

The Parramatta River

The Parramatta River is the main tributary of Sydney Harbour. Its catchment area covers 266 square kilometres and is home to a diverse and rapidly growing community of over 750,000 people.

The river was once a popular swimming location and the focal point of many social activities. By the 1950s, lack of regulation and rapid industrial development led to the river becoming heavily polluted and most swimming sites being closed.

With improved regulation, technology and community awareness over the last 20 years, the condition of the river has been improving and swimming has become a possibility once again.

Where is it safe to swim in the Parramatta River?

There are currently four sites safe for swimming in the Parramatta River. Water quality indicators are routinely monitored at each of these sites to demonstrate that they are safe for human contact.

Suitability for swimming is assessed at these sites following the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Guidelines for Managing Risks in Recreational Waters 2008*.



Cabarita Park beach



Chiswick Baths



Dawn Fraser Baths



Lake Parramatta

What we are doing to make more sites safe for swimming

The Parramatta River Catchment Group has developed an evidence-based Masterplan to map the steps needed to make more sites along the Parramatta River swimmable by 2025.

This swim report provides a current snapshot of where we are at in achieving this goal.

Stay updated with our progress at www.ourlivingriver.com.au or by following us on Facebook.

Help us make the Parramatta River swimmable again

What you can do to help

At home, at work or at play, what we do can affect the river. Everyone has an important role to play in helping make the river swimmable again.

Report littering from vehicles

Download the Environment Protection Authority's Litter App:

www.epa.nsw.gov.au/litter/reporting.htm

Report pollution incidents

Call 131 555 (NSW only) or +61 2 9995 5555, or contact your local council to report leaks, spills and other pollution incidents that can harm the environment.

Inside your home

Never put the following household materials down the sink:

- ✓ food
- ✓ paint
- ✓ rubbish
- ✓ oils
- ✓ chemicals

Don't ever flush wet wipes down the toilet. They block pipes and cause sewage to overflow into the river.

Outside your home

The stormwater drain is just for rain! Prevent harmful materials from washing into our rivers.

- ✓ put litter in the bin
- ✓ pick up dog poo
- ✓ shop with reusable bags
- ✓ put grass clippings in the compost or green bin
- ✓ wash your car on the grass or at a car wash
- ✓ contact your local council to dispose of paints, oils or other chemicals
- ✓ clean paintbrushes in the garden
- ✓ minimise the use of pesticides and herbicides.

Build a raingarden and install a rainwater tank

Raingardens are an attractive, low maintenance and self-watering garden that help filter stormwater before it enters our rivers and creeks.

Ask your council where your closest street raingarden is to see what they look like and how they work.

Become a Riverkeeper volunteer

Have fun while helping to clean up the river.

Register at:

www.ourlivingriver.com.au

For more information visit:

www.ourlivingriver.com.au or Our Living River

Parramatta River Swim Report



The Parramatta River Catchment Group is an alliance of local and state government organisations and the community who have the common purpose of making the Parramatta River a living river.

Our mission is to make the Parramatta River swimmable again by 2025.

Financial members include Sydney Water, NSW Environment Protection Authority, NSW Department of Planning and Environment and the Councils of Blacktown, Burwood, Canada Bay, Canterbury Bankstown, Cumberland, Hunters Hill, Inner West, Ryde, Parramatta, Strathfield and The Hills.

Updated July 2018

As the health of the river improves the opportunity to swim and recreate along its foreshore will undoubtedly provide for immense enjoyment, pleasure and solace. The Parramatta River will provide families and friends with an opportunity to enjoy the unique features and attributes that are vastly different to other aquatic locations.

