

**Mill Creek Education Plan  
Environmental Education Strategy for the Mid Georges River  
Catchment**

**For the**

**Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative**

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

*Just as the key to a species' survival in the natural world is its ability to adapt to local habitats, so the key to human survival will probably be the local community.*

*If we can create vibrant, increasingly autonomous and self-reliant local groupings of people that emphasise sharing, cooperation and living lightly on the Earth, we can avoid the fate warned of by Rachel Carson and the world scientists and restore the sacred balance of life.* David Suzuki.1997. *The Sacred Balance* Allen & Unwin p.8

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# *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* Education Program Summary

This summary of the Mill Creek Education Program is written for key stakeholders and community members and will be useful in the implementation of the program.

## *Program title and tag line*

### *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

#### **The context**

The area surrounding Mill Creek is an important community asset. The majority of the landholding, around 75-80% of the sub-catchment, is in private ownership (including semi-government agencies), with the largest landholder the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Lands Council [GLALC]. Over 200 Important Aboriginal sites are located in the area. The National Parks and Wildlife Service also own a large parcel of land. The communities of Menai and Alford's Point are located on the eastern side of the Creek.

Approximately 75% of the sub-catchment is remnant bushland in varying, but generally good, condition. It supports wildlife and local plan species.

The land around the creek is affected by some careless human practices and some wilful behaviour that disregards reasonable warnings and barriers. The impact of four wheel drivers and trail bikers cannot be understated. Significant behaviour change approaches need to be instigated to address these issues.

#### **The *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* Education Program**

The program involves the use of specific education and compliance components for reducing four wheel drive use and trail bike use. Three components will be conducted. The first is designed to seek the support of people using the area and local residents for improved behaviour; the second delivers warning letters to those still using the area; and the third will fine four wheel drivers and trail bikers for continued illegal use. In addition, the program will seek the support of local residents, bushwalkers and school students to care for and grow their connection with the bushland surrounding Mill Creek and with the creek itself. A range of strategies including a launch event, media activity and a schools program will be conducted. A bushwalking program is also an important component of the program.

The features of this program are that it:

- Can be conducted within a period of approximately sixteen weeks, although it could be extended if more time is available or warranted.
- Uses staffing resources and community involvement wisely.
- Will be effective in modifying negative behaviours – especially behaviours that are wilful in their motivation.
- Will connect local community with Mill Creek and help them to value it more.
- Can be able to be conducted more than once in the same location to reinforce outcomes

Overall, when fully implemented the program will achieve the following results for people in the local community and those who use the site.

*Knowledge:* Increased knowledge of impacts in the environment – and understanding of their importance to health of the Mill Creek.

*Values and Attitudes:* Heightened appreciation of the Mill Creek as an iconic feature of the local community and improved community connection with Mill Creek and surrounding bushland.

*Behaviour:* Modified behaviour by people across the community so that the environmental health of Mill Creek is improved.

This is an exciting education approach to restoring a challenging site. *Mill Creek- Tread Lightly*.

# Mill Creek Education Plan

The program is to be entitled the *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly Education Program*.



## 1. Overview of the area

Mill Creek is a tributary of the Georges River located in the Sutherland Shire. The Mill Creek Sub-catchment covers approximately 20 square kilometres and compared to other parts of the lga, it is sparsely populated. The majority of the landholding, around 75-80% of the sub-catchment, is in private ownership (including semi-government agencies), with the largest landholder the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Lands Council. The National Parks and Wildlife Service also own a large parcel of land.

Approximately 75% of the sub-catchment is remnant bushland in varying, but generally good, condition. The natural areas east of Mill Creek [Alfords Point and Menai] comprise strips and incursions of remnant bushland on steeper topography surrounded by residential and urban land uses. The large western bushland areas of the sub-catchment [Heathcote Rd side] include extensive ridgetop and flatter upland areas, which is terrain less common in Sydney's remnant natural areas (outside of conservation reserves) and consequently they support extensive areas of significant vegetation communities

*"I think that people don't often think about the bush that they look at but when they use it, that's different"* [local resident]/

## 2. Brief Overview of the Issues Impacting on Mill Creek

Mill Creek, which takes its name from an historic mill previously located in the area. The area retains a significant amount of natural Sydney sandstone bushland, although in varying conditions and regenerating from disruptive prior land uses in some areas, and so has a suite of significant biodiversity, landscape and Aboriginal cultural heritage values. It also serves an important water quality function for the Georges River and is a recreation asset valued and used by the local community and others. [extracted from draft Masterplan].

The reserves and surrounding lands have a long history of Aboriginal use and lie within Gandangara Local Aboriginal Lands Council. Over 200 Aboriginal sites have been recorded within the catchment. Most of these sites are associated with water and many are concentrated along creek lines and are on Aboriginal land controlled by the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Lands Council.

The draft Masterplan is focused strongly on the catchment's natural and environmental values, water quality and recreational uses. It provides a comprehensive overview of the issues that impact upon the land around Mill Creek and the water quality in it. Significant issues identified include degradation of natural areas and impact on flora and fauna.

Specific objectives to be realised by the draft Masterplan are to:

- reduce the impact of damaging recreational activities;
- reduce the impacts of stormwater in the catchment, and identify opportunities for water sensitive urban design (WSUD);
- protect and enhance habitat, vegetation communities within the catchment;
- manage noxious and environmental weeds within the catchment; and
- improve the overall environmental and passive recreational values of the catchment.



### 3. Purpose of this Document and the Rational for the Program

The purpose of this document is to outline a costed community education program containing integrated enforcement, and education initiatives for Mill Creek. This program is designed to reduce the inappropriate/illegal use of the land surrounding Mill Creek and to grow positive connection with the area. It will be delivered in-part by the Mid-Georges River Sustainability Initiative [working out of Bankstown City Council], in liaison with a number of project partners. All proposed components are outlined below, but it is acknowledged that in some instances not all activities will be implemented on every occasion that the program is delivered.

The features of this program are that it:

- can be conducted within a period of approximately sixteen weeks, although it could be extended if more time is available or warranted , given the extent of the problem and the resources available
- is conscious of staffing constraints and funding limitations.
- will be effective in modifying negative behaviours – But it would be more effective if it contained more enforcement activity [see Appendix 4] especially behaviours that are willful in their motivation.
- will be able to be conducted more than once in the same location to reinforce outcomes
- is based on behaviour change principles and appropriate models.

The *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly Education Program* is in-part based on the assumption that a combination of visible deterrence oriented education and strong warnings about inappropriate behaviour can bring about behaviour shift, even in challenging circumstances. Integration, visibility and strong community support are key contexts for this program. Deterrence theory is based on an implicit or explicit threat with the risk being a function of the chance of being caught and the cost of being caught. This project will highlight the risk of being caught.

The rationale for the project is that the close link between general education and deterrence oriented education will bring about the desired changes because:

- There will be a high level of visibility of both educative activities.
- The delivery of the program will be precisely targeted and will capture attention.
- The program will be conducted in partnership with key stakeholders and will focus on the location where the negative behaviour is occurring.
- The program will offer real and believable information about why the behaviour will not be tolerated.

It should be noted that this Education Plan has been completed prior to the finalization of the Masterplan for Mill Creek. This is not ideal. Prior to implementation of the Education Plan it must be reviewed against the approvals and final version of the Masterplan and amended if appropriate.

## 4. Who needs to change or to improve their behaviour to affect water quality in Mill Creek?

### Local householders on the Eastern Side

Behaviours to be addressed:

- Weed control – weeds are invading the creek from the residential areas (due to runoff) e.g. weeds from Buckle reserve entering Mill Creek Valley via storm water runoff. This is now widespread and requires large scale action.
- Management of bins – litter and organic spills.
- Litter reduction.
- People bordering the bushland in the catchment have a special responsibility as supporters of the program and champions for the area.

### Visitors to the area, mostly on the western side, along Heathcote Rd

Behaviours to be addressed:

- Reduced dumping along Heathcote Road especially and in the bush land
- Reduced littering [often from vehicles]
- Some removal of native fauna or flora.

### Four Wheel drivers, trial bike riders and mountain bike users

Behaviours to be addressed:

- Four Wheel Drive use of the area by organised clubs or individuals. It would seem that most of this behaviour is by people from out of the immediate local area. Adults are the sole perpetrators.
- Trail bikes used on the site. Anecdotally it would seem that this behaviour is undertaken by locals and people from out of the area. Often quite young local people ride trail bikes in the area around Mill Creek.
- Mountain bikes used on the site. Most mountain bikers appear to be local young people and there is a relatively low level of impact.

