24 reports identifying the poor condition of the Richmond River and setting out plans to improve it. There have been three major fish kills and blackwater events since 2001, events not previously documented in Australia.

June 1987	State Pollution Control Commission conducts water quality surveys of major rivers on the North Coast. Richmond Valley water quality was found to be poor.[1]
1992	The NSW State Rivers and Estuaries Policy is adopted, committing the NSW Government to reporting on the condition of each of the State's major river systems.
1995	A report on the Local and Regional impacts of acid sulphate soil runoff in the lower Richmond River catchment is prepared for the Department of Land and Water Conservation by scientists at Southern Cross University[2].
1996	The Richmond Catchment Management Strategy is released.
1997	The NSW Government discussion paper, A Stressed Rivers Approach to the Management of Water Use in Unregulated Streams[3], addresses the problem of stressed rivers and establishes a consistent rationale for the future management of rivers.
1999	NSW Government sets Water Quality Objectives (WQOs) and the River Flow Objectives (RFOs) for the Richmond River catchment. These are not regulatory.
Aug 1999	The Richmond Catchment Stressed Rivers Assessment Report[4] presents data which indicates high levels of stress from human commercial activities.
2000	NSW adopts the Australian and New Zealand Environment Conservation Council (ANZECC) guidelines for fresh and marine water quality to "provide government and the community … with a framework for conserving ambient water quality."
Feb 2001	Following major flooding in the Richmond catchment, a major fish kill, unprecedented in Australia, occurs in the Richmond River due to low dissolved oxygen levels. NSW Fisheries closes the Richmond River to all forms of fishing for three months.
March 2002	The Australian Catchment, River and Estuary Assessment 2002 finds the Richmond River in "extensively modified condition" and sets out options for improvement.
2002	The Richmond Regional Vegetation Committee releases a Draft Richmond Regional Vegetation management plan for the Department of Land and Water Conservation.[5]
Feb 2003	The Upper North Coast Catchment Management Board releases the Catchment blueprint : integrated catchment management plan for the Upper North Coast catchment 2002.
March 2003	Final report of the independent inquiry into the North Coast rivers identifies a "whole-of-government" effort is required for effective river management.

1 Williams, Ross. State Pollution Control Commission Northern Rivers Study No 4. Water quality in the Richmond River. June 1987
2 Ferguson, A. and Eyre, B. (1995) Local and Regional impacts of acid sulphate soil runoff in the lower Richmond River catchment. Report to Department of Land and Water Conservation. Southern Cross University.
3 Published by the NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation, Sydney, August 1997
4 Published by the NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation, Sydney 1999
5 Richmond Regional Vegetation Committee (2002) Draft Richmond Regional Vegetation management plan. unpublished report for Department of Land and Water Conservation.

2004	Ballina Shire Council State of Environment Report identifies “pressures on the Richmond River Catchment from urbanisation, and economic and agricultural activities”.
Oct 2005	NSW Government introduces Marine Water Quality Objectives (MWQOs) for NSW Ocean Waters which directly relate to the coastal marine environment.
2006	The Estuary Processes Study of the Richmond River estuary finds “environmental and human health values of the Richmond River estuary are being compromised”.
Sept 2006	The Northern Rivers Catchment Action Plan is launched by Northern Rivers CMA and sets a target to rehabilitate 60% of stream lengths by 2016.
Jan 2008	A second major fish kill occurs after prolonged rainfall and extensive flooding throughout the Richmond River catchment.
2008	The Wilsons River Catchment Management Plan is launched by Rous Water.
2010	The Northern Rivers Regional Biodiversity Management Plan, identifies the poor condition of river biodiversity across the Northern Rivers.
June 2011	The Wilsons River Reach Plan for Lismore identifies major pollution run off, erosion, weed and land clearing issues which have degraded the river system.
Feb 2012	The Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) for the Richmond River Estuary is released as a $16 million ,10-year plan to address management issues.
Nov 2012	The North Rivers CMA’s Regional State of the Environment 2012 report finds fish condition and river health in parts of the Richmond catchment are poor.
April 2013	The Northern Rivers Catchment Action Plan 2013- 2023 is launched.
Nov 2013	The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation Richmond River case study for its Revitalising Australia’s Estuaries project finds a need to “greatly repair and extend the available habitat and therefore improve overall fishery productivity”.
2014	The Ecohealth Report for the Richmond River grades the waterway’s overall health at ‘D-‘, or poor. Grades ranged from an ‘F’ in the Wilsons River (the lowest rating possible) and upper Richmond estuary to a C in the headwater streams of the catchment.
Nov 2016	The North Coast State of the Environment Report highlights the poor quality of the Richmond River’s health compared to other catchments on the North Coast
March 2017	Another major fish kill and black water event occurs.
Aug 2017	The New South Wales Marine Estate Threat and Risk Assessment Report finds that major impacts on the Richmond catchment are almost certain to have significant impacts on fishing in the Richmond catchment.
2018	The NSW Government’s Marine Estate Management Strategy case study on the Richmond River finds the catchment is “in worse ecological health than most estuaries in NSW.”

