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Lake On The Line For Community Views

The Office of the Lake Macquarie & Catchment Coordinator will carry out a telephone survey of residents in the Lake Macquarie Catchment area from next Friday (11 July).

Researchers will complete 600 surveys on households over a two-week period, seeking opinions and asking questions about community understanding and awareness of environmental issues in Lake Macquarie.

Lake Macquarie & Catchment Coordinator Jeff Jansson said it would be the third time the survey has been carried out.

"The first survey in April 2000 was completed at the beginning of our intensive community education and reporting program. It gave us some baseline data to compare shifts in community awareness and understanding of key issues.

"When we went back to the community in September 2001 we found that the level of interest over Lake issues had grown significantly and that awareness of causal factors for environmental problems was much better. We also learnt that while this awareness was growing, the community had confidence that the health of the Lake would be improved over time."

FordComm Consulting will carry out the survey on behalf of The Office of the Lake Macquarie & Catchment Coordinator. Managing Director of FordComm, Christopher Ford, said the study was an integral part of the community education and reporting program.

"The survey provides us with a way to measure what effect the communication programs have on the local community. It also provides us with direction on areas that need greater attention. In the past we

have found that people are quite passionate about the Lake and the preservation of it as a priceless regional asset."

"The survey is a great opportunity for residents of the Lake Macquarie and Catchment area to have an input into the improvement of such an important natural resource."

Chris Ford said the telephone survey would take about ten minutes to complete. Analysis of the results would begin immediately after the survey period and a report will be published in the middle of August.

The Lake Macquarie Project Management Committee was established to implement the recommendations of the Premier's Taskforce on Lake Macquarie, formed in 1999 to address issues contributing to the degradation of the Lake environment. These include sedimentation and nutrient enrichment from stormwater run-off.

ENDS

For further information please contact:

Jai McDermott or Elizabeth Pilkington

Phone - 49292063 - Email - info@fordcomm.com.au