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## Background

The NSW Ramsar Wetlands Communications Program (RWCP) is an innovative approach aimed at increasing awareness, appreciation and value for wetlands and the Ramsar Convention, as a key tool for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, across a range of land tenures. RWCP will target key audiences throughout NSW over the next five months (January 2005 to May 2006) using a range of communication tools including a website/link, media campaign, brochures, site tours, presentations to schools, a presence at key events and many other activities. RWCP is an initiative of the NSW Ramsar Managers Network (RMN) which is a group of private and government wetland managers, who are working towards a sustainable future for Private Ramsar Wetlands in NSW. This project is funded through the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust Program and coordinated by The Wetlands Centre, Australia (TWC). RWCP is aimed at supporting Private Ramsar Wetlands in NSW, however the program will most certainly bring benefit to the 11 Ramsar Wetlands in NSW and wetlands in general.

While the aim of RWCP is to support Private Ramsar Wetlands in NSW, the program is expected to benefit the other Ramsar Wetlands in NSW and wetlands generally, this is reflected in the suite of communication activities in the communications program. Of the 11 Ramsar Wetlands in NSW, four are private or community managed. These include: 1) Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands (near Leeton), 2) Wilgara Wetland (part of the Macquarie Marshes Ramsar Site near Quambone), 3) Gwydir Wetlands (near Moree) and 4) Shortland Wetlands (part of the Hunter Estuary Ramsar Wetlands near Newcastle).

The Communications Program is based on key findings and outcomes identified in the "Who Cares About Our Wetlands? Research Report". This research report was developed as the first phase of the Communications Program and was instrumental in identifying existing levels of awareness and understanding that target audiences have for the Ramsar Convention and wetlands in general. This research provided a clear understanding of opinions, attitudes and levels of awareness of key target audiences required to identify appropriate communication activities to feed into the design of the NSW Ramsar Wetlands Communications Program (RWCP).

### *Definitions*

The **Ramsar Convention** on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty, which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. Adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971, with the Convention's member countries covering all geographic regions of the planet ([www.wetlands.org.au](http://www.wetlands.org.au)) A **Communications Program** promotes understanding and may encourage a more informed public comment on an issue. It is not a substitute for policy deliberation or community consultation, but does contain the following key elements: deliberate in gaining understanding, providing information, influence and feedback; planned, with organised and well thought out activities, requiring research and analysis; responsive to target audiences concerns; holds public interest, mutually beneficial to all target audiences; provides two way communication and offers a management function. (Consultus New Zealand, *Effective Communication Strategies*, p:1 and Wilcox D, Cameron G, Ault P, Agee W, *Public Relations Strategies and Tactics*, p:5) **Target audiences** can be defined for the purpose of this program as people or groups that we intend directing our communications to, based on research ([www.commstoolkit.dpc.vic.gov.au](http://www.commstoolkit.dpc.vic.gov.au)). Target audiences also include stakeholders, bearers of separate interests and/or contributions for the management of a wetland (Ramsar Secretariat, Resolution VII.8 1999).

## Current Situation

The “Who Cares About Our Wetlands?” Research included up to 400 people who participated in the various research methods including online surveys, telephone interviews, focus groups, visitor surveys and desktop information review. These participants represented those that come into contact with wetlands and wetland issues as well as those who do not.

A broad overview of the research findings follows (for more information please refer to the research report [www.wetlands.org.au/WhoCaresAboutOurWetlands](http://www.wetlands.org.au/WhoCaresAboutOurWetlands) or contact The Wetlands Centre on ph (02) 49516466):

- People were found to have a varying priority for the protection of wetlands, depending on their involvement and interest in wetlands.
- In general, they valued most highly the social, aesthetic, educational and tourism elements of wetlands.
- Birds were regarded as the most prominent animal associated with wetlands.
- Main issues concerning wetlands were lack of water, development and pollution.
- Communication about wetlands was found to be fair but with understanding low in communities and varying in government sectors, depending on their level of exposure to wetlands.
- One of the main values identified through the visitor survey, for visiting a wetland, was considered a family day out or to see and discover what can be found at a wetland.
- Those familiar with the Ramsar Convention indicated that communication of the Ramsar Convention was fair in government sectors and fair/poor within the community. However there was virtually no awareness of the Ramsar Convention within the community sample surveyed via telephone interviews.
- Key sources of communication include word of mouth, mass media and websites.
- Suggested communication activities from survey respondents included a media campaign, an education program for government sectors and schools, training and/or education about wetlands, coordination between Catchment Management Authorities and wetlands, link with events and other environmental issues and groups and educational associations, develop and convey an analogy of wetlands like vital organs to convey simple messages, link tourism and recreation opportunities for education of wetlands, invite people to wetlands and involve stakeholders.
- In terms of the vision and future for wetlands, people who participated in the focus groups believe decision makers need to take wetlands more seriously, and that greater public education, greater allocation of water resources to wetland areas, reduced pollution and greater stakeholder contribution is required.