CRAYFISH

CASE STUDY

One of the most devastating results of the Richmond River's continued degradation is the loss of many of our marine species. Successive Governments have ignored the declining health of the river over a 30 year period despite numerous reports and testimonies from locals who have tried to draw attention to the issue.

The Northern Rivers are crucial arteries in supplying freshwater habitats and sustaining the aquatic biodiversity in the region. As a Department of Primary Industries report notes:

> *"Healthy freshwater habitats in the Northern Rivers region are essential for conserving aquatic biodiversity. Of the 204 subcatchments identified in the North Coast Stressed Rivers Assessment (DLWC, 1999a&1999b), 33 were defined as High Conservation Value (HCV) including Cudgen Lake and Mooball Creek in the Tweed catchment; Belongil Creek, Lower Marshalls Creek and Simpsons Creek in the Brunswick catchment; 11 subcatchments of the Richmond system; Clarence River subcatchments including the Boyd, Nymboida, Sandon and Mann Rivers; Coastal Nambucca; Lower Deep Creek; Toorumbee Creek; Coastal Hastings; Ellenborough River; and Forbes River. However, more than 50% of the subcatchments assessed in the region were identified as having high environmental stress, including 22 of the HCV subcatchments."*

The most visible examples of the neglect of our river is the threat to our crayfish stocks.

According to the Department of Primary Industries:

> *"Crayfish play a fundamental role in the environment and are considered a keystone species. They have an important and unique position in aquatic food webs. They are major processors of organic matter acting as shredders, predators, collectors and grazers. They are an important source of food for other fauna including invertebrates, frogs, fish and platypus. They also assist in maintaining river health and structure."*

Our plan will help reverse the tragic decline of the Richmond River, enabling our marine species to not only survive but thrive. A healthy Richmond River will enable marine life - like our beloved crayfish - to thrive again.

Cleaning up the Richmond River will not only facilitate the return of a thriving ecosystem and a safe-to-swim river; it will also generate substantial economic opportunities for our region. These opportunities include sustainable aquaculture through the return of the region's once thriving fisheries and oyster farming industries, which have been significantly hindered by poor water quality across the region.

There will also be opportunities in sustainable tourism and recreational fishing with a cleaner river, adding value to our $800 million visitor economy. Through our Revive Richmond River Plan, we will restore Richmond River to its former glory, allowing nature to thrive, as well as the communities that live alongside the river.

REVIVE RICHMOND RIVER PLAN

Total funding proposed: $235 million over 10 years

plus funds from already announced state-wide initiatives

1 APPOINT A RICHMOND RIVER COMMISSIONER

$15 MILLION OVER 10 YEARS

This would be a full time, independent Statutory Office, the role of which is to coordinate a whole of catchment response to the recovery of the river.

The Commissioner would also Chair a new Richmond River Advisory Council, made up of representatives from local and state governments including Rous Water, Landcare, Aboriginal representatives, scientific experts, landholders, fishers and local business and community members.

