Shrinking purses and grand designs
Doing more with less in managed public bushland

Managed Public Bushland
- 94 Reserves
- 0.2ha to 220ha (x̄ = 15ha)
- Large % of Reserves are Crown Land managed by Council
- High level of community involvement in greater PMQ
- Leveraging NRM outcomes through volunteer programs

Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA
- NSW mid north coast, approx 500kms from Qld.
- 3,600 sq km
- 77,000 residents
- Temperate/subtropical climate
- 180 Declared Noxious Weeds
- 6 full time Bushland Management field staff
- 4 Noxious Weeds field staff

Port Macquarie Landcare Group
- 170 members
- Active on 160ha of Reserves
- Fieldwork 5 days per week
- Nursery business
- High community profile
- Corporate partnerships

So far, so good, so what's the problem?
- NRM funding currently in a relatively low part of its cycle
- The lead agency now replaced with a NRM/DPI 'one stop shop' with less stakeholder expertise/support
- Federal funding remodelled with a different set of strings attached
- Council’s growing bushland liability (including developer offsets)

Doing more with less – a case study
- NSW Environmental Trust Landcare project (councils ineligible)
- 6 years, ~$500k, 55.5ha
- PMHC as ‘partner agency’
- NPWS parallel involvement
Who does what?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council</th>
<th>Landcare</th>
<th>NPWS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical oversight</td>
<td>Works coordination</td>
<td>Contractors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ecology</td>
<td>Community engagement</td>
<td>Community engagement</td>
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<td>Stormwater</td>
<td>Recruiting</td>
<td>Technical input</td>
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<td>Rescued weeds</td>
<td>Work for the dole</td>
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<td>Road reserves</td>
<td>Contractors</td>
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<td>Bushfire</td>
<td>CSO</td>
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<td>Community engagement</td>
<td>National Tree Day</td>
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<td>Waste removal</td>
<td>Media/publicity</td>
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<td>Parks and Gardens</td>
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Stretching the dollars – on-ground

- High impact techniques
  - Forestry tritter = 200hrs labour
  - High-volume spraying
  - ‘Greenfield’ conversion (planting)
- Diverse partnerships
  - Corrective services team
  - Work for the dole
  - Corporates/donations (eg mulch)

Stretching the dollars – behind the scenes

- Assuming the role of a Catchment Management Authority
- Scientific and technical oversight done ‘in-house’
- Reporting metrics
- Multiple organisational ‘silos’ involved and cooperating (!)
- Generating positive publicity
Doing less with more…when good times go bad!

- Short-term-impact projects
- Highlights what can (and usually does) happen with non-strategic works
- Project metrics often measured in participants outcomes, not ecological benefit
- Contrasts with long-term community ownership

Have we learnt anything?!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pretty happy with...</th>
<th>Could do better at...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting volunteers</td>
<td>Community engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steering but not controlling</td>
<td>Knowledge sharing</td>
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<td>Multiple silos working together</td>
<td>Positive publicity</td>
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- Estelle Gough and Port Macquarie Landcare Group
- Rebecca Montague-Drake and Port Macquarie-Hastings Council