Each of the 4 Private Ramsar Wetlands (PRW) were found to have different communication needs. For the Gwydir Wetlands and Macquarie Marshes, this communications program will provide the opportunity to communicate their plight due to continued lack of water in order to effectively manage their Ramsar Wetland sustainably. For Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands and The Wetlands Centre, the communications program provides the opportunity to promote their Ramsar Wetlands (opened to the public) direct to the visitor market and gain additional support to effectively manage their Ramsar Wetland. Macquarie Marshes are also interested in tourism related activities, however water requirements need to be addressed first in order for tourism potential to occur. The communications program aims to raise the awareness of the Ramsar Convention and wetlands generally, as well as communicate the needs of the PRW that are relevant to the target audiences.

## Aim and Communication Objectives

An effective communications program uses research to identify information needs of its key target audiences. It then seeks to develop an informed approach by drawing upon key objectives and activities that will offer the greatest potential for persuasion and ultimate change.

The **aim of the NSW Ramsar Wetlands Communications Program (RWCP)** is to:

Increase awareness, appreciation and value in NSW for wetlands and the Ramsar Convention to key target audiences, as a key tool for the conservation and wise use of wetlands, across a range of land tenures.

The **communication objectives for the NSW Ramsar Wetlands Communications Program (RWCP)** are to:

1. Communicate the function and important role wetlands play in the total landscape and environment, using simple language and analogies, to further increase the awareness, understanding and appreciation of wetlands amongst key target audiences.
2. Communicate the significance and role of the Ramsar Convention as a key tool for conservation and wise use of wetlands within NSW , including the four Private Ramsar Wetland sites, to further increase the awareness, understanding and appreciation of the Ramsar Convention amongst key target audiences.
3. Communicate the relationship and significance between wetlands and the Ramsar Convention, for increased recognition, appreciation and priority amongst key target audiences.

## Target Audiences

The following target audiences have been selected, based on the outcomes of the “Who Cares About Our Wetlands? Research Report” and the needs of wetlands in general and specifically the Private Ramsar Wetlands (PRW). This program does not restrict communication to identified target audiences, with information and communication material produced through this program, reaching the broader community indirectly. The targeted approach, taken by this communications program, will obtain more effective outcomes and will be the first step to reaching broader target audiences and community. *For a detailed overview on the interpretation of the characteristics to determine the current mindset of each target audience, please refer to Appendix 1 Target Audience Characteristics.*

<i>Key Target Audience</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Desired mindset outcomes (related to current mindset and communication objectives). For current mindset interpretation please refer to Appendix 1.</i>
<b><i>Government and Agency Organisations</i></b>	Provide advice, information and natural resource management for issues involving wetlands and/or the environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation of wetlands in the total landscape and environment and the current issues threatening wetlands in general.</li> <li>• Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation of the Ramsar Convention and what it has to offer wetlands and regions.</li> <li>• Give a higher priority to wetlands and the Ramsar Convention in policy and resource tools, including increased recognition of wetlands and Ramsar within Catchment Action Plans and investment strategies.</li> <li>• Encourage an advocating role for wetlands and the Ramsar Convention across relevant target audiences.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Politicians/ High Profile Bureaucrats</i></b>	Responsible for setting policies and legislation in regard to wetlands and the Ramsar Convention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop greater recognition for wetlands and the Ramsar Convention to be rated as a higher priority on the environmental agenda.</li> <li>• Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for wetlands, the Ramsar Convention and the four PRW.</li> </ul>

<i>Key Target Audience</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Desired mindset outcomes (related to current mindset and communication objectives). For current mindset interpretation please refer to Appendix 1.</i>
<b><i>Communities in Private Ramsar Wetland areas.</i></b>	Communities in Private Ramsar Wetlands (PRW) areas including neighbours/ landholders, local businesses ♦.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for the role wetlands play in the total landscape and environment and PRW communities.</li> <li>• Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for the significance of the Ramsar Convention and the PRW in their communities.</li> <li>• Encourage a sense of place and involvement or visitation, of PRW.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Education Sector within Private Ramsar Wetland Areas</i></b>	Schools surrounding each of the PRW, but may also include TAFES, Universities ♦.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for the role wetlands play in the total landscape and environment within their communities.</li> <li>• Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for the Ramsar Convention within the education sector in PRW areas.</li> <li>• Encourage schools surrounding PRW to gain a greater appreciation and sense of place for their local PRW.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Visitor Market</i></b>	Visitors to the PRW that offer visitor facilities ♦.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for wetlands and the Ramsar Convention.</li> <li>• Encourage greater visitation and exposure of the PRW that offer visitor facilities.</li> </ul>

♦ Only those PRW who wish to participate

*Suggested additional target audience for Year 2: Non-government agencies and organisations, including community and environmental groups.*

## Key messages

The communication activities will aim to develop and consider key messages, as identified through the “Who Cares About Our Wetlands? Research Report”. These messages may include the following suggestions to ensure consistent key messages, for maximum impact and to minimise confusion and conflict in people’s awareness and understanding. Messages will be developed and tested in the initial stages of the Communications Program.