Some issues include:

- Four wheel drive and trail bike use at night, not just day time.
- Four wheel drive and trail bike use on both sides of the creek but mostly on the western side.
- Parties etc especially on Saturday night – lighting of fires for bar-b-ques, littering, bottles and cans.
- Limited community reporting of issues and problems.
- Current signage on site seems not to be effective.
- More activity: for example, new signage etc, will generally gives the impression that the area is cared for and managed.
- Limited consistent enforcement regimen. Effect of increased enforcement would lead to change - "Someone's looking".

### Bushwalkers

Behaviours to be addressed:

- More open for use would help - better tracks etc. Bushwalkers need marked tracks
- Bushwalkers can be champions for the area

As indicated, the *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly Education Program* will focus on behaviour shift. A number of reasons will be used to underpin calls for behaviour change:

1. *It is the law.* Fines of \$200 to \$11,000 apply for illegal entry and unauthorised activities [for example - littering and dumping] in the area around Mill Creek.
2. *It is risky.* Activity on site increases the bushfire risk – these include risks to neighbouring property and risk to catchment health and ecology.

3. *It increases pollutants and sediment run-off.* Activity increases sediment run-off and litter and other pollutants and hence impacts on water quality of both Mill Creek and the Georges River.
4. *Green places in the city are important.* In our community we need to protect some urban bushland areas – Mill Creek is such an area. Activity sometimes involves the removal of native fauna or flora and this disturbs the ecology.



## 5. The Approach

As indicated above, the use of the area surrounding Mill Creek involves some careless practices and some wilful behaviour that disregards reasonable warnings and barriers. Significant behaviour change approaches need to be instigated to address this issue. The attitudes of those wilfully impacting on the site seem to be *'no fence, no sign, no fine.'* Even though twenty metres up the road there may be signs and barriers. The attitude of those being careless on the site revolves around a lack of connection.

Essentially the program has two target populations:

1. Those who are wilfully impacting on the site [mostly non residents]
2. Those who are carelessly impacting on the site [mostly local residents].

Hence the program needs to be hard hitting with those who are impacting on the environment in a willful manner - a softly, softly approach won't work here. It also needs to be engaging and connecting with the second target population. The program must find the delicate balance between too soft and overly draconian. While giving a clear and firm message, the program needs not to just point the finger at some illegal users of the site, for example four wheel drivers. A delicate balance is required and key members of all constituencies need to be involved in the program and see it as an important sustainability effort, and not a finger pointing exercise.

### Program Aim

Through improved community knowledge and more responsible attitudes improve and protect urban bushland and water quality in Mill Creek.

### Program Objectives:

- To reduce the illegal recreational use of the area surrounding Mill Creek.
- To seek the support of and motivate appropriate behaviours by local residents, who live in proximity to Mill Creek, and other relevant stakeholders in order to reduce human impact on Mill Creek.
- To increase the knowledge of those using the area surrounding Mill Creek about why certain activities are not to occur.
- To increase community connection with Mill Creek.
- To promote positive feelings in the community for this unique environment, and concerns for issues of sustainability.

**Program outcomes** fall within three major areas. These are:

*Knowledge* Increased knowledge of impacts in the environment – and understanding of their importance to health of the Mill Creek.

*Values and Attitudes.* Heightened appreciation of the Mill Creek as an iconic feature of the local community and improved community connection with Mill Creek and surrounding bushland.

*Behaviour.* Modified behaviour by people across the community so that the environmental health of Mill Creek is improved.

The following abbreviated Outcomes Hierarchy has been developed for this program. It assumes that all interventions suggested below would be implemented. A more complete Outcomes Hierarchy for the project is found at Appendix 5.



Project Outcomes	Evaluation Questions
7. Reduced environmental impact and increased appropriate behaviour.	<p>Is there evidence of improved community behaviour [Creek related] as a result of effective implementation of the program?</p> <p>Is there evidence of reduced environmental impact on the Mill Creek as a result of effective implementation of the program?</p>
6. Increased conservation activity by the community to enhance the sustainability of Mill Creek.	To what extent is their evidence of improved ownership / participation in Creek management?
5. Some reduced four wheel drive, trail bike and mountain bike use of the site	To what extent is there evidence of reduced illegal use of the site by four wheel drivers and trail bikers?
4. Improved behaviour by residents and visitors to the Mill Creek area,	What evidence is there of behaviour change to reduce pollution in the Mill Creek area?
3. Heightened appreciation and awareness of Mill Creek as an iconic feature of the local community.	<p>To what extent is there evidence of increased valuing of the Creek?</p> <p>Is there evidence of increased use of bush tracks around the creek by local residents?</p> <p>Positive media coverage and public information about the creek?</p>
2. Improved knowledge of what individuals might do to improve the health of the creek.	Do people in the catchment demonstrate an increasing level of knowledge about protecting the sustainability of the creek?
1. A significant range of education initiatives were conducted with residents, visitors and site users.	What education approaches were conducted?

### Program Tag Line

The program tag line is *Mill Creek – Tread Lightly*

### Program Logo

A decision will need to be made by the Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative about whether there is a need for a Mill Creek project specific logo in order to brand all aspects of the project.

### Program Key Messages

This program is built around the following key messages:

- Why is there a need to make Mill Creek better?
- Recreation is great but the areas around Mill Creek are not recreation areas – you might be fined. ‘Just don’t use it.’
- Using the land surrounding Mill Creek for four wheel driving, trail biking, dumping of rubbish, weeds, or litter damages the quality of the land and the water.
- You can do it elsewhere: alternative locations are provided.
- Using the land around Mill Creek for bush walking and other passive recreation is welcomed

- Mill Creek is a part of our world – take care of it.

## 6. The Education Strategies – *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

This part of the Plan outlines all of the education strategies designed to address the *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly Education Program* objectives and lead to achieving program outcomes. It is assumed that all activities will be implemented together in order to achieve program objectives.

*Important Note: Undoubtedly the most effective program for dealing with willful impact on the areas surrounding Mill Creek is a mixture of education and enforcement. Due to a variety of circumstances this cannot be conducted at the time of drafting this strategy. A complete integrated program is outlined in Appendix 4, and it is hoped that the circumstances change so that this program can be implemented in the future.*

### Part 1. Education Strategies for targeting those who are wilfully impacting on the site [mostly non residents]

The education strategies outlined below are focused on reducing willful behaviour on site. If appropriately used, they will be implemented mostly on the Heathcote Road side of the catchment, but they might also be required on the Menai side. As indicated above they involve general education and more specific deterrence focused education

<p><b>Context Setting Phase – Information/Program commencement [six weeks]</b>          In this phase the project officer will be seeking the support of local residents around Mill Creek, and other relevant stakeholders – most especially the GLALC to inform them of the program.          The intention will be to build understanding of those using the area surrounding Mill Creek about why some activities are not to occur, and the risks of getting caught.</p>
<p>Activity 1. Issue general press release to local press about the project.</p>
<p>Activity 2. Contact the <i>Four Wheel Drive NSW &amp; ACT Association</i> [see Appendix 1] and seek their support for a partnership role in the program. Offer the opportunity to them for acknowledgement on the program material and the website.</p> <p>Also Contact Mountain Bikes Australia [see Appendix 1]</p>
<p>Activity 3: Provide early advice to each 'local' Four Wheel Dive Club and tell them about the program. Seek their support for it and ask them to inform members. Note Appendix 1 provides a list of clubs, which might be added to over time.</p>
<p>Activity 4: Establish or insert specific information on a page on the most appropriate website that allows for the insertion of relevant messages and materials about this program.</p>
<p>Activity 5: Liaise with any business or community groups in Menai/Alfords Point etc to inform them of this part of the program. [See Appendix 2]</p>
<p>Activity 6: Determine how the relevant Councils might support the project at the highest level. For example Messages on Council Website or in the Mayor's column in the press about the program, its key messages and Council support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council direct mail-out to ratepayers in the area surrounding Mill Creek about this project and the importance of the area around Mill Creek</li> <li>▪ Integration of this program with other Council sustainability initiatives as appropriate.</li> </ul>
<p>Activity 7: Liaise with other program partners to establish how they might support the program. Meet with partners where appropriate. Appendix 2 contains program partners.</p>
<p>Activity 8: Liaise with the staff and community of the Area surrounding Mill Creek Primary School and other</p>

local schools and pre-schools about how they might support the program. See Appendix 2 for possible schools to be contacted.
Activity 9: Engage the community in a Mill Creek Art Photo Competition. This should be run early in the project and engage local artists to submit paintings or photographs of Mill Creek and environs. These would be judged by a high profile judging panel and used at the program launch, see Activity A below
Activity 10: Layout and publish all print materials required for education activities. See Appendix 3. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Produce a simple low literacy flyer about why people should not use the area surrounding Mill Creek for recreation purposes. Include in this flyer how people can report illegal use of Mill Creek bushland. Contact information included in this flyer.</li> <li>➤ Produce a local Area surrounding Mill Creek version of the Sutherland Shire Council brochure [with local map for distribution as a part of the program].</li> <li>➤ Produce four large banners for use on the boundaries and known illegal entry points.</li> <li>➤ Produce one banner for use in Area surrounding Mill Creek informing people about the program.</li> <li>➤ Produce posters for use around Area surrounding Mill Creek with program messages.</li> <li>➤ Produce thank-you banner for use in Area surrounding Mill Creek at the end of the project.</li> </ul>

See Implementation support material below.

