

Have your say on the draft catchment plan

THE draft Northern Rivers Catchment Plan was launched earlier in October and was prepared by the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority.

Community opinion is now being sought for the future of the region's natural resources.

According to Northern Rivers CMA chairman John Williams, the plan is an all-of-government and all-of-community document, which will provide clear direction for investment of local, New South Wales and Australian government funding to manage regional natural resources over the next 10 years.

"This plan is the product of input from landholders, community groups, Aboriginal land managers, industry, business and government and identifies priority activities that will contribute to the sustainable use and long-term protection of our natural assets," Mr Williams said.

"The CAP sets a number of goals and strategies around engaging the community in natural resource management activities, managing landscapes and seascapes, sustaining livelihoods, enriching lifestyles and culture, each supported by a set of strategic directions, priority actions, key indicators, targets and sub-targets."

The draft Catchment Action Plan will be on public exhibition until November 9. Submissions can be made in writing to the NRCMA or online at yoursay.northern.cma.nsw.gov.au.

Mr Williams said the community, particularly landholders and people involved in natural resource management, are encouraged to provide feedback on the plan.

For more information go to yoursay.northern.cma.nsw.gov.au or contact the Northern Rivers CMA on 6642 0622 during business hours.

Got news? Email rural@northernstar.com.au

Be prepared: 70 bushfires burning in NSW

Community fires up to save region

FOR many rural communities living in fire-prone landscapes, the responsible use and management of fire presents an ongoing challenge.

With about 70 bushfires burning in New South Wales, there is a need to be prepared.

On October 23 this year, 43 rural landholders, NSW Rural Fire Service members together with representatives from land management agencies, the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Northern Landcare Support Services and local Aboriginal communities, attended the Bungawalbin Hotspots Fire Project at the Bungawalbin RFS Fire Station.

The program is a practical education and active planning process bringing together scientists, rural fire authorities, natural resource managers and landholders.

Together they establish sustainable fire management practices to protect life and property, as well as biodiversity and cultural values.

The program provides landholders and land managers with the knowledge and skills to work together on practical and sustainable fire management activities by preparing individual property fire management plans.

The Bungawalbin area was chosen because it is a high



bushfire risk with rich biodiversity values and Aboriginal cultural heritage significance.

The workshop started off with site visits exploring the wide array of different vegetation types and threatened species found in the Bungawalbin.

Discussions were held on each site's fire history, current land use and recommended fire regime.

These site visits provided the landholders with an opportunity to tap into the knowledge of the scientists and rural fire authorities.

Then in a facilitated workshop, assisted by the agencies, participants prepared their own individual property fire management plans.

These individual property management plans will be incorporated into a Regional Fire Management Plan for the Bungawalbin community, where common management actions will be developed for fire and biodiversity management.



HOT SPOTS: Landholders learn about unique biodiversity values and fire history.

PHOTOS: JIMMY MALECKI

IN FOCUS: Students learn how to be prepared for bushfires.

NSW RFS Hotspots officer John Allen said The Bungawalbin Hotspots Fire Project provided an ideal opportunity for landholders to address bushfire hazard reduction on their properties while improving and maintaining biodiversity values and at the same time recognising Aboriginal cultural values.

"The Hotspots Fire Project has received an Australian Safer Community Award on the basis

that it addresses fire management by effective planning and collaboration within communities, between agencies and across tenures," he said.

Workshop two of the Bungawalbin Hotspots Fire Project will be held on November 20.

For details contact John Allen, on 6655 7002, email john.allen@rfs.nsw.gov.au or visit hotspotsfireproject.org.au.

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