



13 Nov 2018

Inner West Courier, Sydney

Author: Kate Bastians • Section: General News • Article Type: News Item
Audience : 43,087 • Page: 5 • Printed size: 489.00cm² • Region: NSW • Market: Australia
ASR: AUD 2,532 • words: 340 • Item ID: 1035568936



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Three new swim sites planned on Parramatta River

Kate Bastians

THE inner west could get three new swimming sites on the Parramatta River within seven years.

Inner West Council will consider paying a team from UNSW almost \$45,000 to fast-track water quality testing at Callan Park at the seawall west of Callan Point and the old Leichhardt tidal baths to see whether it's safe to take a dip.

It follows last month's release of the Parramatta River Masterplan which aims to make three other sites swimmable by 2025; at McIlwaine Park in Rhodes East, Bayview Park in Concord and Putney Park.

A cornerstone of the plan will be maintaining, improving and creating new habitat for plants and animals, especially five river "mascots"; the eastern long necked turtle, southern myotis, bar-tailed godwit, powerful owl and striped marsh frog.

"If we help them thrive, then our river will thrive too," the plan states.

It also aims to reduce stormwater run-off and improve overflows to reduce


sewerage, pollution and rubbish flowing into the river – a major issue as development across the region surges.

Parramatta River Catchment Group chair Mark Drury said the key was bringing together all the government agencies and councils who are responsible for the river to agree on the way forward – with Sydney Water to take the lead.

"Because it's no surprise that if you've got 35 bodies responsible for something, you've got a recipe for not much happening," Mr Drury said. "It's about getting the science and everyone to work together to give us the cleanest possible river; so clean that you'll be able to swim in it."

"All the indications are the river would be safe to swim in (at Callan Park) but we would want the scientific data to absolutely demonstrate that."

The plan also encourages people to use current swimming sites at Cabarita Park beach, Chiswick Baths, Dawn Fraser Baths and Lake Parramatta.

 **Have your say by
November 29 at
ourlivingriver.com.au**



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**Dreaming of swimming in
Callan Park: Ziggy Lumley
Tow, Luca Ward, Mia Evans
Rorris and Ch'aska Cuba de
Reed. Picture: Julian Andrews**