Suggested messages and statements may be developed using the following concepts and parameters:

- Wetlands are important organs within our landscape. Like kidneys, they cleanse and control our water;
- Use analogies such as the following key wetlands statement: ‘wetlands are kidneys of our environment’ and ‘without wetlands millions of wildlife and plants could die’;
- Continue to use the themes developed during the research phase – “Wetlands ... Without Wetlands” (please see research flyer as an example) and provide visual photographs to clearly communicate these themes and messages;
- Represent wetlands for their social, aesthetic and educational values;
- Communicate the social (tourism and recreation), environmental (water quality and habitat) and economic (fishing, tourism and agriculture industry) wetland values;
- Key industries rely on healthy wetlands – commercial and recreational fishing for plentiful fish breeding and agriculture lands use wetlands, wetlands offer useful properties for farming;
- Communicate reasons for visiting wetlands (wetlands with visitor facilities) for their family and discovery elements;
- Communicate that wetlands can include rivers, lakes, estuaries, swamps, marshes, coral reefs, seagrass beds, caves etc as part of the total landscape and environment;
- Show that some wetlands are wet while others occasionally dry up, wetting and drying an important part of the ongoing health of some wetlands. Wetlands can tolerate short periods of drought, but longer periods can destroy wetlands;
- Wetlands can be saltwater (e.g. mangroves, saltmarshes) or freshwater types (e.g. marshes etc);
- Use simple language and explanation for specific target audiences, with more technical language appropriate to other target audiences;
- Feature birds as prominent wetland animals and also mention other wetland animals which can include waterbirds, frogs, ducks, dragonflies, water dragons, snakes, fish, eels, crabs etc
- Focus Ramsar Convention messages on conservation (wise use), protection and international significance principles;
- Communicate the Ramsar Convention, as a convention for the wise use of wetlands and wetland habitats for future generations throughout the world;
- Communicate that the Ramsar Convention’s broad aims are to halt the worldwide loss of wetlands.

## Action Plan – Year 1

The following **Communications Diagram** provides an overview of the timeframe (January to June 2005) and types of communication activities for the Action Plan. NB for completion dates and more information on each of the activities please refer to individual tables in the following sections.

*Throughout:*

Media  
Monitoring,  
Newsletters,  
Media  
Releases,  
Events/  
Conferences,  
Email  
Newsletter,  
Key Policy  
Events.

*January:* Website/Link, Database, Media Contact, Brochure, Partnerships.

*February:* World Wetlands Day, Video, Media Campaign, Education Resources, Information Booklet, Experts.

*March:* Display material, Presentation, Print Column, Case Studies, CMA Visits, Media Kit, Key Policy Personnel, Tourism NSW.

*April:* Direct Mail, Strategic Alliances.

*May:* Site Tours (government), Site Talks (education), Print Column, Strategy.

*June:* Evaluation.

This **Action Plan** has been developed for a five-month period from January to June 2005. An application for Year 2 funds to continue the project from June 2005 to June 2006, has been submitted for consideration. Communication activities for that proposed period have been suggested at the end of each table.

**Communication Tools and Activities** within this Action Plan, fall under the following key headings:

1. Advertising –print column and display material;
2. Media Relations – media releases, media contacts, media campaign, media kit and media monitoring;
3. Multi-Media – website/link, video, presentation;
4. Publications – brochure, newsletters, email newsletter; information booklets, education resources, case studies;
5. Direct Mailing – direct mail
6. Events – events/conferences, site tours, key policy events, World Wetlands Day, site talks;
7. Consultation – experts, database, Catchment Management Authorities (CMA) visits, key policy personnel, Tourism New South Wales (NSW), strategy, partnerships, strategic alliances.

**Generic communication activities** are outlined as follows. These generic activities support the overall communications program, its objectives and the identified target audiences. To specifically meet the needs of key target audiences, a range of **targeted communication activities** are outlined in the next section.

**GENERIC COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES – Year 1**

<i>Communication Tool</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Timeframe &amp; Budget</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Multi-media	Website or Link	Identify an appropriate website and prepare and/or upgrade an existing NSW Ramsar Wetlands link/website. Content would be relevant to all identified target audiences, include key messages, information on wetlands in general and the Ramsar Convention and updates from RWCP. The site would be a key call to action resource, promoted on all communication resources produced through RWCP. Information may include: links to brochures; media releases etc; map of NSW Ramsar Wetlands; information pertaining to each of the 11 Ramsar Wetlands, specific to PRW; links to all other relevant wetland websites and gallery of PRW photos.	Jan-Feb \$3000	2% increase of hits to website each month.
Consultation	Database	Develop a list of network contacts (database) to communicate relevant RWCP activities. Review list every six months.	Jan Nil	700 people on database
Media Relations	Media Monitoring	Identify an evaluation system to monitor media enquiries established through media campaign, in addition to other current services.	Jan-Jun \$1000	15 media spots
Media Relations	Media Contacts	Prepare media contact listing that identifies key media contacts relevant to each PRW area and target audiences.	Jan-Feb Nil	20 media identified
Publications	Brochure	Update current NSW Ramsar Wetlands Brochure to clearly identify Ramsar Wetlands in NSW and clearly outline the role of wetlands in general and the Ramsar Convention. Brochure may include map of NSW RW (inside the brochure also utilised as a poster) and key messages and analogies for wetlands. This brochure would promote website link.	Jan-Feb \$7000 + sourced (\$2000)	Distribution of 1000 brochures

