



**Media Release  
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For Immediate Use**

## **\$240,000 TO BE SPENT ON WETLAND REPAIR**

The Office of the Lake Macquarie & Catchment Coordinator will spend \$240,000 over the next 15 months to repair natural wetlands in the Lake catchment area. The money will be spent on target weeding, planting and bush regeneration, along with rubbish removal, fencing and signage.

The announcement comes after a recent study in Lake Macquarie found that wetland areas in the region are being lost at an alarming rate.

Banksia Environmental Consulting conducted a monitoring program of 30 Lake Macquarie wetlands and compared the findings with a similar survey completed in 1998. Almost 70% of the wetlands were found to have reduced in size over the five years.

The report was commissioned by The Office of the Lake Macquarie & Catchment Coordinator. Spokesperson Jeff Jansson said the study also identified some of the main causes of the problem.

*"There has been an overall loss of 2% or 12.5 hectares of wetland vegetation.*

*"The major causes are activities such as slashing or mowing, vehicle access into sensitive areas, land clearing, weed infestation and altered hydrology.*

*"As you can see by that list, most if not all the causes are entirely preventable."*

Jeff Jansson said the study also found that many swamp forest species were being lost.

*"The main species which are being put at risk are Swamp Mahogany, Broad-leafed Paperbark and Cabbage Tree Palms," he said.*

The Office of the Lake Macquarie & Catchment Coordinator has had work designs and technical specifications prepared to assist in the protection and remediation of a number of these wetlands.

The works program will integrate with the ongoing efforts of Landcare groups to improve selected wetlands.

**Background information:**

In 1983 the then State Pollution Control Commission undertook an Environmental Audit of Lake Macquarie to investigate issues affecting lake water quality. The study estimated that nearly 35% of the total area of wetlands in the Lake Macquarie catchment had been lost.

Wetlands, apart from being rich in biodiversity, performs a similar role for the Lake as the kidney does for the human body, filtering out sediments, nutrients and other contaminants and preventing them from entering the lake.

**ENDS**

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