

Hunter Catchment Contributions



Catchment Contributions are derived from a levy on all rateable land valued in excess of \$300 within the Hunter catchment (see map on back page). The actual rate is based on land values of rateable land at the start of the financial year and is approved by the Minister responsible for administration of the *Local Land Services Act 2013* and *Local Land Services Regulation 2014*.

How much does the levy equate to?

Ratepayers in the Hunter catchment will pay a contribution of around 0.0111 cents per dollar of land value for the 2018/19 financial year. This is an average of approximately \$28.51 per rate notice.

In total, around \$5.036 million will be collected in 2018-19, funding a range of projects to improve the health of the Hunter catchment.

Catchment Contributions also allow Hunter Local Land Services to leverage other sources of investment from NSW and local government, industry and community groups. Catchment Contributions are invested in projects in the Hunter catchment that contribute to management targets of the Hunter Local Land Services Local Strategic Plan and cannot be spent outside the Hunter catchment.

How long have Catchment Contributions been collected?

Catchment Contributions were first collected by the Hunter Valley Conservation Trust in 1950, under section 4(1) of the *Hunter Valley Conservation Trust Act 1950*. This provision has carried through legislation current at the time for organisations such as the Hunter Catchment Management Trust and the Hunter Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority.

In 2014, Catchment Contributions became the responsibility of Local Land Services.

In addition to catchment health initiatives, a proportion (approximately 30 per cent) of the Catchment Contributions collected is allocated towards maintenance and construction of the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme. This responsibility was introduced in 1956, with the introduction of the *Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Act (1956)*, and now continues under the *Water Management Act (2000)*.

How are Catchment Contributions collected today?

Catchment Contributions are now collected in accordance with the *Local Land Services Regulation 2014*. As provided for in the Act, local government authorities within the Hunter area collect Catchment Contributions on behalf of Hunter Local Land Services and receive a five per cent commission for this service. This is why you will see a "Catchment Levy" (or similar) line item on your council rates notice.

Why are Catchment Contributions collected?

Catchment Contributions are collected to provide a coordinated approach to the extensive problems of natural resource conservation in the Hunter Valley catchment and to undertake flood mitigation works.

Regulation 33 of the *Local Land Services Regulation 2014* specifies that a Catchment Contribution may only be levied to fund a shortfall in available funding for the catchment activities of Local Land Services.

The revenue generated from this levy enables Hunter Local Land Services to meet its legislative obligations under the *Water Management Act 2000*, as well as meeting resource condition and management targets in the Local Strategic Plan.

Where will Catchment Contributions be invested in 2018-19?

Here is a selection of the types of projects for which Catchment Contributions are used.

- **Flood mitigation:** maintaining the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme.
- **Lower Hunter estuary:** Continuing wetland rehabilitation works at Hexham Swamp and within the Hunter estuary.
- **Riparian works:** Undertaking projects in targeted areas to improve riverbank stability, water quality and in-stream habitat.
- **On-ground incentives program:** Providing financial incentives to landholders in the Hunter catchment to undertake on-ground works addressing natural resource management priorities listed in the Local Strategic Plan, including soil erosion works, protecting native vegetation and improving riparian areas.
- **Community education, capacity building and engagement:** Implementing communication and education activities for the community and providing funds to community groups for education and communication activities.



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