

Section 7

Sustainability and environmental performance

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Roads and Maritime supports and delivers sustainable and compliant environmental management practices and behaviours to minimise the impact of road and maritime activities on the environment.

Our Environment Policy

All Roads and Maritime staff have a responsibility to actively contribute towards avoiding or minimising environmental impact in their day-to-day work.

Roads and Maritime has a statutory responsibility under the *NSW Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979* to consider the impact of its activities on the environment. The Act requires the assessment of Roads and Maritime activities and different pathways for the assessment and approval/determination of capital projects. Roads and Maritime must provide evidence it has examined the potential environmental impact and how these can be avoided, minimised or offset against other benefits.

Environmental performance improvements

In 2013–14 Roads and Maritime:

- Oversaw more than 650 inspections on 200 separate construction and maintenance projects.
- Completed environmental performance reviews on complex projects across the State, including Bullaburra East Upgrade on the Great Western Highway, Frederickton to Eungai Upgrade on the Pacific Highway and the Camden Valley Way upgrade.
- Produced an education video for staff and industry on vegetation clearing best practices, using examples from the Pacific Highway, Nambucca Heads to Urunga upgrade.
- Revised and updated our contaminated land management guidelines to meet current legislative requirements and industry practices.

Noise abatement program

Roads and Maritime's Noise Abatement Program provides noise mitigation treatment for dwellings and noise sensitive land-uses such as schools, hospitals and churches that are exposed to high levels of road traffic noise. The Noise Abatement Program operates

in addition to extensive noise mitigation work installed as part of road upgrades across NSW.

In 2013–14 Roads and Maritime:

- Invested more than \$4 million on architectural treatments to properties and a further \$4.7 million on noise walls.
- Treated 314 houses in the Sydney region. This included acoustically treating or upgrading windows, doors and seals.
- Treated 22 properties across other parts of NSW, with a further 12 under way.
- Built new noise walls at five locations across Sydney.

Marine pollution response

In 2013–14 Roads and Maritime:

- Removed 1923 cubic metres of rubbish from Sydney Harbour.
- Trained 81 staff in marine pollution response.
- Responded to five marine oil pollution incidents. We:
 - Monitored and oversaw salvage operations for the historic paddle steamer, the *Avoca*, at Mildura.
 - Assisted Marine Rescue to contain and extinguish a fire on board a 14 metre recreational cruiser offshore from Forster. All passengers were transferred safely and a potential pollution incident negated.
 - Organised the salvage and removal of a commercial houseboat on the Myall River, Buladelah.
 - Assisted Fire and Rescue to refloat a recreational cruiser at Coffs Harbour Marina.
 - Monitored the salvage of a 13 metre timber vessel submerged on its mooring at Blackwall Channel, Brisbane Water.

Ensuring urban design excellence

Roads and Maritime's Centre for Urban Design provides urban design advice on projects to ensure road and maritime infrastructure fits sensitively into environments, provides good connections and quality design outcomes for customers and the community. The Centre services the Transport cluster and acts as a leader in the NSW Government sector by participating in an all-of-government urban design group, chaired by the NSW Government Architect: and producing a number of guidelines and standards for use across the government sector.

In 2013–14 we:

- Revised and re-launched the award-winning urban design policy guide, "Beyond the Pavement: Urban Design Policy, Procedures and Design Principles".
- Developed a standard pedestrian bridge design for use in built-up areas where there is little room for ramps.
- Developed an urban design guideline for the WestConnex Delivery Authority to inform the design of the motorway, ensure consistency and provide a more customer-focused, innovative and sustainable outcome.
- Continued to provide urban design guidance and advice to improve outcomes on WestConnex, NorthConnex, Pacific Highway upgrade and Princes Highway upgrade and for smaller projects, including noise walls installed as part of the Noise Abatement Program.

Further information on our environmental performance and policies can be found in:

- Appendix 6: Threatened Species Recovery Plans.
- Appendix 7: Waste reduction, including energy consumption.
- Appendix 8: Environmental planning and assessment.
- Appendix 9: Heritage.
- Appendix 10: Biodiversity projects.

Case study

From highway to heritage bridges

Many old timber bridges are classified as State Significant under the *Heritage Act 1977 (NSW)* and remain in full service today. The ongoing maintenance of these bridges can be expensive, time consuming, require a high degree of technical skill and the supply of increasingly scarce high-grade hardwood. A number of timber truss bridges have been identified for retention by a strategy endorsed by the NSW Heritage Council.

Up to 150 timber logs cleared as part of the Pacific Highway, Nambucca Heads to Urunga upgrade were recycled and made available for use in the heritage timber bridge maintenance program.

Roads and Maritime officers worked closely with timber consultants to identify trees suitable for timber before major work started on the project. The trees are required to be of a certain species to meet strength and durability requirements.

Suitable logs were transported to local mills for processing into valuable products for use in maintaining the state's timber bridges.