The Commissioner and Council would be tasked with:

- ➔ Determining and delivering River Recovery incentive funding.
- ➔ Reviewing and reporting on river health, including:
  - ➔ Setting clear targets for recovery and regeneration
  - ➔ Monitoring progress
  - ➔ Delivering three-yearly comprehensive reports
- ➔ Delivering community and business education programs.

OYSTERS

The Greens' plan will enforce the guidelines for the protection of Richmond River's severely depleted oyster industry, as laid out in the Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) of 2016, the primary regulatory document around aquaculture in NSW.

Geoff Lawley, the sole remaining oyster farmer on the Richmond River, contends that none of the CZMP protections based around the regulation of floodgates, pH levels, bacteria and hydrogen sulphide testing are being met.

The NSW North Coast Sustainable Aquaculture Strategy also requires updating to reflect the realities of climate change, the Richmond River's poor health and to provide a strategy for restoration. The Strategy states: "Potential impacts of climate change on the oyster industry … are not likely to become apparent over the term of this strategy."

It incorrectly claims that the Richmond River does not suffer from poor water quality. This grossly misrepresents the concurrent impacts of climate change, blue green algae outbreaks, fish kills and studies such as the Richmond Ecohealth project of 2014, which gave an overall report card grading the Richmond catchment with a D-.Rous Country Council's Risk and Audit Committee formed under section 355 of the Local Government Act 1993 needs to be more representative of the relevant stakeholders in the catchment. Oyster farmers, commercial fisheries, recreational fishermen and marine environmental groups must be involved.

2 FUND RIVER RECOVERY

$100 MILLION OVER 10 YEARS

JOBS

The Greens' Richmond River Recovery plan will create local jobs and opportunities across a variety of sectors, from research to fishing to tourism to aquaculture and many others.

The once-thriving local fishing and aquaculture industry will be revived as oysters and sea life return to the healthy river. While oyster farming is now in a state of recession due to the poor water quality, it can be restored to its former glory through cleaning up our rivers.

Southern Cross University will immensely benefit from additional research opportunities and jobs created by benchmarking, monitoring and research activities. With Southern Cross University producing "well above world standard" (ERA) research in Environmental Science and Veterinary Science and Animal Studies, this is a win-win opportunity for both the University and the wider community.

Last, but not least, the millions of visitors to the Northern Rivers can experience clean, sustainable tourism and adventure opportunities such as water rafting, kayaking and swimming in clean rivers.

The Richmond River is in urgent need of recovery, with the river being in one of the worst states of its long life. Our $100 million investment over 10 years is a serious and long-term commitment to restore a once-healthy river from its sickened and polluted state into a thriving, healthy river. Our vision is for a flourishing river that can sustain a wealth of plant and marine life, bringing back the creatures that once teemed in it, such as oysters and crayfish.

We will do this through a combination of policy measures that will help reduce the pollution going into the river and give Richmond River space and assistance to 'breathe,' through a program of re-vegetation and regeneration.

Fencing off river banks to stock, including provisions of off-stream water and creek crossings, will minimise the potential of further contamination of the water from livestock including sheep, cattle and other animals. This will reduce run-off levels from effluent and support the river's regeneration.

Coupled with the fencing of river banks, a comprehensive suite of packages will incentivise changes to farming practices to reduce run-off and erosion. Farmers in our community know that continued degradation of the Richmond River is not only a threat to precious marine and plant life, but also to the economic well-being of industries in our community. Our package of incentives will include education, low-interest loans and grants for conservation work and other measures that will build on the desire and knowledge of our local farmers to do the right thing for our river.

Besides change in land use practices, we will implement direct measures to assist in the regeneration of the river, through planting trees and undertaking wetland restoration projects. Tree planting will help regenerate the river by assisting natural filtering processes, providing animals and plants with habitat and naturally cooling the river by providing shade.

We will invest in research grants to assist in the benchmarking, monitoring and restoration of the Richmond River. The world class policy expertise that exists in Southern Cross University will be the backbone of our research efforts, providing opportunities to students and researchers as well as allowing us to use their expertise.

