

Integrating roadside management activities into an Environmental Management System

COUNCIL NAME

Port Stephens Council

WEB ADDRESS

<http://www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au/>

SIZE

979 km2

POPULATION

70,447

Overview of the project

Port Stephens Council has recently developed an integrated Environmental Management System (EMS) which is embedded into the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework. Council is deploying the new EMS for all operational activities including management of roadside reserves. During deployment, knowledge and data gaps were identified, inhibiting the progression for roadside management activities. This project addressed these identified gaps to successfully implement and deploy the new EMS for activities in roadside reserves for the Port Stephens Local Government Area.

The project was originally focused on operational deployment of the EMS through data collection, environmental impact assessments, procedures, a marker program and training. With the release of the Local Government New South Wales, *Integrating Natural Asset Management into Council Asset Management Systems Investigation Report*, the data collected could be used to deploy the strategic component of the EMS through the asset management framework in the IP&R.

How the project was carried out

Port Stephens Council developed an EMS over a two-year period (2015 - 2017) and produced a system that is aligned with ISO 14001:2015. It provides a framework that enables Council to manage its environmental performance and includes organisational structure, strategy, delivery programs and operational planning and control to integrate and embed environmental management.

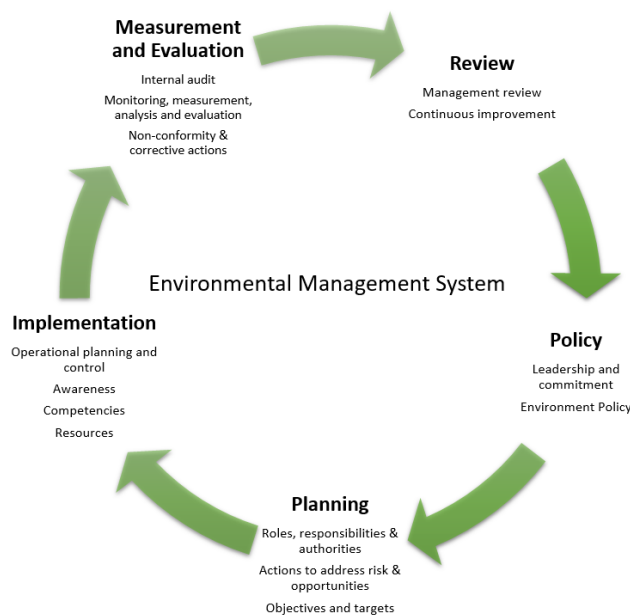


Image: A continuous improvement Environmental Management System ISO14001:2015 model.

The project was approached as a change management project in its development. We focused on influencing organisational culture and staff behaviours to ensure that the system was:

- Built from the top down through Executive leadership, endorsement, support and participation;
- Providing an embedded functional framework that suited Council's operations through integrating effectively with Council's existing processes and systems – in particular with Council's IP&R and Integrated Risk Management System (IRMS); and
- Built from the bottom up through the identification of the right resources across the organisation to participate in and design specific aspects of the system to accurately reflect Council's day-to-day operational requirements.

Project working groups were established as below, to achieve the outcomes above:

- **Steering Group** – ensures all business risks are identified and that project objectives, timeframes and outputs are attainable.
- **Manager Working Group** – the main user groups for the system. Reinforce the need for the EMS, allocating resources and driving development and implementation. This team identified and resourced the EMS Operational Team to adequately deliver on their Unit actions.
- **Operational Working Group** – members were responsible for ensuring the project met the needs of their respective operational areas and that their allocated actions were completed within timeframes. They provided on-ground support, monitored the system, and received feedback from field staff for operational improvements.

Outcomes now and in the future

The following EMS items for roadside management have been developed as part of this project.

EMS Element	Item
Policy	Environmental Policy
Planning	Strategic: Roadside/natural assets into the Strategic Asset Management Plans and Asset Management Plans
	Delivery: Road management and maintenance not the Delivery Plan and the Operation Plan
Implementation	Risk registers (environmental risk)
	Operational Planning- Part 5 Environmental Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Works – case by case • Operational Maintenance (roadside vegetation maintenance, road verge asset maintenance, road maintenance)
	Site Control: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Works - Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMP) • Operational – Operational Environmental Management Plans (OEMP) (high-risk locations). Safe Work Methods Statements (SWMS) (general maintenance).
	Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data gaps – Roadside Assessment method (RAM), targeting site survey (orchids and amphibians). • Roadside marker program • GIS • Training • Technical support (ecologists, biosecurity, arborists).
Measurement and Evaluation	Incident management and response
	Operational site audits and inspections
	System and process audits
	Lessons learned – incident and near miss
Review	Risk register review
	Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework – SAMP/AMP, Delivery and Operational Plans



Benefits and lessons learned

Council gained invaluable new ecological data and knowledge from undertaking this project. This has been incorporated into our EMS to ensure knowledge is not lost and used continuously and consistently throughout Council.

The EMS is applicable to all roadside management functions, including assets, planning, construction and maintenance. It is expected that as the system is used ongoing, desired behaviours will become further embedded into the day-to-day practices of council staff.

The approach of this project could be transferred to other local governments and road Authorities. The roadside marker resources have been incorporated into the HJO's Roadside Environment Marker Scheme, applicable to the Hunter Region and are ready to use.

More information

Hunter Councils, Roadside environment program resources
<https://www.hccrems.com.au/roadside-environment-program/>

Integrating Natural Asset Management into Council Asset Management Systems Investigation Report
https://lgnsw.org.au/common/Uploaded%20files/REM_files/Natural_Assets_Report.pdf

Contact

Name: Kirily Sheridan
Position: Manager, Environmental Management System
Phone: 02 4988 0189
Email: Kirily.Sheridan@portstephens.nsw.gov.au

