



INNER WEST

Diving in to river clean up plan

Two new swimming spots slotted for 2025

David Barwell

A PLAN to create new swimming spots along the Parramatta River has given itself an ambitious seven-year timeline for completion.

The proposal, created by the Parramatta River Catchment Group, aims to make three new sections of the river swimmable by 2025 as part of long term efforts to increase the health of the waterway.

The new swimming spots would be at McIlwaine Park in Rhodes East, Bayview Park in Concord and Putney Park, joining current sites at Cabarita, Chiswick Baths, Balmain and Parramatta.

Early plans show a netted swimming enclosure and outdoor shower would be built at Bayview Park, while McIlwaine Park would have a new jetty and “river activation” upgrades to the local foreshore. The State Government and Canada Bay Council have already backed the plans with funds for water quality testing and initial design works.

The plans state the seven-year target will require a “10-step” approach involving co-operation between multiple state government departments, developers and local councils.



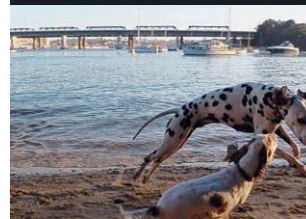
A concept plan of the Bayview Park swim site in Concord.

The steps include creating a single set of policies and planning rules for the entire river catchment area.

There is also a goal to reduce stormwater run off into the river through technologies that can “absorb and filters rain where it lands”, resulting in less rubbish and pollution entering the river.

Greater Sydney Commission’s environment commissioner Rod Simpson said the health of the river has improved over the past 20 years, but there was still a lot of work to do to meet the 2025 target. “Even with the predicted development in the catchment, water quality can be improved through additional management interventions,” he said. “If we don’t act now, the new pressures placed on Sydney’s infrastructure will likely see the river degrade.”

More on the way?



THE River Catchment Group outlines nine other sites that could be made swimmable in the near future.

They include Callan Park (pictured) where water and sediment testing will soon be carried out to assess its suitability.

Other sites in the inner west include Quarantine Reserve in Abbotsford.