<p><b>Education Phase – deterrent focus [Six weeks]</b></p> <p>The focus of this phase is to provide deterrence focused education  In this phase the project officer will be seeking the support of local residents around the area surrounding Mill Creek, and other relevant stakeholders, to reduce the illegal use of the area  It will also involve raising the understanding of those using the Area surrounding Mill Creek about why activities are not to occur, and the risks of getting caught. - increasing the real and perceived risks of being caught illegally entering Mill Creek land.</p>
<p>Activity 11: Write a more direct follow-up letter to each of the Four Wheel Drive Clubs listed in Appendix 1 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Remind them about the project</li> <li>▪ Provide hard and electronic version of the flyer and ask the club to circulate to members</li> <li>▪ Tell them about the level of fines that might impact on their members.</li> </ul>
<p>Activity 12: Undertake a letterbox drop of the Area surrounding Mill Creek community. Use the low literacy flyer for this purpose.</p>
<p>Activity 13: Erect up to four large banners carrying key messages about the non use of the area around Mill Creek. The locations of these banners depends on the focus area of the program and the agreement of the landholder. If the program is being delivered on the eastern side of the creek, the banners should be placed near possible points of entrance to the bushland area. If the program is targeted along Heathcote Rd, then appropriate locations need to be found. Liaison with The GLALC and the NPWS needs to occur prior to placement of these banners and activity on this side of the Creek. Their approval must be granted</p>

## **Part 2. Strategies for targeting those who reside near Mill Creek**

Those who are carelessly impacting on the site - mostly local residents - or who can be champions of the site are the targets for this part of the program. Strategically it is wise to consider all residents in the same manner – champions and/or careless impacts. Note that this component of the program can be integrated with activity in Part 1 above and delivered at the same time. Approximately sixteen weeks is required to deliver this aspect of the program, if conducted in an integrated manner with Part 1.

*Fire is not the threat. Weed invasion, feral animals, pollution and land mismanagement are all contributing to the degradation of the area. Management of these factors are paramount. [Resident comment]*

### **Activity A: Launch event**

The *Mill Creek – Tread Lightly* Program lends itself to a launch at a site somewhere near the Creek. Should this be undertaken, significant PR must occur to promote the event? In these circumstances the following might be considered:

- Hold the event at a venue on the eastern side of the Creek. – perhaps at the Menai Public School.
- Promote the event across the catchment with specific promotion directed at those who live in proximity to the Creek – letter box drop and school notices.
- Use the launch as an educational and recruitment experience. All Bushcare and bushwalking groups should be there and actively recruiting new members.
- Highlight the judging of the photo competition [ note this may just be photos or may include paintings]
- Refreshments/a bar-b-que could be provided.
- PR should focus on what's in the program for various people. Ensure local media exposure for this event
- There must be an Indigenous presence at this event.
- Identification of local stories [see below] could occur at this event.

The event could involve the use of local photographs. *The wildflowers are beautiful, all year round. If only people knew about them.* (one resident is a very keen photographer of the wildflowers found in the bush behind his home in Menai.). He might be approached to be a partner in the launch event.



### **Activity B: Guided Mill Creek Walks**

A way of gaining resident connection is to hold a series of guided walks around the area. These should be negotiated with local bushwalkers and promoted widely. A number of audiences might be involved in this project

- A school group
- A group of senior citizens
- A group with a common interest
- A mixed group of interested persons wanting to know more about the Creek responding to a Council advertisement. Perhaps walks could be offered on a monthly basis.

### **Activity C: Involving the Community in the Program**

There are a number of different general components to this project which are amplified a little below:

- Encouraging the community to complain to the *Mill Creek - Treading Lightly* Project about illegal use on the area surrounding Mill Creek. This is an important part of the Education aspect in that increasing community ownership will also draw out community complaints. Information must be provided to the local community about how to do this [See materials in Appendix 3]. The Project Manager should make this data available to GLALC and SSC with a view to carrying forward the compliance element of the project [See Appendix 4].
- The program should also involve a variety of mechanisms for promoting the knowledge and behaviour shifts among local residents. It is essential that the appropriate approach is used in the appropriate circumstances. Information should be provided as part of this program about:
  - Littering
  - Bin management
  - Household weed control and management
  - Connection to Mill Creek
  - Bushwalking opportunities
  - Bushcare and bushland management.

### **Activity D: Schools Program**

There are a range of activities that could be undertaken with local schools – especially Menai Primary, Padstow Heights and other slightly further afield schools might also be targeted. These schools include Alford's Point Primary, Tharawal Primary, Menai High School and Lucas Heights College [K-12]. Activities include:

- Develop a *Mill Creek – Tread Lightly* unit for integration into a selected KLA at level 2 and or 3.
- Encourage local schools and community groups in introducing/extending the Streamwatch Program into the sub-catchment.
- Link indigenous speakers, local community champions with the school to provide more information about Mill Creek.
- Work with the school about how they can be 'champions for Mill Creek'.
- Conduct teacher training session about Mill Creek

### **Activity E: Signage on the Eastern [Menai] Side of Mill Creek**

Improved on-site signage – such as on the regularly spaced vent pipes and other sewer infrastructure – advising users of the relevant Sydney Water contact numbers to report sewer leaks  
Also improve signage showing bush walks and warning signs about illegal use

### **Activity F: Integrating Approaches**

This part of the Program is supported by a variety of other activities flagged in the Masterplan, including:

- Target weed control and bush regeneration efforts to priority locations – based on bushland condition assessments and a threats-to-values approach to protect high value conservation assets, reduce risks and minimise weed spread.

- Priority weed control efforts targeting recent (post-fire) Crofton Weed invasion of Barden Creek (eastern branch) and previously low weed incidence in bushland.
- Council to target establishment of Bushcare Groups in residential areas along the eastern ridge – Alfords Point, Menai and Barden Ridge.
- Continue current weed and pest control and education/awareness programs.
- Incorporate the “Blue Track” into the wider sub-catchment walking track network.
- Provide on-site walking track destination, direction and distance marking to the preferred walking track network supported by readily available track maps/guides – with priority to the eastern hillslopes links.
- Liaison with local and regional mountain bike groups regarding co-operative planning for the activity, and volunteer role in subsequent works implementation.
- Council to continue to encourage volunteer involvement in the sub-catchment’s management.

### **Activity G: Local Stories**

Often the stories of people in the local community can be collected and used to promote responsible use of a particularly degraded area. As an important part of this program the Project Manager should engage with local residents and other stakeholders and develop stories of how people use the site. These can then be:

- The subject of media articles about Mill Creek, to give the media program local life and colour.
- Used in the schools component of the program to help young people appreciate the area
- Sent to Four Wheel Drive groups etc, to demonstrate that the local community value the site
- Used in letter box drops etc to promote activities – for example the guided bush walks or other events

The following stories might be developed

- The beauty of Mill Creek – a story about art/photography in and around Mill Creek.
- Bush walking around Mill Creek.
- Respecting Mill Creek – a story about the responsible use of the area.
- What I do to care for Mill Creek.
- We went somewhere else – a story about a four wheel driver who went to another location. [Might be hard to find this one].
- Aboriginal people and Mill Creek – the story of the GLALC [to be written by the indigenous community].

Others will emerge as the project Manager engages with the community. Stories must be short [less and a page], written in plain English and carrying major messages of the program.

### **Part 3. Media Opportunities**

Using the media to support the *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* program and any associated activities can be achieved on a large scale, and for smaller initiatives. The list below is by no means a comprehensive overview of when and how media can be involved, but it provides a starting point to community engagement with a variety of communication vehicles.

Communication can be targeted to the community via:

- Regular Council communications / processes [e.g. including program material in all Development Application / Building Application processes; including information in rates notices.
- A major launch event and associated PR in local media
- Mayor’s column in the newspaper

- Council web sites [e.g. banner advertisements; maps; information on relevant activities / strategies; community champions; case studies etc.]
- Paid advertising in local print media / In-kind advertising and promotion
- Offer of Program logo and tagline to local newspapers to use the Program logo as a “filler” to use when there is spare advertising space on media print copy
- PR material – donut press releases / use of stories as print articles etc.
- School newsletters showcasing recent Creek excursions
- Community sector bulletins e.g. local clubs and associations, Progress Associations, Senior Citizens Circulars etc.

