

Water way to cool off in summer

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WESTERN Sydney families looking to beat the heat will have more options with three new swimming sites to open along the Parramatta River by 2025.

The Daily Telegraph can reveal Bayview Park in Concord, McIlwaine Park in Rhodes East and Putney Park will be upgraded as part of the Parramatta River Masterplan, designed to help Sydney waterways compete with world-class rivers in Copenhagen, Berlin, London and New York.

“We’re already seeing a push by international cities to transform parts of their rivers into new swimming locations for its citizens,” Utilities Minister Don Harwin said.



Concept art for the upgraded swim sites on along the Parramatta river to be completed by 2025. Pictures supplied.

“The masterplan is a step towards creating a world-class river and is the key to improve the health and amenity of Parramatta River to ensure the government’s vision for a Central River City.”

The new swimming areas will join the four sites already open at Cabarita Park beach, Chiswick Baths, Dawn Fraser Baths and Lake Parramatta.

A further nine are also under consideration.

The sites will prove critical in helping residents keep cool amid unprecedented rates of development and steamy weather.

The Parramatta River catchment area, currently home to 750,000 residents, is tipped to experience a 64 per cent increase in high density residential development by 2025.

And last year, it had 22 more days above 35C than it did in 1967.



Concept art for the upgraded swim sites on along the Parramatta river to be completed by 2025. Pictures supplied.

Parramatta River Catchment Catchment Group chair Mark Drury said he was looking at holding Aboriginal tours along the swim sites and even recreating fish nets and eel traps.

“I think that would really capture the imagination,” he said.

Greater Sydney Commission environment commissioner Rod Simpson said the swimming sites would be an “oasis” for people living further west.

“I think it really means that the west of the city will have public spaces and parks to rival the east — not that it’s a competition but it’s about creating beautiful landscapes all over the place,” he said.

Mr Simpson said the health of the river had been improving “but if we don’t act now, new pressures placed on Sydney’s infrastructure will likely see the river degrade”.

The masterplan, which launches today, outlines 10 steps to make the Parramatta River swimmable again and has had input from 35 different agencies

It’s being rolled out in line with the International Rivers symposium, which was this week held in Sydney for the first time.