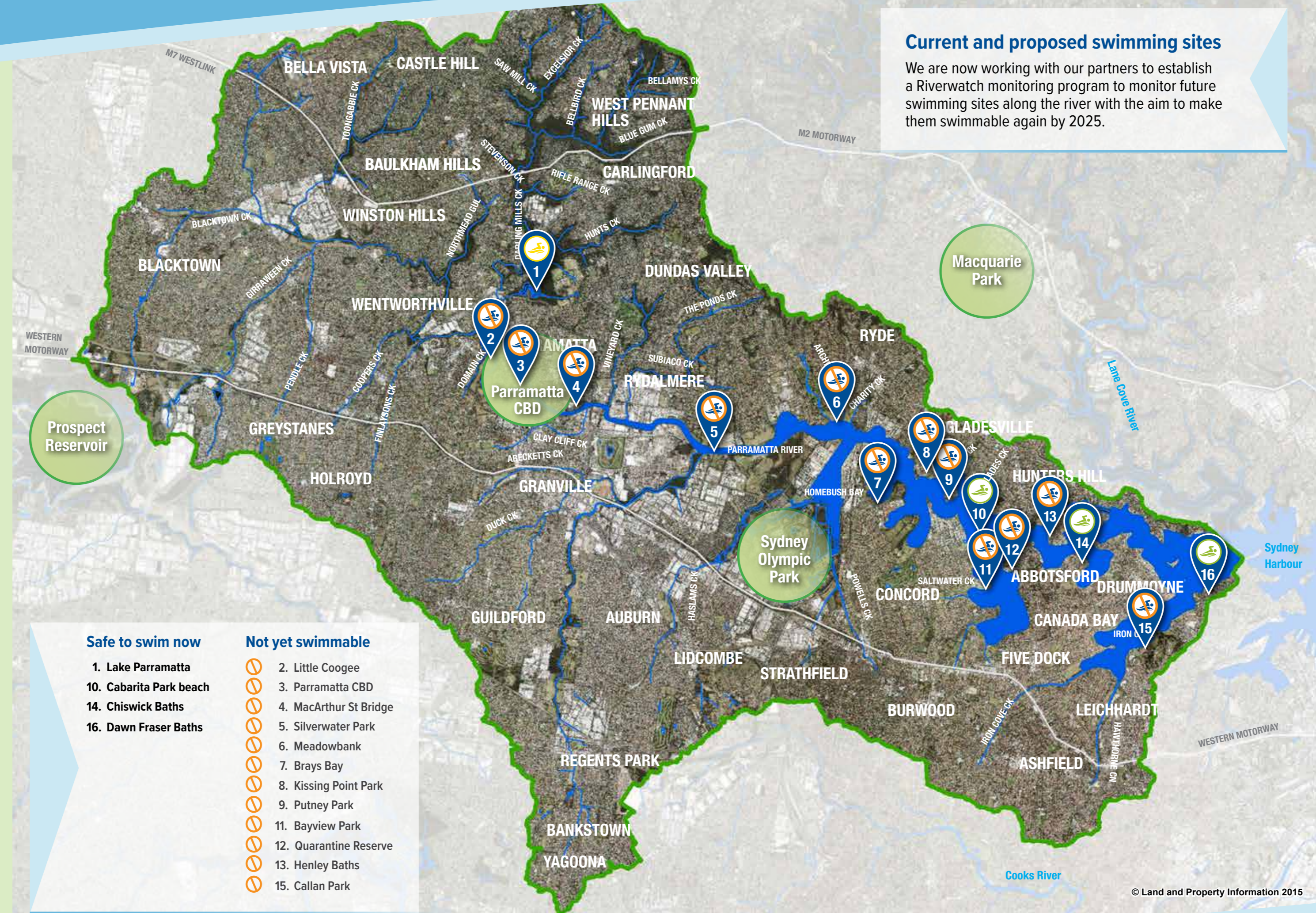
The future vision is exciting but it is also important that collaboratively we work together to gain the significant benefits the river will provide.

Please...Respect the river", Royal Life Saving Society, NSW.

The past, present and future of swimming in the Parramatta River

Timeline of key historic events along the Parramatta River

- 1791**
 - Aboriginal people use and enjoy the Parramatta River. British settlement commences in 1788.
 - River modification begins, including planting of vineyards, citrus trees and other plants along the riverine landscape.
- 1830s**
 - Wetlands along the Parramatta River were drained and filled to create firm and arable land.
- 1850s**
 - Parramatta becomes a main metropolis.
- 1866**
 - First ferry service begins with services often terminating at Rydalmere. Ferry trips to Parramatta cease in 1928 due to siltation and shallowing.
- 1880–1930s**
 - Twenty-two swimming baths established along the Parramatta River. Rowing and sailing was also very popular with thousands of spectators at river events.
- Early 1900s**
 - Industrialisation begins to see illegal dumping of soil and rubbish in the river.



Current and proposed swimming sites
 We are now working with our partners to establish a Riverwatch monitoring program to monitor future swimming sites along the river with the aim to make them swimmable again by 2025.

- | Safe to swim now | Not yet swimmable |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Lake Parramatta | 2. Little Coogee |
| 10. Cabarita Park beach | 3. Parramatta CBD |
| 14. Chiswick Baths | 4. MacArthur St Bridge |
| 16. Dawn Fraser Baths | 5. Silverwater Park |
| | 6. Meadowbank |
| | 7. Brays Bay |
| | 8. Kissing Point Park |
| | 9. Putney Park |
| | 11. Bayview Park |
| | 12. Quarantine Reserve |
| | 13. Henley Baths |
| | 15. Callan Park |

- 1960s**
 - Water quality in the river becomes a health risk. Most river swimming baths close.
- 1970**
 - Introduction of the Clean Waters Act to improve water quality. Increased awareness sees plans for river improvement and relocation of waterfront factories.
- 1989**
 - Beachwatch established in response to public concern over the level of sewage at Sydney's ocean beaches.
- Early 1990s**
 - The upper Parramatta River is dredged for ferry access. Rivercat service begins in 1993.
- 2006**
 - Commercial fishing ban for all areas west of the Sydney Harbour Bridge due to heavy metal accumulation in fish.
- 2008**
 - The Parramatta River Catchment Group is formed with the purpose of restoring and protecting the Parramatta River.
- 2015**
 - Lake Parramatta is officially re-opened for swimming 72 years after its closure. It attracts over 12,000 visitors in the first summer season.
- 2018**
 - Launch of the Parramatta River Masterplan at the International Riversymposium.
- 2025**
 - New sites along the Parramatta River opened for swimming, and monitored and reported via a new Riverwatch program.