Engagement of media and distribution channels, to create ongoing relationships will support program longevity and clear messaging. The use of PR about the *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* program is strategic and cost effective.

## 7. Indicative Program Budget

### *Expenditure*

The costings below assume that education staff costs required to deliver the project will be met by the project. Hence the budget table below identifies direct costs only.

<b>Part 1 Illegal Use Component</b>	<b>Design and Publication costs</b>	<b>Other costs</b>
<b>A. Preparation</b>	Banners: 4	\$7,000
	Flyers 10,000 – A4	\$4,000
	Four wheel drive brochure: 3,000	\$5,000
	Warning flyer [A5 size] 4,000	\$3,000
<b>B. Education</b>		Placement of Print ads \$2,000 Radio Placement \$2,000 Costing for letter box drops \$2000
<b>C. Enforcement</b>		Print [thank you] \$2,000
<b>Part 2 Residents Component</b>	<b>Costs of activity</b>	
<b>A. Launch Event</b>		Program launch costs \$3,000
<b>D. Schools Program</b>		Schools Program budget \$5,000
<b>E. Signage</b>	Signage 6 new signs	\$7,000
<b>Part 3 Media Component</b>	Free Media only	<b>Nil</b>
<b>Overall Total Parts 1, 2 and 3 – one delivery</b>	<b>\$26,000</b>	<b>\$16,000</b>

**Total Program Cost [excluding staff costs and GST]: \$42,000 minimum.**



## 8. Staff Roles

### *Education Officer*

As indicated above the Education Officer will be the project manager for this project. They will work actively on the project for at least two and a half days per week during the life of the project. In the implementation aspects of the project, up to four days per week might be necessary if Parts 1 and 2 are to be rolled out together, In this role the Education Officer will:

- Be responsible for the coordination of all activities in the project.
- Liaise with relevant staff at Sutherland Shire Council and with key partners, GLALC and the NPWS especially.
- Liaise with the Sutherland Shire Council's Publications staff in the timely production [layout and printing] of all publications required in the program.
- Liaise with the Sutherland Shire Council's communications staff in the timely placement of all paid advertising and distribution of all press releases.
- Establish relationships with all project partners and provide briefings, presentations and support as appropriate.
- Organise banner placement, poster placement, letter box drops and hand out of warning flyers in an appropriate, timely manner.
- Undertake all project activities in an integrated manner.
- Organise project evaluation as appropriate. This will involve collecting any baseline data that is available and establishing how program data will be collected and collated. Write final report on the project – which will include recommendations for repeat delivery of the intervention.

## 9. Program Evaluation

As indicated above an Outcomes Hierarchy has been developed for this project. Appendix 5 contains this in detail and it also contains a major data collection tool for the program, the Resident's Survey. It is anticipated that the level of detail in the evaluation process will be commensurate with the level of roll out of the program.

It is assumed that the program is to be internally evaluated only, hence there will be officer time costs involved in the planning, data collection and analysis of the evaluation results. These will be part of the project manager's role and are not identified separately in the budget.

## Appendix 1. Contacts for Four Wheel Drive Clubs/ Mountain Bike Clubs

### 1. Peak Bodies

#### Four Wheel Drive NSW & ACT Association

Organisations representing more than 70 four wheel drive clubs in NSW and the ACT, promoting responsible four wheel drive family touring, environmental awareness and driver education.

Four Wheel Drive NSW & ACT Inc

PO Box 1371

Parramatta NSW 2124

[www.4wdnsw-act.asn.au/](http://www.4wdnsw-act.asn.au/)

Note from Website

Four Wheel Drivers Helping the Environment & Community!

"Environmental protection is a priority for four wheel drive organisations across the state," NSW-ACT 4WD association President Greg Redfern said today.

Mr. Redfern said that recent reporting of 4WD activities in the area surrounding Mill Creek did not reflect the reality of the activities 4WD clubs engage in.

"On almost any weekend 4WD drivers are working on projects to restore erosion on tracks, are doing cleanups to public land, or are helping raise money for a worthy cause," he said.

#### Mountain Bikes Peak Group

Mountain Bikes Australia

[www.mtba.asn.au](http://www.mtba.asn.au)

MTBA

PO Box 17

Mirani Qld 4754

### 2. Priority Individual Clubs Contacts

#### High Rollin 4x4 Club

PO Box 58

Macarthur Square

Campbelltown NSW 2560

No web contact details found

Club meetings take place on the last Sunday of every month at 7.00pm. Meetings are held at Monarch Oval, Fields Road, Macquarie Fields. All guests are welcome.

#### Bong Bong 4WD Club

Bong Bong 4WD Club is a small and family-oriented club based in the Southern Highlands area of NSW.

Website down

#### Blue Mountains 4WD Club

Driver training, photo gallery, meetings & activities.

[www.bluemtns4wdclub.asn.au/](http://www.bluemtns4wdclub.asn.au/)

P.O. Box 65

Glenbrook NSW 2773

### **Nepean District 4WD Club**

Events, pictures, meetings and 4WD information.

[www.nepean4wd.org.au/links.html](http://www.nepean4wd.org.au/links.html)

Website down so no contact address

### **Southern Tablelands Four Wheel Drive Club**

[www.st4wdc.org](http://www.st4wdc.org)

PO Box 661

Fyshwick

Canberra ACT 2609

ST4WDC, established in 1976, is the largest 4WD club in Canberra and the region. The club has its own property, and specialises in 4WD training. Members lead trips from one day to three months to destinations all over the country.

### **Toyota Land Cruiser Club**

[www.tlcc.com.au/](http://www.tlcc.com.au/)

Toyota Land Cruiser Club of Australia

PO Box 2

Bankstown NSW 2200

### **3. Other relevant contact details**

Relevant popular magazines

Overlander <http://www.overlander.com.au/>

Offroader : <http://www.offroader.com.au/>

### **Trail Bike Adventure**

<http://www.eatmydirt.com.au>

### **Australasian Dirt Bike Magazine**

PO Box 1014

Haymarket NSW 1240

Phone: 02 9581 9400

## Appendix 2: Program partners

### Relationships with NPWS and GLALC

It is recognised that a substantial reach of the Mill Creek runs through land managed by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service [NPWS]. An even larger area of land is Aboriginal land controlled by the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Lands Council.

Before any education activity can be commenced it is essential that both of these stakeholders are involved and sign off on all activity. A guiding principle for this project is that:

*Contact and dialogue is commenced and maintained on a regular basis with a designated officer from the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Lands Council and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, in order to approve program activities, to communicate program progress and to leverage Program outcomes for all organisations.*

Key contact agencies

**Gandangara Local Aboriginal Lands Council.**

**Rural Fire Service**

**National Parks and Wildlife Service**

**NSW Department of Lands**

**NSW Department of Commerce**

**Police**

**Area surrounding Mill Creek - Chamber of Commerce**

**Bushwalker Groups**

**Landcare or other groups**

**Schools and Pre-schools [local only]**

### Appendix 3: Materials Required for Delivery of this Program

This appendix provides the staff delivering the program with drafts of most of the material required. These drafts are written in plain English Word versions without art or layout of all materials required for the program is included.

Note GLALC input and support is essential for this material and at the time of completion of this Education Plan, this was not forthcoming. It is essential that this occurs before the program is rolled out

Note also that letters etc are written in general terms from the Mid Georges Rived Initiative, but it may be that they should come from the project manger or some other body or person – this can be amended.

#### General support letter for possible partners and other stakeholders

Dear

The [Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative] is concerned about the quality of the water that is flowing into the Georges River from Mill Creek. It has also been concerned for a long period of time about the extent of illegal use of the land around Mill Creek by trail bikers and four wheel drivers, as well as by people who dump their rubbish in this area.

The *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* education program will be held in the near future and it will target all people who break the law by entering this area. Anyone who drives a 4WD, or rides a bike or dumps rubbish in the area surrounding Mill Creek is breaking the law. They are putting the quality of our water at risk. Although most people follow the law and stay out of the area, some people still ignore the signs and barriers. The Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative wants all people to know that they must not enter this area except on foot. Attached is a short description of the planned education and enforcement program.

If you are able to support this program, I would appreciate further contact with you. Can you please contact ??????? to discuss how you might be able to help or if you would like more information.

Thank you for your support.

Yours .....

---

#### Initial Contact Letter for Four Wheel Drive Associations and ACT/Four Wheel Drive Clubs and Mountain Bikes Australia/Mountain Bike Clubs

Dear

I am sure you are aware that the Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative has the responsibility to ensure that our water remains at the highest quality.

