



Media Release
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Environmental works prove successful

Efforts to improve the once degraded environment of Fennell Bay, Edmunds Bay and their tributary creeks have been very successful, according to an independent report released today by the Lake Macquarie Improvement Project.

The Environmental Quality within Fennell Bay and Edmunds Bay Status Paper reviewed both scientific data and community feedback.

The environmental health of the area became seriously degraded during the second half of the twentieth century with local residents complaining of strong odours, fish kills and algal blooms.

Since 2002, the Office of the Lake Macquarie and Catchment Coordinator (OLMCC) has invested nearly \$2-million in a range of targeted environmental studies, on-ground works, community awareness programs and monitoring.

Whilst some priority actions were implemented over three years ago, the full program has only recently been completed.

The best evidence that the program has been successful is the feedback from local residents who observe the waterways day to day.

"It is pleasing to learn that for the first time in many years healthy fish have now been spotted in some areas of the Bay," Lake Macquarie and Catchment Coordinator Jeff Jansson said.

The technical review looked at data collected on nutrient concentrations, dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll 'a', water clarity, seagrass coverage, rates of sedimentation and faecal bacteria.

Although the data confirmed that Fennell and Edmunds Bay were different in character to the main body of the Lake, the overall health of the area has seen some important signs of improvement.

These signs of improvement include:

- In dry weather there appears to be a trend towards lower nutrient concentrations, improved water clarity, and a marked reduction in the incidence of algal blooms;
- There has been a recovery of seagrass habitat, particularly in Edmunds Bay; and
- Nuisance species of macroalgae now comprise the minority of species observed, a reversal of the situation in 2000.

The improved conditions have also come to the attention of the Toronto Sunrise Rotary Club who are planning canoe races in Fennell Bay as part of a Paddlefest this coming April.

The report is available on the Living Lake Macquarie website www.livinglakemacquarie.org

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