

KURNELL 2020 – LAND REHABILITATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

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The Kurnell 2020 project in Sydney Australia is succeeding because of: political attraction; good contacts; tightly defined outputs and outcomes; justified need; understandable boundaries; clear end date; openness to project partners; actions based on research and science; a good logo; and the managers having an ability to work across levels of government and among various land managers.

This project is to restore ecological diversity in a highly degraded environment. It will link two National Parks with 10 km of vegetated corridors which have been located using best science. It involves weed removal, pest animal control, planting local native species and their long term maintenance. Existing remnant native plant communities will be incorporated in the corridors with the aim of helping their long term survival. It will enhance the geomorphic stability of the peninsula.

The project is situated on a sand peninsula 10 km S of Sydney CBD. The Kurnell Peninsula features various heavy industries, sand mining, land fill activities and significant weed infestations. It is a special place for indigenous Australians. It is where the first European settlement in Australia occurred – the 250th anniversary of this settlement is in 2020. It has a Ramsar wetland and significant migratory bird habitat. There are some endangered ecological communities. The Kurnell 2020 project has received political support because of its environmental benefits and opportunities for providing environmental training and employment to Aboriginal youth. It is strongly supported by the local communities and businesses because it will improve the local environment and also offer economic and social benefits.

The NSW and Australian Governments have contributed ~ E300,000 in the first and second years of the project. It has 10 years to completion. Initial funding occurred because the project had been fully scoped, was appealing, and that the Government had surplus funds that were not spent by other project recipients. It was based on a similarly successful project that occurred 10 years earlier.

Government is unlikely to continue this level of cash support, so the project will need corporate and business sponsorship for its continuity. As the project develops over the next few years, it is expected that businesses will see commercial advantage in investing in the project so they can show their “green” credentials.

Project staff recognise that corporate sponsorship is critical and are negotiating with a leading private landcare organisation to join in the partnership. The expectation is that this organisation with national “green environmental” exposure can market the advantages of investing in Kurnell 2020. They will, in turn, provide funds to maintain project management and operational expenses (weeding, pest control and replanting).