I am writing to inform you about a program that the Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative is conducting in the area surrounding Mill Creek and to seek your support for it. Although most people respect and follow the law which prohibits entry to the land on the eastern and the western sides of the creek, there are examples of illegal entry which pose a threat to the quality of our water. The *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* education program is described in the short attachment to this letter.

I appreciate that some of your members seek to use off-road locations for their vehicles. While I agree that recreation is important for all of us, it vital that this does not occur in the land around Mill Creek. The *Mill Creek*

- *Tread Lightly* education program is a combined education and enforcement campaign to inform people about and to deter their use of the area for recreational purposes.

Your support for our efforts in managing the site would be greatly appreciated. Please pass on information about this program to your member groups/members.

If you have any questions about the program or you would like further information, please contact?????

Yours.....

---

**Short Program Description for use on:**

- Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative Website
- Attachment to letters and other communication mechanisms
- Mayors column
- Other communication opportunities

***The Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* Education Program  
Brief Information Flyer**

The **[Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative]** is responsible for managing the water quality in its local area. It is also responsible for Bushland management. Council takes these responsibilities seriously

Along with our program partners **GLALC and NPWS** Council is conducting a comprehensive education program around Mill Creek. *The Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* Education Program is aimed improving knowledge and developing more responsible attitudes to improve and protect urban bushland and water quality in Mill Creek.

The program helps local residents particularly in Alford's Point and Menai to improve the area and also targets those people who use the area illegally – four wheel drivers, trail bikers and dumpers.

Some alternative venues can be found for some of these activities. People who want to drive a 4WD, ride a bike or bushwalk can do it in other areas. Information will be provided directly to those who use Mill Creek in this way and it can be found on the Council's website.

The *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* Education Program will include a period where education and information will be provided, in order to remind people of their responsibilities and deter them from using the area surrounding Mill Creek. This will be followed by an enforcement blitz where fines will be issued.

In addition, people in the area surrounding Mill Creek and those that use the road past the area will be asked to support the program by informing the Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative about those using the area illegally. They can do this by calling 02 ????????. Keeping our water clean and our bushland healthy is very important and everyone needs to take responsibility for this.

For more information see ??????

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

Detailed Flyer for Four Wheel Drivers and Mountain Bikers – Alternate Sites etc  
**Mill Creek - Tread Lightly Education Program**  
**Information for Four Wheel Drivers and Trail Bikers**

**What is in the area?**

The bushland area around Mill Creek is important to the people of the Sutherland Shire community and beyond. About 75% of the area between Heathcote and Illawarra Rds is bushland. These natural areas support extensive areas of significant plants and animals.

There are 24 species of threatened native wildlife within the Mill Creek area. Also there are approximately 1,600 plant species in the area. Of these, 55 plant species are listed as threatened and of those – 20 species are endangered [the highest rating] and 21 are vulnerable. Mill Creek bushland is an important natural site.

This area needs protecting so that the bushland is preserved and the water quality in the creek remains good.

The largest landholder in this area is the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Lands Council [GLALC]. The National Parks and Wildlife Service {NPWS} also own a large parcel of land on the banks of Mill Creek.

**What is the problem?**

In this area four wheel driving and trail bike riding are major problems. They are illegal and are causing a great deal of environmental harm. The *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* Education Program aims at reducing the use of bikes and four wheel drive vehicles on this site. In doing this, the **Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative** is responding to the needs of the local community and acting within legislation established under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997. It is also mindful of the policies of the peak Four Wheel Drive Association and the Trail Bike Association – see below.

<p><b>Four Wheel Drive NSW &amp; ACT</b>  <a href="http://www.4wdnsw-act.asn.au/">http://www.4wdnsw-act.asn.au/</a>  <b>Code of Ethics</b>          “The Association Code of Ethics has been around for a long time. It is up to every member of every club to ensure they, and fellow members, understand and adhere to this code.” For drivers who might have used Mill Creek the following rules are important:          1. Obey the laws and regulations for Recreational Vehicles that apply to public lands.          2. Respect the cultural, heritage and environmental values of public/private land by obeying restrictions that may apply.          3. Respect our flora and fauna. Stop and look but never disturb.          4. Keep to formed vehicle tracks.          5. Keep the environment clean. Carry your own and any other rubbish out.          6. Keep your vehicle mechanically sound and clean to reduce the environmental impact.          7. Adopt minimal impact camping and driving practices.</p>	<p>The Trail Bike Association  <a href="http://www.offroad.mccofnsw.org.au">http://www.offroad.mccofnsw.org.au</a>          offers the following advice to riders.  <b>What riders can do:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be considerate of other land users, neighbours, etc</li> <li>• understand and obey the laws governing riding dirt bikes on public and private land.</li> <li>• act and ride in ways that minimise disturbance to others</li> <li>• ride in areas and ways that minimise impact on the environment</li> <li>• wash bikes, gear, trailers etc after each ride/trip to minimise transfer of weeds and disease</li> <li>• wear appropriate clothing and protective gear</li> </ul> <p>The Association acknowledges that trail biking in inappropriate areas can cause:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• greater disturbance to the wider community</li> <li>• increased conflict with other land users and enforcement agencies</li> <li>• danger to riders, others land users and those who treat and evacuate them</li> <li>• conflict between neighbours in semi-rural areas</li> </ul>
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The *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly Education Program* will be asking bikers and four wheel drivers to stay out of the area on the banks of the creek. Following a period of education, staff from Council and the Police will be issuing fines to those who continue to use the site.

We understand that people are using the area for recreational purposes and are not wanting to cause harm. But they are harming the environment and affecting local residents.

### ***Where else can you go?***

There are other areas where four wheel drivers and trail bikers can go. While these areas are not as close to Sydney as Mill Creek they do offer free, legal access to bushland.

For both trail bikers and four wheel drivers these are in state forests [see Forrest NSW website <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forests> for details of locations and maps.

- North - 1 hour to reach the Central Coast. Ourimbah SF, Olney SF, Heaton SF (Watagan Mountains).
- South - 1.5 hours. Nearest forests are Belanglo, Meryla, Wingello and Penrose.

Drivers should know that 4WD club members (or those affiliated with the NSW/ACT 4WD Association) do not need to seek permits to drive in Forests NSW locations. The NSW/ACT 4WD Association has an agreement which provides for 4WD to use state forests in exchange for club assistance in monitoring forest hazards (blocked roads, fallen trees, recreation area conditions etc).

Riders should know that trail bike riding is permitted on formed roads only, in state forests, by licensed riders on registered bikes.

Please do not drive or ride in the area around Mill Creek.

## ***Mill Creek - Tread Lightly***

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### **Banners for Use around Mill Creek**

#### **Banner 1 – General Banner**

*This area surrounding Mill Creek is precious. Treat it with care.*

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

#### **Banner 2 – Seeking Community Help Banner**

*To protect the water in Mill Creek and the land around it. No four wheel driving trail biking or dumping is permitted.*

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

#### **Banner 3 – Request Banner**

*Please help us to care for the area around Mill Creek. Please take your four wheel drive or trial bike elsewhere.*

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*



#### Banner 4 - Thank you banner

*Thank you for protecting the area surrounding Mill Creek. In staying out of the area surrounding Mill Creek you have helped to keep our water clean.*

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

#### Follow-up letter to all 4WD Clubs etc informing them that the program is beginning on .....

See appendix 1

Dear....

You will recall that I wrote to you some time ago informing you of the intention of the **Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative**] to run an education/enforcement program in the Area surrounding Mill Creek.

The *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* Program begins **next Monday????** and your members risk heavy fines if they use this area for four wheel driving/trail biking. It would be appreciated if you could pass this information on to all your members. Please let them know that it is illegal to enter any area surrounding Mill Creek and it could cost them **?????in fines**. The attached flyer provides more information about alternative venues, and you can also check out the Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative website at [www.Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative.nsw.gov.au](http://www.Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative.nsw.gov.au).

Yours....

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

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**Press Ads** Note similar words to be used if radio community service ads can be secured or talk back time is procured] along with program key messages, see **page 7** above].

Mill Creek feeds the Georges River. Its health is important to us. The bushland surrounding it is important too Please take care of it.

No four wheel driving, trail biking or dumping is permitted.

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

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#### Mayor or????? Donut Press Release

The **Mayor** etc .....said *"I am very pleased to be joining with the ..... in this program – so often our water quality is just taken for granted."*

The *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* Program is important because it protects the quality of our water and the bushland around the creek.

*"Recreation is great but doing it in the area surrounding Mill Creek is not OK. A clean Mill Creek is important" said ??????*

So far the *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* program has informed thousands of people about the need to protect our waterways..