The funding would be available to Government agencies, Landcare and other community groups, landholders, businesses and local councils for activities such as:

- ➔ Fencing off river banks to stock, including the provision of off-stream water and creek crossings.
- ➔ Planting trees, wetland and mangrove restoration and weed management.
- ➔ Research grants for benchmarking, monitoring and restoration.
- ➔ Public education programs.

GROW THE FISHING INDUSTRY

The Greens' plan will assist fisheries by rehabilitating the Richmond River. Contrary to the assertion of the Government's 2016 Coastal Management Plan that the river "does not suffer from poor water quality," the Greens recognise that its neglect has severely compromised the fishery industry.

The Government's 2015 Structural Adjustment Review Committee (SARC) dramatically reshaped the state's commercial fishing. Ballina Fishermen's Co-op CEO, Phil Hilliard, said SARC reforms halved industry employment and dramatically reduced the annual catch.

No doubt the reforms reflected declining fish stocks, but they do not mention climate change or environmental deterioration. Mr Hilliard said, "the number of fishermen fishing is all about the reform. The amount of fish caught is all about the health of the river."

He cited fish kills in 2002, 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2016. "The one in 2008 wiped out a lot of the river. What have we done about the acid sulphate water sitting in the drainage systems? As soon as we get rain all that stuff is going to come rushing into the river and decimate it. It's a political football; everybody saying it's somebody else job."

The Greens River Commissioner will address acid sulfate soil runoff and the control of flood gates through management of state and local council bodies. Proper riparian management will enable breeding stocks and regenerate pH and oxygenation.

3 END NATIVE FOREST LOGGING IN CATCHMENT AND BRING IN 30M RIPARIAN BUFFER FOR PLANTATIONS AND PRIVATE NATIVE FORESTRY

$20 MILLION TRANSITION GRANT FUNDS

According to the Coastal Zone Management Plan for the Richmond River, "the majority of the Richmond River catchment has been extensively cleared of native vegetation," and "remaining vegetation needs to be protected and enhanced wherever possible."

28 state forests make up 9.2% of the Richmond River catchment land (62,863 hectares) and are currently not protected from logging. There are 4,155 km of streams in state forests in the Richmond catchment. Currently, there is only a 10-metre riparian buffer for logging in native forests; and for 76% of streams in state forests the Government has proposed to reduce this to only a five-metre buffer.

Funding and coordination will be insufficient to improve the river if we continue logging the catchment. That is why the Greens want to end native forest logging on public land and transfer the land to the National Parks Estate. In those areas of the headwaters that are the Githabul Native Title Lands, the care and control be handed to the Githabul for rehabilitation as part of the Githabul Rangers working on Country initiative. We would then work with the community to develop comprehensive multi-use and tourism plans for these areas.

A $20 million transition grant would be provided for impacted businesses and the affected forestry workforce, with assistance to take up jobs created by the recovery plan.

TOURISM AND RECREATION

The Richmond and Wilsons rivers are beautiful natural assets that are currently being ignored or used as dumping grounds and sewage for our towns and farms. Turning that around will require a massive program of public works, and a public relations campaign to convince the community of their potential for tourism and recreation.

On the ground, recreational amenity will be realised by dedicated rehabilitation works in concert with Landcare and other community groups. The Plan will employ Githabul and other regeneration professionals in planting millions of trees along the catchment, implementing best practice wetland and mangrove rehabilitation, and cleaning up and fencing off the river banks while they're revegetated.

This will involve the removal of vast quantities of industrial and household waste from river banks and the river bed, and the removal of invasive weeds and other pests. Cleaning up and screening polluting effluent from the stormwater sub catchment and wider environment will be an essential part of this process.

The plan will reserve and construct specific areas for recreational amenity and swimming, and encourage commercial premises such as cafes and restaurants to build with river frontage. The 2011 Estuary Management Policy will be updated to reflect the exigencies of climate change, drought and increased flood frequency and take into account the 2014 EcoHealth Report, working towards an A+ score for all areas of the catchment. Encouraging people to swim in a clean river will provide flow-on benefits from tourism to all the communities in our electorate.

