

## **What is a/the Stormwater Levy?**

A council may, in accordance with the regulations, make and levy an annual charge for the provision of stormwater management services for each parcel of rateable land for which the service is available. (Local Government Act 1993, Sect 496A). What this means is that council can charge properties within areas which have access to stormwater management. The amount that Council can charge is determined by the State Government through the Local Government Regulations. The current rate for the stormwater management charges are:

- (a) for land categorised as residential (other than land referred to in paragraph (b))-- \$25, and
- (b) for a lot in a strata scheme that is categorised as residential--\$12.50, and
- (c) for land categorised as business (other than land referred to in paragraph (d))-- \$25, plus an additional \$25 for each 350 square metres or part of 350 square metres by which the area of the parcel of land exceeds 350 square metres, and
- (d) for a lot in a strata scheme that is categorised as business--the greater of the following--
  - (i) \$5,
  - (ii) the relevant proportion of the maximum annual charge that would apply to the land subject to the strata scheme if it were a parcel of land subject to paragraph (c).

## **What is it for?**

As communities grow, so too does the volume of stormwater flowing into urban waterways. These increased flows can mean a large amount of litter, sediment and chemicals can be washed into urban waterways as well as contributing to flooding. Stormwater management involves the use of structural and non-structural measures to improve stormwater quality and mitigate excessive flows.

What this means is that the funds raised through the charge can be used to improve and expand existing and future drainage systems within the Bland Shire as well as conduct information programs and monitoring in relation to stormwater.

## **What do you mean “stormwater management”?**

Stormwater management can be broadly defined as managing the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff from a catchment with the aim of:

- minimising stormwater impacts on aquatic ecosystems;
- minimising flooding impacts; and
- utilising stormwater as a water resource.

Put simply, stormwater is the rainfall that runs off all urban surfaces such as roofs, pavements, car parks, roads, gardens and vegetated open spaces. Stormwater management is the management of these flows off a parcel of privately owned and developed urban land. This includes managing both stormwater quality and quantity and ensuring that potential negative stormwater impacts are not transferred across council boundaries.

## **Whose idea was that?**

Initially, the idea of charging for stormwater management came from the State Government when it was included in the Local Government Act. Many Councils across New South Wales levy a stormwater charge to rateable properties and have been able to do so for many years. Until now, Bland Shire Council has not levied such a fee. The decision to introduce the

charge from this financial year was taken to assist the organisation in covering costs of providing services, specifically those relating to stormwater management. Councils have the primary responsibility for this within their local government areas.

### **What will it be spent on? (What will I see for my money?)**

The purpose of the charge is to allow councils the option to raise additional revenue to cover some or all of the costs of providing new/additional stormwater management services to urban areas within Bland Shire. It is to cover costs additional to those attributed to the level of service provided to the area in previous years, which has been funded by council's general income.

Council stormwater management activities can be split as follows:

- stormwater management services to private land;
- stormwater management services to public and other non-rateable land; and
- restoration activities (ie restoring degradation arising from past poor practices, including stream and riparian vegetation rehabilitation).

The stormwater management service charge cannot be used for dealing with stormwater run-off from public land.

Funds accumulated through levying of the stormwater management service charge do not have to be spent within the year they are raised, as it is recognised that these funds may be used to resource major programs spanning a number of years. The income from the charge can be spent on both capital projects and recurrent expenditure relating to new/additional stormwater management services such as, among other things:

- planning, construction and maintenance of drainage systems, including pipes, channels, retarding basins and waterways receiving urban stormwater;
- planning, construction and maintenance of stormwater treatment measures, including gross pollutant traps and constructed wetlands;
- planning, construction and maintenance of stormwater harvesting and reuse projects;
- planning and undertaking of community and industry stormwater pollution education campaigns;
- inspection of commercial and industrial premises for stormwater pollution prevention

### **What is Council doing about the streets that flood like Kurrajong Street?**

It is anticipated that through the funds raised from the introduction of the Stormwater Management Charge that identified areas where issues occur, such as localised flooding, steps will be taken to address the problems. To facilitate this, Council will need to update its Stormwater Management Plan to include data relevant to the areas which it will serve. The current plan was developed some time ago and does not take into account developments within Bland Shire communities over recent years.

While flooding issues in North, Brown and Kurrajong Streets have already been identified in the previous plan, any future work undertaken would need to be incorporated into the revised plan. It would also require a significant amount of planning and infrastructure work to be undertaken to mitigate flooding as a result of stormwater – which is why it is critical for Council to be in a position to fund both the planning for and implementation of such projects.

Further information can be found at the following:

<https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/council-circulars/06-47-stormwater-management-services-charge-guidelines/>