It is important that people do not take their 4WDs, mountain or trail bikes into this area and do not dump their rubbish in the bush or on the road side..

*The Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative can provide information about alternative areas that can be used for recreation. If you see people using the area surrounding Mill Creek in four wheel drives or trail bikes report them by phoning ??????*

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

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#### **Donut Press release at conclusion of the project**

*The Mill Creek - Tread Lightly Program has been a significant success," said ??????. "This program was designed to inform people about the area around Mill Creek and to encourage them to use other more suitable areas for recreation."*

Four Wheel driving, Trail and Mountain biking are banned in this area. People doing these things around Mill Creek can be fined up to \$???? depending on what they are doing.

*In our community we need to leave some areas free of human activity*

For more information about the *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly Program* contact ??????? the Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative's Compliance Unit by phoning????

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

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#### **Thank you press advertisement**

*In staying out of the Area surrounding Mill Creek you have helped to keep our water clean and our bushland healthy. Thank You.*

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

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## Appendix 4. Complete Education/Compliance Program

Undoubtedly the most effective program for dealing with willful impact on the areas surrounding Mill Creek is a mixture of education and enforcement. Due to a variety of circumstances this cannot be conducted at the time of drafting this strategy. A complete integrated program is outlined below, and it is hoped that the circumstances change so that this program can be implemented.

What follows integrates education and enforcement into a sixteen week initiative designed to impact on the behaviours of four wheel drivers, and trail bikers who are illegally using the area around Mill Creek. It can also be used to target dumping behaviour, if required.

This strategy can be used once or repeated on a number of occasions if the behaviour persists, and can be adapted for use in other locations. Note that contact with representative organisations is an important part of this project and contact details of priority Four Wheel Drive Clubs, Trail Bike Clubs and media contacts for these targets are provided.

As indicated above, the program is divided into three components – preparation, education and enforcement. The tables below describe all activities that form a part of the program.

### **A. The Preparation Phase:**

#### **Duration 6 weeks**

This part of the project occurs prior to the specific on-ground activity.

<p><b>Context Setting – Information:</b>            In this phase the project officer will be seeking the support of local residents around Mill Creek, and other relevant stakeholders – most especially the GLALC to inform them of the program.            The intention will be to build understanding of those using the area surrounding Mill Creek about why some activities are not to occur, and the risks of getting caught.</p>
<p>Activity 1. Issue general press release to local press about the project.</p>
<p>Activity 2. Contact the <i>Four Wheel Drive NSW &amp; ACT Association</i> [see Appendix 1] and seek their support for a partnership role in the program. Offer the opportunity to them for acknowledgement on the program material and the website.</p> <p>Also Contact Mountain Bikes Australia [see Appendix 1]</p>
<p>Activity 3: Provide early advice to each 'local' Four Wheel Dive Club and tell them about the program. Seek their support for it and ask them to inform members. Note Appendix 1 provides a list of clubs which might be added to over time.</p>
<p>Activity 4: Establish or insert specific information on a page on the Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative website that allows the Project Officer to insert relevant messages and materials about this program.</p>
<p>Activity 5: Liaise with any business or community groups in Menai/Alfords Point etc to inform them of this part of the program. [See Appendix 2]</p>
<p>Activity 6: Determine how council at the highest level might support the project. For example Messages on Council Website or in the Mayor's column in the press about the program, its key messages and Council support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council direct mail-out to ratepayers in the area surrounding Mill Creek about this project and the importance of the area around Mill Creek</li> <li>▪ Integration of this program with other Council sustainability initiatives as appropriate.</li> </ul>
<p>Activity 7: Liaise with other program partners to establish how they might support the program. Meet with partners where appropriate. Appendix 3 contains program partners.</p>
<p>Activity 8: Liaise with the staff and community of the Area surrounding Mill Creek Primary School and other</p>

local schools and pre-schools about how they might support the program. See Appendix 2 for possible schools to be contacted.
<p>Activity 9: Layout and publish all print materials required for education activities. See Appendix 3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Produce a simple low literacy flyer about why people should not use the area surrounding Mill Creek for recreation purposes. Include in this flyer how people can report illegal use of Mill Creek bushland. Contact information included in this flyer.</li> <li>➤ Produce a local Area surrounding Mill Creek version of the Mid Georges River Sustainability Initiative brochure [with local map for distribution as a part of the program].</li> <li>➤ Produce four large banners for use on the boundaries and known illegal entry points.</li> <li>➤ Produce one banner for use in Area surrounding Mill Creek informing people about the program.</li> <li>➤ Produce posters for use around Area surrounding Mill Creek with program messages.</li> <li>➤ Produce thank-you banner for use in Area surrounding Mill Creek at the end of the project.</li> </ul>

See Implementation support material below.

**B. Education Phase:**

**Duration 6 weeks**

<p><b>Education Phase</b></p> <p>The focus of this phase is to provide deterrence focused education  In this phase the project officer will be seeking the support of local residents around the area surrounding Mill Creek, and other relevant stakeholders, to reduce the illegal use of the area  It will also involve raising the understanding of those using the Area surrounding Mill Creek about why activities are not to occur, and the risks of getting caught. - increasing the real and perceived risks of being caught illegally entering Mill Creek land.</p>
<p>Activity 10: Write a more direct follow-up letter to each of the Four Wheel Drive Clubs listed in Appendix 1 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Remind them about the project</li> <li>▪ Provide hard and electronic version of the flyer and ask the club to circulate to members</li> <li>▪ Tell them about the level of fines that might impact on their members.</li> </ul>
<p>Activity 11: Undertake a letterbox drop of the Area surrounding Mill Creek community. Use the low literacy flyer for this purpose.</p>
<p>Activity 12: Erect up to four large banners carrying key messages about the non use of the area around Mill Creek. The locations of these banners depends on the focus area of the program. If the program is being delivered on the eastern side of the creek, the banners should be placed near possible points of entrance to the bushland area. If the program is targeted along Heathcote Rd, then appropriate locations need to be found. Liaison with The GLALC and the NPWS needs to occur prior to placement of these banners and activity on this side of the Creek.</p>
<p>Activity 13: Compliance staff and education staff need to be in the located area for up to 30% of the time in this period. Their role is to approach illegal users, give them a flyer and warn them that they are at risk of a fine. This is the warning phase of the program.</p>
<p>Activity 14: Press ads/community services [see also below Using the Media Section]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ place press ads and liaise about free editorial placement – messages consistent with flyers, banners and posters.</li> <li>▪ place community service advertisement and editorial in local community radio if appropriate– develop and place announcement -- messages consistent with flyers banners and posters.</li> </ul>

### C. Enforcement Phase:

#### Duration Six Weeks

The enforcement aspect of this program relies upon site access being provided to Authorised Officers who are able to issue Penalty Infringement Notices to those who illegally access the site [or who litter or dump on the site]. These officers will need to be drawn from the Appropriate Regulatory Authority [ARA] that has statutory responsibility for this area. Under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997, these officers must be drawn from the Sutherland Shire Council [SCC]. Liaison between the GLALC and the SCC has to occur if this program is to be delivered as it is written.

Note: The material below indicates that letters etc will originate from the Sutherland Shire Council – given their ARA status. But it may be that this will be varied in the roll out of the program.

<b>Enforcement Phase</b> This phase increases the understanding of the community that continuing to use the land around Mill Creek for illegal activity is no longer tolerated. Prosecution Infringement Notices [PINS] will be issued to those who continue to offend by illegally using the area surrounding Mill Creek To increase the real and perceived risks of being caught illegally entering privately owned land and dumping on or near the site.
Activity 15: Continue all of the actions in Phases A and B that flow through the whole program, most particularly Activities 4, 6, 7 and 16.
Activity 16: In the morning of most Saturday and Sunday of the Enforcement Phase of the program and selected other days, hand out the A5 flyer to any 4WD driver and to drivers of cars with trail bikes in trailers parked in the area surrounding Mill Creek.
Activity 17: Conduct a joint operation with the Police on-site – blitz. Ensure that the Police presence is visible in the area. Issue a specific press release about this police presence. Select appropriate days and times for this to occur. Compliance officers should be on-site each weekend and one/two days per week [vary days weekly] to issue fines as appropriate
Activity 18: Liaise with Sutherland Shire Council PR staff and issue press releases about the number of fines issued, what extent of use is occurring etc.
Activity 19: Place a 'thank you' advertisement in the local press.
Activity 20: Produce a new banner and put in place towards the end of the program. The message on this banner is something in the order of <i>Thank you for staying out of the Area surrounding Mill Creek.</i>

Implementation support materials developed to assist in the delivery of this program are to be found in.