◆ Only those PRW who wish to participate

*Generic Communication Activities continued ....*

<i>Communication Tool</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Timeframe &amp; Budget</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Events	World Wetlands Day 2005 (WWD)	Identify WWD activities to be undertaken by each PRW and support these activities through media support, email networks (database) and any communication material produced at that time. Also use WWD as the launch of the Communications Program through a media release, supported by individual activities in each of the PRW♦.	Feb Nil	1 event held
Multi-Media	Video	Prepare a video relevant to target audiences, to communicate in simple language wetlands in general and Ramsar Convention messages, featuring PRW. The video could be shown in Wetland Visitor Information Centres, schools, Tourist Visitor Information Centres, during site tours (see government target audience section) and distributed to media to complement other communication activities.	Feb-Apr \$8000	2 requests to screen video
Events	Events/ Conferences	Identify and select 2 key events and/or conferences as a platform for communicating wetlands in general, the Ramsar Convention and RWCP activities.	Feb-May \$1000	2 events attended
Publications	Newsletters	Identify and select 2 relevant newsletters, distributed to key target audiences to communicate wetlands, Ramsar Convention and RWCP activities (e.g. AWA, FUNN).	Feb-Jun Nil	2 articles distributed
Consultation	Experts	Identify a series of wetland related fields (i.e. wetlands, birds, natural resource management) and select 2 experts in one of the nominated fields who would be available on request, to provide additional information to target audiences e.g. media, schools etc.	Feb Nil	2 experts identified
Media Relations	Media Releases	Prepare and distribute 2 media releases to communicate various RWCP activities.	Feb-Jun Nil	2 releases distributed
Media Relations	Media Campaign	Prepare a Media Campaign, using a broad range of mediums, relevant to PRW and target audiences to communicate wetlands and the Ramsar Convention messages e.g. Totally Wild♦.	Feb-Jun \$750	2 media visits

♦ Only those PRW who wish to participate

*Generic Communication Activities continued ....*

<i>Communication Tool</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Timeframe &amp; Budget</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Media Relations	Media Kit	Prepare a media kit for distribution during media campaign.	Mar-May \$250	3 media kits distributed
Advertising	Display material	Prepare display material, communicating wetlands in general, the Ramsar Convention and PRW. The display material would be utilised at specific events identified throughout RWCP and beyond the life of this project.	Mar \$2000	Material staged at 2 locations
Multi-media	Presentation	Prepare a PowerPoint presentation that is relevant to wetlands in general, the Ramsar Convention and specific to each of the PRW. This presentation would be utilised at nominated events/conferences.	Mar Nil	2 presentations
Publications	Case Studies	Explore the feasibility of producing a suite of case studies for each PRW that clearly outline the features, problems and challenges, solutions, future strategies etc, to be made available throughout RWCP and linked to website. Similar to format of recently produced WWF Case Studies.	Mar-Apr \$2000	4 PRW Case Studies
Publications	Email Newsletter	Prepare 2 email newsletters to provide RWCP updates to key networks.	Mar-Jun Nil	2 newsletters prepared

◆ Only those PRW who wish to participate

*NB: We assume that all PRW would be featured and involved in these generic communication activities, unless otherwise indicated.*

## Target Audience Communication Activities

### Government and Agency Organisations – Year 1

#### *Desired Mindset Outcomes (refer Target Audience section)*

- Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation of wetlands in the total landscape and environment and the current issues threatening wetlands in general.
- Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation of the Ramsar Convention and what it has to offer wetlands and regions.
- Give a higher priority to wetlands and the Ramsar Convention in policy and resource tools, including increased recognition of wetlands and Ramsar within Catchment Action Plans and investment strategies.
- Encourage an advocating role for wetlands and the Ramsar Convention across relevant target audiences.

<i>Communication Tool</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>RW /PRW</i>	<i>Timeframe &amp; Budget</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Consultation	Partnerships	Identify a resource that communicates with relevant wetland organisations throughout NSW and their roles, responsibilities and communication role and commitment to wetlands and the Ramsar Convention. This resource would be included in the Information Booklet.	All PR W	Jan-Feb Nil	Material
Publications	Information Booklet	Prepare an information booklet that may include information on the Ramsar Convention, map of RW, Ramsar Brochure, wetland issues and other material for future reference.	All PRW	Feb-Mar \$500	10 distributed
Consultation	CMA Visits	Organise visits to each PRW CMA outlining RWCP, in conjunction with PRW Managers, DEH and DEC staff. Information could be presented on how CMAs can partner the delivery of RWCP and how this addresses Blueprint or CAP targets. Identify an appropriate representative to represent RWCP, from a technical and appropriate background.	All PRW	Mar-May \$3800+ sourced (\$5000)	4 visits

*Government and Agency Organisations continued ....*

<i>Communication Tool</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>RW /PRW</i>	<i>Timeframe &amp; Budget</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Consultation	Strategic Alliances	Identify appropriate and relevant government and agency organisations to provide linkages and communication of RWCP communication resources and in turn wetlands and Ramsar Convention messages. Links may include brochure, media releases, website etc.	All PRW ♦	May Nil	2 links
Events	Site Tours	Organise site tours of the PRW, complementing the information booklet tool. Site tours may include tours of the sites, talks by landholders, talks on the Ramsar Convention and its significance etc.	All PRW ♦	Apr \$1000	4 site tours

♦ Only those PRW who wish to participate

**Politicians/High Profile Bureaucrats – Year 1**

*Desired Mindset Outcomes (refer Target Audience section)*

- o Develop greater recognition for wetlands and the Ramsar Convention to be rated as a higher priority on the environmental agenda.
- o Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for wetlands, the Ramsar Convention and the four PRW.

