



9 November 2000:

Local Community Urged To Turn The Tide on Sediments & Nutrients

Deputy Chair of the Lake Macquarie Project Management Committee, Councillor Greg Piper has called on local residents to be more environmentally aware when carrying out common domestic activities. Speaking at the meeting of the Lake Macquarie Estuary Management Committee today, Councillor Piper said that while major efforts were being made to inform the community about its responsibilities to the environment, many residents failed to see the immediacy of the problem.

"It worries me that there still appears to be this attitude that if it won't happen in my time, why should I change my way of doing things.

Unfortunately this view is inherited by the next generation. The fear is that we may still be hearing this line when many of our beautiful bays and inlets become tarnished by black ooze and odours, problems associated with sedimentation and nutrients."

Lake Macquarie & Catchment Coordinator Jeff Jansson launched an information brochure on Sedimentation and Nutrients as part of the Living Lake Macquarie series at the meeting. It contains some amazing statistics about the effects of human lifestyle on the Lake environment.

Mr. Jansson said it has been estimated that approximately 70,000 tonnes of sediment and 383 tonnes of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous) enter the Lake with stormwater each year. The estimate for natural sediment run-off prior to European development is just 6,600 tonnes.

"The truth is that no amount of government funding can completely solve the issues facing Lake Macquarie unless it is matched by a commitment from the local community to be more responsible in their individual domestic habits.

We need to develop the idea of a treatment chain, where all actions have a flow on-effect, with the Lake the final destination. The family home is the head of this chain, leading to drainage systems which should then flow into wetland areas and eventually into the Lake. So you can see how limiting sediments and nutrients at the source is easier than trying to fix the problem once it moves down the chain."

The free information brochure explains that while no individual person or cause is solely responsible, the everyday activities of the estimated 190,000 residents along with the many social and economic demands within the catchment has a cumulative, negative effect on the health of the Lake.

The brochures are available at Lake Macquarie Council and public library facilities. Discussion posters will also be distributed through community groups and schools.

For further information or to arrange an interview,
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