4 ESTABLISH A LAND ACQUISITION REVOLVING FUND AND VOLUNTARY COVENANT PROGRAM

$70 MILLION SEED FUNDING

This would operate in a similar way to current arrangements under the Biodiversity Conservation Trust, by setting up a revolving fund for purchasing and selling key areas of land.

The land would be selected on the basis of its value for conserving biodiversity and river health and protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage. The land would then be revegetated and restored before being sold, with covenant conditions attached to the title. Money from resale of the land would then be used to buy new land.

$70 million will allow about 7,000 hectares of high value land to be purchased outright. Over a 10 year period this will allow about 25,000 hectares to be purchased for restoration, and resold with conservation covenants placed over each title.

SWIMMABLE WILSONS RIVER IN LISMORE

In many other areas of the world, freshwater rivers are available for swimming, kayaking, boating, recreational fishing and many other sustainable, clean tourism opportunities that visitors prefer to do in clear, healthy rivers, as against stagnant, polluted ones. Cleaning up our rivers will not only create direct usage opportunities, but further enhance our reputation as a clean, sustainable region – adding a premium value to all our other exports and attracting tourists and visitors.

The Richmond River Catchment could provide an ideal swimming amenity for both locals and tourists. However, families living in the catchment and our valuable tourists are more likely to head to the beaches rather than take the risk of swimming in a polluted river. A swimmable river would open up opportunities for recreation and activities, drawing in visitors and providing locals with close-to-home recreational amenities.

The Greens believe that clean, swimmable rivers are the birthright of every Australian. Our policy to revive the Richmond River will make that a reality again for the Northern Rivers.

5 PROTECT AND ENHANCE ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

$30 MILLION OVER 10 YEARS

The CZMP identified that the estuary has "high spiritual and cultural significance" to local Aboriginal Australian communities. We will facilitate the direct involvement of these communities in the management of the river, working in partnership to restore the status of the river.

To enhance cultural heritage management in the Richmond River, the following programs would be funded:

- ➔ Fund the Githabul Rangers Program to re-vegetate and restore their native title lands in the headwaters, particularly the Bell Miner Associated Dieback (BMAD) areas.
- ➔ Co-funding with the Aboriginal Commercial Fishing Trust to enable the purchase of a fisheries quota to support economic development opportunities for Aboriginal fishers and communities.
- ➔ Initiatives with a direct benefit to Aboriginal Australian communities by way of employment opportunities with at least two Aboriginal land coordinators, improving habitat in areas of cultural significance or improving traditional fishing grounds.
- ➔ A program to identify and record cultural sites, with development of accompanying management plans.
- ➔ Assistance in the construction and ongoing funding of cultural centres.

The Greens will also ensure cultural fishing rights are recognised in NSW law and take steps to correct the historical injustices relating to access to traditional fishing grounds in the estuary. Aboriginal cultural fishing rights were recognised by NSW Parliament in 2009, but the legislation has never been assented to and those rights have never come into force. This uncertainty has left many Aboriginal people facing prosecution and jail as a result of fisheries offences, for activities considered by many as cultural fishing and part of native title rights.

GITHABUL RANGERS

Under the Plan, the headwaters of the Richmond River will be rehabilitated back to health. These 12 tributaries rising from the McPherson Range are on state forest land and the native title land of the Githabul. The Commissioner will have powers to protect the health of the river and its headwaters, including through requiring adequate buffers from land use activities.

Under new logging rules, these water courses are no longer protected adequately, the Government having reduced stream buffers from 10 metres down to five metres. The retention of undisturbed buffers around streams is essential to provide food and other resources to the aquatic environment and maintain riparian habitat.

The riparian rehabilitation work on the native title lands of the Githabul would be undertaken by the Githabul Rangers program. This would compliment the $30 million plan to rehabilitate all the state forest and national parks in the headwaters of the river.