<i>Communication Tool</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>RW/ PRW</i>	<i>Timeframe Budget</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Events	Key Policy Events	Invite key politicians and bureaucrats to key events associated with RWCP activities.	All PRW ♦	Feb-Jun Nil	2 attended events
Consultation	Key Policy Personnel	Identify key politicians and bureaucrats who can be invited to lobby and advocate for wetlands and Ramsar within PRW areas.	All PRW ♦	Mar Nil	4 identified

♦ Only those PRW who wish to participate

## Communities in Private Ramsar Wetland areas – Year 1

### *Desired Mindset Outcomes (refer Target Audience section)*

- Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for the role wetlands play in the total landscape and environment and PRW communities.
- Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for the significance of the Ramsar Convention and the PRW in their communities.
- Encourage a sense of place and involvement or visitation, of PRW.

<i>Communication Tool</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>RW/ PRW</i>	<i>Timeframe &amp; Budget</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Advertising	Print Column	Investigate the feasibility of preparing 2 wetlands columns, in each local PRW newspaper, to update communities on RWCP activities and essentially communicate the role of wetlands and the Ramsar Convention.	All PRW ◆	Mar & May \$2500 + sourced (\$1000)	2 features
Direct Mail	Direct Mail	Prepare a direct mail to immediate neighbours at each of the PRW with an outline on their local PRW. The mail out could include: an outline on why the PRW became a RW; information on Ramsar Wetlands; address some local issues associated with the PRW from problems with feral animals; demystify confusion about Ramsar; opportunity to recruit volunteers etc.	All PRW ◆	Apr-May \$2000	4000 direct mails

◆ Only those PRW who wish to participate

## Education Sector within Private Ramsar Wetland Areas – Year 1

### *Desired Mindset Outcomes (refer Target Audience section)*

- Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for the role wetlands play in the total landscape and environment within their communities.
- Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for the Ramsar Convention within the education sector in PRW areas.
- Encourage schools surrounding PRW to gain a greater appreciation and sense of place for their local PRW.

<i>Communication Tool</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>RW/ PRW</i>	<i>Timeframe &amp; Budget</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Publications	Education Resources	Identify the feasibility of upgrading current wetlands educational material, in conjunction with relevant organisations. It would be proposed if this option were feasible to bring together relevant organisations to collaboratively update and coordinate this resource. It would also be proposed that an updated kit would include information on the Ramsar Convention and Ramsar Wetlands throughout NSW. If this option appears not feasible, explore alternative production and coordination of educational material for wetlands and the Ramsar Convention, to be distributed to PRW education areas and available via the website.	All RW ♦	Feb-May \$960 + sourced	Circulated to 4 schools
Events	Site Talks	Link the education kit/alternative material, with site talks to a maximum of 4 relevant schools in PRW areas to discuss wetlands, the Ramsar Convention and PRW within the area.	All PRW ♦	May-Jun \$500	4 site talks

♦ Only those PRW who wish to participate

## Visitor Market - Year 1

*Desired Mindset Outcomes (refer Target Audience section)*

- Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for wetlands and the Ramsar Convention.
- Encourage greater visitation and exposure of the 2 PRW, that offer visitor facilities

<i>Communication Tool</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>RW/ PRW</i>	<i>Timeframe &amp; Budget</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Media Relations	Media Contacts	Ensure media campaign identifies relevant tourism media.	FT & TWC ◆	Jan-Feb Nil	2 tourism media
Consultation	Tourism NSW	Attempt to increase recognition of wetlands in ecotourism, with Tourism NSW.	FT & TWC ◆	Mar Nil	Mentioned in resources
Consultation	Strategy	Develop a 2 page recommended brief, as a way forward for relevant PRW that could identify and provide opportunities, to improve visitor facilities for increased visitation. Recommendations could include funding opportunities, networks, interpretive material etc.	FT & TWC ◆	May-Jun Nil	Brief

◆ Only those PRW who wish to participate

## Action Plan - Year 2

The following **Communications Diagram** provides an overview of the timeframe (July 2005 – June 2006) and types of communication activities for the Action Plan. NB for completion dates and more information on each of the activities please refer to individual tables in the following sections.

*Throughout:*  
Media Monitoring, Newsletters, Media Releases, Events/ Conferences, Email Newsletter, Key Policy Events.

*July: website launch, Brochure Launch; ID events to attend; Distribution of Brochures*

*August: Website Links; Production of Video; Email Newsletter*

*September: Direct mail; Postcards*

*October: Production of TV ad; Update of Media Contacts; site tours; Presentation*

*November: Plan School tours; Education resources*

*December: Email Newsletter; Key Partners*

*January: TV ad; Signage; events presentation*

*February: World Wetlands Day Email Newsletter*

*March: School Tours; Wetland Tour operator links;*

*April: School Tours; Email Newsletter; media releases*

*May: Key Policy personnel; Update of Media Contacts*

*June: Evaluation*

This **Action Plan** has been developed for the Year 2 approved funds and the 12 month continuation consisting of 12 month from July to June 2006.

