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**LAKE CATHIE/LAKE INNES** – **UNIQUE SYSTEMS UNDER STRESS**

**FACT SHEET LAUNCH**

In collaboration with DPIE, Southern Cross University, Soil Conservation Service and NSW National Park Wildlife Service, Revive Lake Cathie launches the “Lake Cathie and Lake Innes – Unique Systems Under Stress, Fact Sheet”.

Lake Innes and Lake Cathie are part of the Lake Innes Nature Reserve which surrounds them to protect and conserve the unique ecosystems, species within, communities, and natural phenomena. They are currently under extreme stress due to historical drainage modifications that are exacerbating the creation and disturbance of acid sulfate soils within the Lake Cathie Lake Innes Estuarine System.

The fact sheet gives an outline of the creation of the geographical area, man-made interventions, effects of urban development and the possible future issues associated from climate change.

This document describes conditions during the July 2018 Lake Cathie opening and the extended drought in 2019 when the Lake Cathie / Lake Innes Estuarine System was closed to the ocean. The combination of acute drought, reflooding, partial reverted chemistry followed by rapid drawdown of lake water levels caused by the entrance opening in May 2020 resulted in an unprecedented mass iron floc event.

Sediment surveys by the Soil Conservation Service have confirmed widespread presence of sulfidic sediments and acid sulfate soil materials across the Lake Innes and Lake Cathie systems. Some areas have acid sulfate sediments of extreme levels.

Ongoing artificial opening of the Lake Cathie entrance for flood mitigation presents a significant challenge with the two lakes remaining connected and will likely lead to further iron floc events.

To successfully manage the Acid Sulfate soil issues and achieve some stability in these high value wetland and aquatic habitats whilst maintaining an entrance strategy for flood mitigation may require decoupling Lake Innes from Lake Cathie. While decoupling was not recommended by previous studies, this conclusion was based on an insufficient assessment of the ASS issues and must therefore be revisited in light of recent events.

Council’s soon to be commenced preparation of a Coastal Management Program for Lake Cathie Bonny Hills provides an appropriate platform for all stakeholders to be involved in tackling the complexities of ongoing management of this lake system.

“Revive Lake Cathie again calls for immediate implementation of measures to halt the national environmental catastrophe underway in the Lake Cathie/Lake Innes Estuarine System” said Revive Lake Cathie President Danielle Maltman.

The brochure will be available on the Port Macquarie Hasting Council (PMHC) website Lake Cathie / Lake Innes Management.

**For further information contact**

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**Feel free to tag** Revive Lake Cathie on Facebook @revivelakecathie if you post on this platform.