#### **Note: Compliance Staff will be required to work on this program**

- During the Education Phase [B], Compliance staff will patrol the area surrounding Mill Creek and issue warnings to anyone found trespassing in the Area.
- During the Enforcement Phase [C], Compliance staff will issue PINs as appropriate.
- Compliance staff will also be involved in the blitz of the area surrounding Mill Creek that is to be conducted with the NSW Police.
- Compliance staff will provide data about the number of PINs issued etc to the Sutherland Shire Council's Communications team for use in press releases and other PR activities.

#### **Materials Required for Delivery of this Education/Compliance Program**

This Section provides the staff delivering the program with drafts of most of the material required. These drafts are written in plain English Word versions without art or layout of all materials required for the program is included.

Note 1. GLALC input and support is essential for this material and at this stage this is not included.

Note 2. That the support from Sutherland Shire Council is essential if this integrated compliance/education program is to occur.

Note 3. That letters etc are written from Sutherland Council [given their role in a compliance oriented program] but it may be that they would come from the project itself – this can be amended if and when this Education/Compliance program is delivered.

### General support letter for possible partners and other stakeholders

Dear

The [Sutherland Shire Council] is concerned about the quality of the water that is flowing into the Georges River from Mill Creek. It has also been concerned for a long period of time about the extent of illegal use of the land around Mill Creek by trail bikers and four wheel drivers, as well as by people who dump their rubbish in this area.

The *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* education program will be held in the near future and it will target all people who break the law by entering this area. Anyone who drives a 4WD, or rides a bike or dumps rubbish in the area surrounding Mill Creek is breaking the law. They are putting the quality of our water at risk. Although most people follow the law and stay out of the area, some people still ignore the signs and barriers. The Sutherland Shire Council wants all people to know that they must not enter this area except on foot. Attached is a short description of the planned education and enforcement program.

If you are able to support this program, I would appreciate further contact with you. Can you please contact ??????? to discuss how you might be able to help or if you would like more information.

Thank you for your support.

Yours .....

---

### Initial Contact Letter for Four Wheel Drive Associations and ACT/Four Wheel Drive Clubs and Mountain Bikes Australia/Mountain Bike Clubs

Dear

I am sure you are aware that the Sutherland Shire Council has the responsibility to ensure that our water remains at the highest quality.

I am writing to inform you about a program that the Sutherland Shire Council is conducting in the area surrounding Mill Creek and to seek your support for it. Although most people respect and follow the law which prohibits entry to the land on the eastern and the western sides of the creek, there are examples of illegal entry which pose a threat to the quality of our water. The *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* education program is described in the short attachment to this letter.

I appreciate that some of your members seek to use off-road locations for their vehicles. While I agree that recreation is important for all of us, it is vital that this does not occur in the land around Mill Creek. The *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* education program is a combined education and enforcement campaign to inform people about and to deter their use of the area for recreational purposes.

Your support for our efforts in managing the site would be greatly appreciated. Please pass on information about this program to your member groups/members.

If you have any questions about the program or you would like further information, please contact?????

Yours.....

---

**Short Program Description for use on:**

- Sutherland Shire Council Website
- Attachment to letters and other communication mechanisms
- Mayors column
- Other communication opportunities

***The Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* Education Program  
Brief Information Flyer**

The Sutherland Shire Council is responsible for managing the water quality in its local area. It is also responsible for Bushland management. Council takes these responsibilities seriously

Along with our program partners GLALC and NPWS Council is conducting a comprehensive education program around Mill Creek. *The Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* Education Program is aimed improving knowledge and developing more responsible attitudes to improve and protect urban bushland and water quality in Mill Creek.

The program helps local residents particularly in Alford's Point and Menai to improve the area and also targets those people who use the area illegally – four wheel drivers, trail bikers and dumpers.

Some alternative venues can be found for some of these activities. People who want to drive a 4WD, ride a bike or bushwalk can do it in other areas. Information will be provided directly to those who use Mill Creek in this way and it can be found on the Council's website.

The *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* Education Program will include a period where education and information will be provided, in order to remind people of their responsibilities and deter them from using the area surrounding Mill Creek. This will be followed by an enforcement blitz where fines will be issued.

In addition, people in the area surrounding Mill Creek and those that use the road past the area will be asked to support the program by informing the Sutherland Shire Council about those using the area illegally. They can do this by calling 02 ??????? Keeping our water clean and our bushland healthy is very important and everyone needs to take responsibility for this.

For more information see ??????

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

Detailed Flyer for Four Wheel Drivers and Mountain Bikers – Alternate Sites etc  
**Mill Creek - Tread Lightly Education Program**  
**Information for Four Wheel Drivers and Trail Bikers**

**What is in the area?**

The bushland area around Mill Creek is important to the people of the Sutherland Shire community and beyond. About 75% of the area between Heathcote and Illawarra Rds is bushland. These natural areas support extensive areas of significant plants and animals.

There are 24 species of threatened native wildlife within the Mill Creek area. Also there are approximately 1,600 plant species in the area. Of these, 55 plant species are listed as threatened and of those – 20 species are endangered [the highest rating] and 21 are vulnerable. Mill Creek bushland is an important natural site.

This area needs protecting so that the bushland is preserved and the water quality in the creek remains good.

The largest landholder in this area is the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Lands Council [GLALC]. The National Parks and Wildlife Service {NPWS} also own a large parcel of land on the banks of Mill Creek.

**What is the problem?**

In this area four wheel driving and trail bike riding are major problems. They are illegal and are causing a great deal of environmental harm. The *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* Education Program aims at reducing the use of bikes and four wheel drive vehicles on this site.

In doing this, the project is responding to the needs of the local community and acting within legislation established under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997. It is also mindful of the policies of the peak Four Wheel Drive Association and the Trail Bike Association – see below.

<p><b>Four Wheel Drive NSW &amp; ACT</b>  <a href="http://www.4wdnsw-act.asn.au/">http://www.4wdnsw-act.asn.au/</a>  <b>Code of Ethics</b>          "The Association Code of Ethics has been around for a long time. It is up to every member of every club to ensure they, and fellow members, understand and adhere to this code." For drivers who might have used Mill Creek the following rules are important:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Obey the laws and regulations for Recreational Vehicles that apply to public lands.</li> <li>2. Respect the cultural, heritage and environmental values of public/private land by obeying restrictions that may apply.</li> <li>3. Respect our flora and fauna. Stop and look but never disturb.</li> <li>4. Keep to formed vehicle tracks.</li> <li>5. Keep the environment clean. Carry your own and any other rubbish out.</li> <li>6. Keep your vehicle mechanically sound and clean to reduce the environmental impact.</li> <li>7. Adopt minimal impact camping and driving practices.</li> </ol>	<p>The Trail Bike Association  <a href="http://www.offroad.mccofnsw.org.au">http://www.offroad.mccofnsw.org.au</a>          offers the following advice to riders.  <b>What riders can do?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be considerate of other land users, neighbours, etc</li> <li>• understand and obey the laws governing riding dirt bikes on public and private land.</li> <li>• act and ride in ways that minimise disturbance to others</li> <li>• ride in areas and ways that minimise impact on the environment</li> <li>• wash bikes, gear, trailers etc after each ride/trip to minimise transfer of weeds and disease</li> <li>• wear appropriate clothing and protective gear</li> </ul> <p>The Association acknowledges that trail biking in inappropriate areas can cause:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• greater disturbance to the wider community</li> <li>• increased conflict with other land users and enforcement agencies</li> <li>• danger to riders, others land users and those who treat and evacuate them</li> <li>• conflict between neighbours in semi-rural communities</li> <li>• environmental damage</li> </ul>
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The *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly Education Program* will be asking bikers and four wheel drivers to stay out of the area on the banks of the creek. Following a period of education, staff from Council and the Police will be issuing fines to those who continue to use the site.

Council understands that people are using the area for recreational purposes and are not wanting to cause harm. But they are harming the environment and affecting local residents.

### *Where else can you go?*

There are other areas where four wheel drivers and trail bikers can go. While these areas are not as close to Sydney as Mill Creek they do offer free, legal access to bushland.

For both trail bikers and four wheel drivers these are in state forests [see Forrest NSW website <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forests> for details of locations and maps.

- North - 1 hour to reach the Central Coast. Ourimbah SF, Olney SF, Heaton SF (Watagan Mountains).
- South - 1.5 hours. Nearest forests are Belanglo, Meryla, Wingello and Penrose.

Drivers should know that 4WD club members (or those affiliated with the NSW/ACT 4WD Association) do not need to seek permits to drive in Forests NSW locations. The NSW/ACT 4WD Association has an agreement which provides for 4WD to use state forests in exchange for club assistance in monitoring forest hazards (blocked roads, fallen trees, recreation area conditions etc).