**Communication Tools and Activities** within this Action Plan, fall under the following key headings:

8. Advertising –print column and display material;
9. Media Relations – media releases, media contacts, media campaign, media kit and media monitoring;
10. Multi-Media – website/link, video, presentation;
11. Publications – brochure, newsletters, email newsletter; information booklets, education resources, case studies;
12. Direct Mailing – direct mail
13. Events – events/conferences, site tours, key policy events, World Wetlands Day, site talks;
14. Consultation – experts, database, Catchment Management Authorities (CMA) visits, key policy personnel, Tourism New South Wales (NSW), strategy, partnerships, strategic alliances.

**Generic communication activities** are outlined as follows. These generic activities support the overall communications program, its objectives and the identified target audiences. To specifically meet the needs of key target audiences, a range of **targeted communication activities** are outlined in the next section.

**YEAR 2****Generic Communications Activities – Year 2**

<i>Communication Tool</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description/</i>	<i>Timeframe/ Budget</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Multi-media	Website or Link	Continue to monitor and create links	Nil Augusts	2 links
	Website launch	In conjunction with the NSW Brochure, distribute media release launching the new website	August Nil	1 media response
	TV - ad	Prepare a mass communication advertisement that includes key messages associate with RWCP and wetlands in general, aim to have it shown within the PRW area were possible Explore the possibility of creating partnerships with eg CVA to increase funds hence increase exposure Tie or lead into World Wetlands Day 2 February 2006	Oct- December \$10000	TV ad to be shown within the 4 private Ramsar site area leading into World Wetlands Day Feb
	TV – general	Target programs such as Totally Wild, Cheese TV with re the Ramsar Convention and wetland stories -	July-August Nil	2 media spots
	Video	Prepare a video relevant to target audiences, to communicate in simple language the Ramsar Convention and wetlands in general also, featuring PRW which want to participate.	August September \$8000	7 – 10 minute video
	Video Screening	The video screening in PRW Wetlands Visitor Centres, schools, Tourist Visitor Information Centres etc, during site tours (see Government Target audiences) and distributed to media to complement other communication activities.	On going Nil	2 requests for screening within each PRW area
Media Relations	Media Monitoring	Continue to monitor and collate print and any other relevant coverage	On going Nil	On going
	Media Contacts	Update Media Contact database every 6 months Use database to communicate RWCP activities	November Nil	1 update
	Media Releases	Prepare media releases to communicate various RWCP activities throughout the project Media release launching the new website and NSW brochure	Throughout the project	5 releases distributed

*Generic Communication Activities continued ...*

NSW Ramsar Wetlands Communications Program (RWCP)

Events	World Wetlands Day 2006 (WWD)	Identify possible WWD activities to be undertaken by each PRW and support these activities through media support, email networks (database) and any communication material produced at that time. Use 2005 activities as a guide. Only those PRW who wish to participate.	Jan - Feb Nil ♦	2 activities
	Community events	Identify community events to attend with display and information within each PRW wetland areas	July Nil	2 events
	Events/ Conferences	Identify and select key conferences as a platform for communicating wetlands i.e.: -River Symposium -Water week – Wetlands Forum -Water week – Source our one other event during water week to present	June 2005 – June 2006 Nil Or travel expenses	3 events
Publications	Wetlands Email Network Newsletters	Continue from year 1 with a bimonthly Wetlands Email Network Newsletter to provide RWCP updates to key networks	June, Aug, Oct, Dec, Feb, April, June	6 newsletters distributed
	Brochure	Distribute during site tours, presentations to PRW area, Visitor Centres and where ever possible	June 2005 – June 2006 ♦	Distribute 4000
	NSW Brochure Launch	In conjunction with new website distribute media release launching the NSW brochure and website	July	1 media visits
Advertising	TV Ad	TV advertising leading into World Wetlands Day Feb	Jan – Feb	1 week of ads
	Postcards	Produce a series of Ramsar Wetlands postcards embedded with seed	September \$2500	Distribute 400

♦ Only those PRW who wish to participate

*NB: We assume that all PRW would be featured and involved in these generic communication activities, unless otherwise indicated.*

## Target Audience Communication Activities

### Government and Agency Organisations – Year 2

#### *Desired Mindset Outcomes*

- Develop a greater awareness, understanding, and appreciation of wetlands in the total landscape and environment and the current issues threatening wetlands in general.
- Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation of the Ramsar Convention and, what it has to offer wetlands and regions.
- Give a higher priority to wetlands and the Ramsar Convention in policy and resource tools, including increased recognition of wetlands and Ramsar within Catchment Action Plans and investment strategies.
- Encourage an advocating role for wetlands and the Ramsar Convention across relevant target audiences.

<i>Communication Tool</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>RW /PRW</i>	<i>Timeframe &amp; Budget</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Events	Site Tours CMA visits	Organise Site tours of the PRW (except Gwydir) as per year 1. Site tours may include tours of the sites, talks by landholders, talks on the Ramsar Convention and its significance.	All PRW ◆	November	3 tours for the PRW that would like to have a tour
Publications		Explore the possibility of CMA's to include Ramsar in their 3 year investment strategies and Catchment Action Plans	NA	December	Possible inclusion

◆ Only those PRW who wish to participate

## Politicians/High Profile Bureaucrats – Year 2

### Desired Mindset Outcomes

- Develop greater recognition for wetlands and the Ramsar Convention to be rated as a higher priority on the environmental agenda.
- Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for wetlands, the Ramsar Convention and the four PRW.