In August 2018, representatives of the Githabul Tribe and NSW conservation groups signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the management of public state forests over which the Githabul Tribe hold Native Title rights in the upper Clarence and Richmond River catchments.

NSW MP and Greens environment spokesperson Cate Faehrmann and Greens candidate for Lismore Sue Higginson have previously announced $31.5 million over 10 years as part of a plan to transfer care and control of 29,700 hectares of state forests north of Kyogle to the Githabul Tribe. This will fund a comprehensive 15-year rehabilitation plan to arrest and repair forest dieback on Crown lands, in turn rehabilitating the upper catchments of both rivers.

The Githabul fought for their Native Title rights and in 2007 they were granted title over 1120 sq km in nine national parks and 13 state forests in the headwaters of the Richmond and Clarence Rivers.

The Githabul Rangers program has been operating for over 10 years, and has made significant inroads in addressing alarming levels of BMAD in eucalyptus forest and rainforest areas due to intensive logging.

The Greens plan to expand the program includes:

- ➔ Transferring care and control of 29,700 hectares of state forests, for which Githabul Native Title rights are recognised, from the NSW Government to the Githabul Tribe.
- ➔ Transferring the care and control of Crown lands around the Tooloom Falls Aboriginal Place to the Githabul Tribe.
- ➔ Providing $22.5m to support the $30m River Plan and implement a comprehensive 10-year plan to rehabilitate this land including arresting and repairing BMAD - this is additional to $1.4m pa of Commonwealth Caring for Country funding.
- ➔ $1.5m for the establishment of a Githabul Cultural and Tourism Centre and assistance in the preparation of a comprehensive Plan of Management to safeguard conservation and cultural values and prioritise rehabilitation works.

6 FUND A RIVER-TO-SEA ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

PART OF GREENS' $100 MILLION STATE-WIDE INITIATIVE

The Greens are calling for a River-to-Sea program that will offer financial support to local communities, to restore habitat that supports the recovery and health of marine ecosystems and biodiversity. This would be a $100 million fund over four years to support tidal river, estuary and inshore marine habitat improvement programs across NSW.

Programs in the Richmond River supported by this fund include:

Mangrove, saltmarsh, seaweed and seagrass regeneration programs.

- ➔ Supporting local oyster businesses and reducing water pollution that has damaged the oyster industry, with particular programs aimed at North Creek.
- ➔ Retrofitting biodiversity-friendly hard barriers along foreshores to increase biodiversity.
- ➔ Funding the Environmental Protection Authority to test water and increase compliance, particularly by industry.
- ➔ Reducing boat speeds across the estuary with a funded education program.

7 FUND THE LANDCARE COORDINATION PROGRAM

PART OF GREENS' $32.5 MILLION STATE-WIDE INITIATIVE

According to the North Coast Regional Landcare Network, local funding for coordination has been cut by 80% this year, resulting in the loss of vital coordinator positions in all 11 north coast local Landcare networks, as well as the regional Landcare facilitator role.

On top of this, funding for the NSW Government's Local Landcare Coordinators Initiative (LLCI) runs out on 1 July 2019 and there has been no guarantee provided for ongoing funding. The Initiative currently employs 17 part-time coordinators on the north coast.

A recent study conducted for Landcare NSW has estimated that the net benefits delivered by the NSW Landcare community are $500 million a year, and that for every $1 the NSW Government invests in Landcare, $6 of benefit is returned to the community.

The Greens are backing Landcare NSW's call for the NSW Government to commit to double the current funding for Landcare coordination to $32.5 million for four years, dated from 1 July 2018. This would provide funding for:

- ➔ At least 70 FTE paid coordinators, who will be embedded in district Landcare networks.
- ➔ A state-wide Landcare coordinator and executive.
- ➔ Two Aboriginal Landcare coordinators.

We need strong action to save our dying river. Our plan will revive the Richmond river, bring back aquatic agriculture and promote sustainable tourism in our region.

LEFT TO RIGHT
Cate Faehrmann, NSW Greens MP
Tamara Smith MP, Member for Ballina
Sue Higginson, Candidate for Lismore

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