Riders should know that trail bike riding is permitted on formed roads only, in state forests, by licensed riders on registered bikes.

Please do not drive or ride in the area around Mill Creek.

## *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

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**Warning Flyer** to be handed out during the education phase

If you trail bike or four wheel drive in the area surrounding Mill Creek you are breaking the law.

Together with NSW Police, the Sutherland Shire Council is concerned that any use of the area surrounding Mill Creek might damage the bushland and the water quality.

Recreation is great, but doing it in the area surrounding Mill Creek is not OK – you will be fined. **Fines of ????** apply.

If you see people in the area on mountain bikes or four wheel drives, call and report them to Sutherland Shire Council on **??????** or **NSW Police on.?????**

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

**Banners for Use around Mill Creek**

**Banner 1 – General Banner**

This area surrounding Mill Creek is precious. You risk a fine if you use it for four wheel driving mountain biking or rubbish dumping

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

**Banner 2 – Seeking Community Help Banner**

To protect the water in Mill Creek and the land around it. No four wheel driving trail biking or dumping is permitted. Please report illegal use. Call ??????.and report misuse

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

**Banner 3 – Fines Banner**

If you enter the bushland around Mill Creek in a motor vehicle you will be fined. It can cost you up to \$???????

**Banner 4 - Thank you banner**

*Thank you for protecting the area surrounding Mill Creek. In staying out of the area surrounding Mill Creek you have helped to keep our water clean.*

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

**Follow-up letter to all 4WD Clubs etc informing them that the program is beginning on .....**

See appendix 1

Dear....

You will recall that I wrote to you some time ago informing you of the intention of the Sutherland Shire Council] to run an education/enforcement program in the Area surrounding Mill Creek.

The *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* Program begins **next Monday????** and your members risk heavy fines if they use this area for four wheel driving/trail biking. It would be appreciated if you could pass this information on to all your members. Please let them know that it is illegal to enter any area surrounding Mill Creek and it could cost them **?????in fines**. The attached flyer provides more information about alternative venues, and you can also check out the Sutherland Shire Council website at [www.sutherlandshirecouncil.nsw.gov.au](http://www.sutherlandshirecouncil.nsw.gov.au).

Yours....

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

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**Press Ads** Note similar words to be used if radio community service ads can be secured or talk back time is procured] along with program key messages, see **page 7** above].

Mill Creek feeds the Georges River. Its health is important to us. The bushland surrounding it is important too Please take care of it.

No four wheel driving, trail biking or dumping is permitted.

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

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**Police / Mayor or????? Donut Press Release**

The **Police Local Area Commander/Mayor** etc .....said "I am very pleased to be joining with the ..... in this program – so often our water quality is just taken for granted."

The *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* Program is important because it protects the quality of our water and the bushland around the creek.

*"Recreation is great but doing it in the area surrounding Mill Creek is not OK – you'll be fined. A clean Mill Creek is important" said ??????*

So far the *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly* program has informed thousands of people about the need to protect our waterways and **????? fines** have been issued.

It is important that people do not take their 4WDs, mountain or trail bikes into this area.

*The Sutherland Shire Council can provide information about alternative areas that can be used for recreation. If you see people using the area surrounding Mill Creek in four wheel drives or trail bikes report them by phoning ??????*

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

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### **Donut Press release at conclusion of the project**

*The Mill Creek - Tread Lightly Program has been a significant success," said ???????. "This program was designed to inform people about the area around Mill Creek and to encourage them to use other more suitable areas for recreation."*

Four Wheel driving, Trail and Mountain biking are banned in this area. People doing these things around Mill Creek can be fined **up to \$?????** depending on what they are doing.

*"During the recent Mill Creek - Tread Lightly Program the ?????? and the NSW Police issued ?????? warning letters and handed out ?????? fines," said ??????.*

*In our community we need to leave some areas free of human activity*

For more information about the *Mill Creek - Tread Lightly Program* contact **?????????** at the Sutherland Shire Council's Compliance Unit by phoning?????

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

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### **Thank you press advertisement**

*In staying out of the Area surrounding Mill Creek you have helped to keep our water clean and our bushland healthy. Thank You.*

*Mill Creek - Tread Lightly*

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## Appendix 5. Evaluation Material

### Outcome Hierarchy: *Mill Creek – Tread Lightly*

Project Outcomes	Evaluation Questions	Who has the Data?	How do we get the Data	Comments
7. Reduced environmental impact and increased appropriate behaviour.	<p>Is there evidence of improved community behaviour [Creek related] as a result of effective implementation of the program?</p> <p>Is there evidence of reduced environmental impact on the Mill Creek as a result of effective implementation of the program?</p>	<p>Council and NPWS monitoring data showing key pollution measures, nutrients.</p> <p>Residents and others who use the area</p>	<p>Review over time of monitoring data against key indicators.</p> <p>Resident survey on the Menai side of the catchment.</p> <p>Use the Resident Survey [amended ] with any stakeholders that can be identified on the Heathcote Rd side of the catchment.</p>	<p>The Project Manager will need to identify the key environmental indicators and measure these at the end of each delivery of the program.</p> <p>This will require these to be built into the Master Plan for Mill Creek</p>
6. Increased conservation activity by the community to enhance the sustainability of Mill Creek.	To what extent is their evidence of improved ownership / participation in Creek management?	<p>The residents of the Mill Creek Catchment.</p> <p>Sutherland Shire Council</p> <p>Project Manager</p>	<p>Review of use data from Bushcare and bushwalks etc.</p> <p>Resident survey data on use of the area</p>	.

Project Outcomes	Evaluation Questions	Who has the Data?	How do we get the Data	Comments
5. Some reduced four wheel drive, trail bike and mountain bike use of the site	To what extent is there evidence of reduced illegal use of the site by four wheel drivers and trail bikers?	Land owners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GLALC</li> <li>• NPWS</li> </ul> Residents will have ad hoc data  Sutherland Shire Council has any compliance information that exists	Negotiation required with Landholders about what data exists and how to obtain it.  Resident survey might assist  Council review of compliance data within the Mill Creek – especially along Heathcote Road	In the absence of compliance activity it will be difficult to both impact upon, and measure this outcome  Review of compliance data and comparison with previous data will not show change if this part of the program is not delivered
4. Improved behaviour by residents and visitors to the Mill Creek area,	What evidence is there of behaviour change to reduce pollution in the Mill Creek area?	The residents of the Mill Creek Catchment.  Anecdotal data is possible. Information from track users.  Collection of media articles about the Creek and comparison of number and extent of media articles.	Resident survey  Talk with bush walkers about level of track use.  Project manager to collect media and report on this.	Getting any real data from those/about those using the area willfully will be difficult.

Project Outcomes	Evaluation Questions	Who has the Data?	How do we get the Data	Comments
3. Heightened appreciation and awareness of Mill Creek as an iconic feature of the local community.	To what extent is there evidence of increased valuing of the Creek? Is there evidence of increased use of bush tracks around the creek by local residents? Positive media coverage and public information about the creek?	The residents of the Mill Creek Catchment.  Anecdotal data is possible. Information from track users.  Collection of media articles about the Creek and comparison of number and extent of media articles.	Resident survey  Feedback from Track users  Media review	Similar mechanisms used for behaviour and appreciation outcomes.
2. Improved knowledge of what individuals might do to improve the health of the creek.	Do people in the catchment demonstrate an increasing level of knowledge about protecting the sustainability of the creek?	The residents of the Mill Creek Catchment.	Resident survey	
1. A significant range of education initiatives were conducted with residents, visitors and site users.	What education approaches were conducted?	The Project Manager will identify and conduct the range of initiatives each time the program is delivered.	Project Manager report	Given the variation in activities at each delivery of the program, it is important that full detail is made available to the community.

**Mill Creek Generic Resident/other Survey**

The generic survey below is provided for use with residents and others of the Mill Creek Catchment

*Mill Creek – Treading Lightly*  
**Community Survey**

Name [optional].....

Address [optional].....

What has the most harmful effect on water quality in Mill Creek?

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 equals excellent how would you rate your level of knowledge about Mill Creek

1.....2.....3.....4.....5  
Very poor                  Just OK                  Reasonable                  Good                  Excellent

Since the start of the *Mill Creek – Treading Lightly* Program are you:

- More aware of the environmental issues at Mill Creek
- More connected with Mill Creek
- Feel just the same as I did previously about Mill Creek
- Have no connection with Mill Creek at all?

Are you aware of more people using the bush land around Mill Creek for passive recreation? Yes/no and comment.

What behaviours have you changed as a result of this program? List behaviours below

Are you aware of any other people changing behaviour?

Which People  
What Behaviour

Any other information you can add?