<i>Communication Tool</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>RW/ PRW</i>	<i>Timeframe Budget</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Events	Key Policy Events	Invite key politicians and bureaucrats to key events associated with RWCP.	All PRW ♦	Nil	3 attended events
Consultation	Key Policy Personnel	Identify key politicians and bureaucrats who can be invited to lobby and advocate for wetlands and Ramsar within PRW areas.	All PRW ♦	Mar Nil	4 identified

♦ Only those PRW who wish to participate

## Communities in Private Ramsar Wetland areas – Year 2

### Desired Mindset Outcomes

- Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for the role wetlands play in the total landscape and environment and PRW communities.
- Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for the significance of the Ramsar Convention and the PRW in their communities.
- Encourage a sense of place and involvement or visitation, of PRW.

<i>Communication Tool</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>RW/ PRW</i>	<i>Timeframe &amp; Budget</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Direct Mail	Direct Mail	Prepare direct mail to immediate neighbours at each of the PRW with an outline on their local PRW. The mail out to be a copy of the area brochure. Also any other relevant information including : address some local issues associated with the PRW from problems with feral; animals demystify confusion about Ramsar; opportunity to recruit volunteers etc. – use of brochure for each	All PRW ♦	June July \$2000	2000 direct mails

*Target Audience Communication Activities continued ...*

Events	Community events	Identify relevant PRW community events to attend and present information on the Ramsar convention and wetlands in general.	All PRW	On going	2 events
	Site Tours	Invite PRW community to tour their local wetland site. Use the tour as a platform for the community to develop an understanding their local PRW site.	HE & FT	July November	2 tours
Media Relations	Key Partners	Identify key partners to display RWCP material within local community i.e. banks, visitor information centres, neighbourhood centres and schools Materials may include use of display boards, brochures for handout and video. Rotate amongst the four sites and look into it coinciding with any community events	All PRW	December	2 partners

♦ Only those PRW who wish to participate

### Education Sector within Private Ramsar Wetland Areas – Year 2

*Desired Mindset Outcomes*

- Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for the role wetlands play in the total landscape and environment within their communities.
- Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for the Ramsar Convention within the education sector in PRW areas.
- Encourage schools surrounding PRW to gain a greater appreciation and sense of place for their local PRW.

<i>Communication Tool</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>RW/ PRW</i>	<i>Timeframe &amp; Budget</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Publications	Education Resources	Upgrade current wetlands educational material, in conjunction with relevant organisations. It would be proposed if this option were feasible to bring together relevant organisations to collaboratively update and coordinate this resource. It would also be proposed that an updated kit would be include information on the Ramsar Convention and Ramsar Wetlands throughout NSW. If this option appears not feasible, explore alternative production and coordination of educational material for wetlands and the Ramsar Convention, to be distributed to PRW education areas and possibly available via the website.	All RW♦	June - October \$960	Circulate to 4 schools

*Target Audience Communication Activities continued ...*

Events	PRW area Schools tour	Go on tour to PRW area schools presenting talk on the Ramsar convention and wetlands in general	All RW	October plan march April May conduct	Tour 8 schools
Consultation	Education linkages	Liaises with relevant TAFES and University for the opportunity to improve courses further with updated information on wetlands and the Ramsar Convention.	All PRW	September	2 contacts
Media Relations	Media Releases	Develop and distribute media release when touring each PRW area for school tour.		Nil	2 media response

◆ Only those PRW who wish to participate

**Visitor Market – Year 2**

*Desired Mindset Outcomes*

- Develop a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation for wetlands and the Ramsar Convention.
- Encourage greater visitation and exposure of the 2 PRW, that offer visitor facilities

<i>Communication Tool</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>RW/ PRW</i>	<i>Timeframe &amp; Budget</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Multi - media	Signage	Identify appropriate Ramsar signage at relevant PRW to affectivity communicate and convey Ramsar messages to visitors	FT & TWC ◆	March Nil	1 appropriate signage
Events	Wetland Tours	Explore the potential to link PRW with wetlands Tours	FT & TWC ◆	March Nil	2 contacts
	Wetland Tours for special interest groups	Identify special interest groups and present the possibilities of visiting PRW	FT & TWC ◆	March Nil	2 contacts

◆ Only those PRW who wish to participate

## Evaluation

The “Who Cares About Our Wetlands? Research Report” provided baseline data so that changes in awareness, understanding and appreciation for wetlands and the Ramsar Convention by key target audiences, could be measured at the end of the Communications Program. Online surveys, visitor surveys and telephone interviews will be used to assess changes in awareness levels.

Measures to evaluate the effectiveness of individual communication activities will also be developed so that program outcomes can be assessed.

An evaluation of how RWCP has met CEPA (Communication, Education and Public Awareness National Action Plan 2001-2005) will also be made and a report distributed to the Department of Environment & Heritage (DEH) for their consideration, at the completion of this program.

## Acronyms

AWF: Australian Wetland Forum

AWA: Australian Wetlands Alliance

CEPA: Communication, Education and Public Awareness National Action Plan 2001-2005

CMA: Catchment Management Authority

DEC: Department of Environment & Conservation

DEH: Department of Environment & Heritage

DIPNR: Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources

EPBC: Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

FT: Fivebough & Tuckerbil Wetlands

FUNN: Facilitator Update NRM Network NSW News

GW: Gwydir Wetlands

GW-C: Gwydir Wetlands, Crinolyn

GW-GL: Gwydir Wetlands, Goddards Lease

GW-OD: Gwydir Wetlands, Old Dromana

NPWS: National Parks & Wildlife Service

PRW: Private Ramsar Wetlands

RMN: Ramsar Managers Network

RW: Ramsar Wetlands

RWCP: NSW Ramsar Wetlands Communications Program

TWC: The Wetlands Centre, Australia

WWF: Worldwide Fund for Nature

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[www.commstoolkit.dpc.vic.gov.au](http://www.commstoolkit.dpc.vic.gov.au)

[www.wetlands.org.au](http://www.wetlands.org.au)

## Project Coordination

The "NSW Ramsar Wetlands Communications Program" and "Who Cares About Our Wetlands? Research Report" have both been prepared by Leanne Cherry and Peggy Mucci, Project Coordinator on behalf of The Wetlands Centre (TWC). For more information about these reports, please contact Peggy Mucci, The Wetlands Centre, Ph (02) 49516466 or email: [ramsar@wetlands.org.au](mailto:ramsar@wetlands.org.au).

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## Appendix 1 – Target Audience Characteristics

### ***Government and Agency Organisations - Current mindset♣***

Based on an interpretation of the research report, this target audience displays the following characteristics:

*Wetlands:* have an interest and some involvement in wetlands and environmental issues; understanding of wetlands ranges from low to high, dependent on their exposure to wetlands; they believe communication for wetlands is fair; highly value wetlands for their protection and preservation in comparison to other environmental issues, but can vary due to other competing environmental priorities.

*Wetland issues:* lack of water, urban encroachment and pollution.

*Ramsar Convention:* awareness ranges from familiar to broadly aware; understanding is based on conservation, natural resource principles and international significance; they regard communication on the convention as fair to poor.

*Resource Tools:* word of mouth/friends, mass media, DIPNR email clippings, DEC etc.

*Their communities:* they believe their communities value wetlands for social and aesthetic values; rely on community and advocacy groups to represent the environmental agenda; the understanding of wetlands within their communities is low but communication of wetlands is fair.

*Suggested communication activities include:* media campaign/advertising, education and communication with government, schools and landholders; political pressure; tourism opportunities; relate wetlands to the total landscape and environment; “wetlands kidneys of our landscape” is a key wetlands statement they relate to.

### ***Environment Regulators and/or Policy Makers – Current Mindset♣***

Based on an interpretation of the research report, environmental and policy stakeholders were identified as a key lobbying group to increase communication of wetlands and the Ramsar Convention. This target audience would show characteristics similar to those of government and agency organisations target audience (as above).

### ***Communities in Private Ramsar Wetland areas - Current mindset♣***

Based on an interpretation of the research report, this target audience displays the following characteristics:

*Wetlands:* involvement in environmental issues can vary depending on personal interest and involvement, but is generally low; understanding is low to very low; communication good to fair of wetlands; birds are regarded as the most popular animal they associate with wetlands, followed by fish, frogs and snakes; value wetlands for their environmental, wildlife, social, aesthetic and education values.

***Communities in PRW continued .....***

*Ramsar Convention:* awareness is virtually non-existent in some areas; communication for the convention fair to poor.

*Local wetland:* know where their local PRW wetlands are located (except Moree), with no awareness that the PRW are RW.

*Visitation:* reasons for visiting a wetland include a family day out, followed by wanting to see what there is at a wetland; may have visited their local wetland (except Moree), with visits depending on individual level of involvement or interest in environmental issues.

*Communication Activities:* key communication sources include media and friends/colleagues, websites, media, word of mouth and wetland signage; preferred wetland statements: 'without wetlands millions of wildlife and plants would die' and followed by 'wetlands are kidneys of our landscape'.

***Education Sector within Private Ramsar Wetland Areas – Current Mindset♣***

Based on an interpretation of the research report, the education sector (primarily schools) was identified as playing a key role in communicating wetlands and Ramsar, for teachers and students. Their characteristics will be a combination of government and agency organisations and communities in PRW characteristics. This is based on the education sector responding to all areas of the research. Specific information that is highlighted from the research includes: this target audience would support education of wetlands and the Ramsar Convention within the education sector; value wetlands for their environmental importance, have little awareness of the Ramsar Convention and believe communication activities should link with educational activities.

***Visitor Market - Current mindset♣***

Based on an interpretation of the research report, this target audience displays the following characteristics:

*Wetlands:* varying degrees of environmental interest; preservation, conservation and education are key wetland values; opinion divided on whether enough is being done to protect wetland environments, dependent on level of understanding of the wetland issues.

*Ramsar Convention:* most people have never heard of the Ramsar Convention; perception of the convention is the protection and international recognition values.

*Communication activities:* communication for wetlands is good to fair; 'without wetlands millions of wildlife and plants would die' popular wetlands statement; communication sources include primarily media and word of mouth.

*Visitation:* consider visiting a wetlands as a family day out and to see what can be found at a wetland. This audience may also display characteristics from communities in PRW areas.

♣These are not conclusive findings, but are based on interpretations from the Who Cares About Our Wetlands? Research Report.