

PARRAMATTA RIVER CATCHMENT GROUP

ANNUAL REPORT

2017-2018



Parramatta River
Catchment Group



**LET'S MAKE OUR RIVER
SWIMMABLE AGAIN BY
2025**

A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR



The year 2017-2018 has been another huge year of progress towards making the Parramatta River swimmable again, starting with our annual Riverfest! community celebration on the banks of the Duck River where we celebrated the many different ways that

people engage with the wonderful tributaries that flow into the Parramatta River.

Throughout the year, we have continued to work closely with our many agency partners and local communities to develop the Parramatta River Masterplan and deliver on-ground projects that improve the health of the river and the land surrounding it. A massive 35 organisations and over 15,000 people have now contributed to the development of the Masterplan, which has culminated in the launch of our *Ten Steps to a Living River*. As part of this, we have gained valuable insights into the significance the river holds for the Aboriginal people and recognised the importance of Aboriginal leadership in the future management of the Parramatta River.

Our Riverkeeper program has continued to grow, with many dedicated Riverkeeper schools, community members and businesses taking action to help make the river swimmable. Our 'Get the Site Right' erosion and sediment control initiative has now taken Sydney by storm, expanding beyond the Parramatta River catchment to more than 20 Councils across Sydney and the Central Coast.

We are well on our way to achieving our goal and opening up new swimming areas on the Parramatta River. This progress would not have been possible without the joint commitment of all our member agencies and local communities. I would like to say a very heart felt thank you to each and every one of you who is working with us on this journey to make the river swimmable again.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark Drury". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'M' and 'D'.

Clr Mark Drury
Parramatta River Catchment Group Chair



Banjo Patterson Park, Gladesville

RECOGNITION OF THE RIVER'S TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS

We would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Parramatta River catchment area and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living on the land today. Their lore, traditions and customs have led to the bountiful land, rivers and ocean we all enjoy today.

THE PARRAMATTA RIVER CATCHMENT GROUP

The Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) is an alliance of councils, government agencies and community groups, who are working together to improve the Parramatta River and the creeks that flow into it.

In 2014, we launched the *Our Living River* initiative with a new vision, purpose and mission:

OUR VISION

We believe
Sydney deserves a
world-class river.

OUR PURPOSE

To make
Parramatta River
a living river.

OUR MISSION

To make Parramatta
River swimmable
again by 2025.

CATCHMENT-WIDE PLANNING & RESEARCH

Establishing the pathways to make the river swimmable again through the development of the Parramatta River Masterplan.

The Parramatta River Masterplan sets out our agreed actions to make the Parramatta River swimmable again. It is based on extensive scientific research and community consultation, which has been undertaken over several years.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2017-2018:

- ✓ Finalised all Stage 1 technical projects and reports.
- ✓ Held two major stakeholder decision-making workshops to prioritise swim sites and management interventions and agree the actions and pathways for the final Masterplan.
- ✓ Completed a sediment screening study at six sites along the river.
- ✓ Held a technical swimming site exposure pathways workshop to agree the methods for water and sediment quality analysis.
- ✓ Undertook community site desirability surveys and expert site vulnerability assessments at all 12 sites.
- ✓ Developed the Masterplan Stakeholder and Community Engagement Report, Stage 1 Summary Report and community update brochure.
- ✓ Completed the economic analysis scoping study and commenced the full economic analysis for the Masterplan.
- ✓ Commenced an Aboriginal Leadership project to support the Masterplan governance.
- ✓ Formed a cross-agency working group to work through the options and recommend the preferred governance model for delivering the Masterplan.

Stage 1 of the Masterplan involved gathering evidence to develop an understanding of what makes a river swimmable. Stage 2 of the Masterplan focused on using the evidence gathered during Stage 1 to make decisions on the actions, pathways and targets needed to form the final Masterplan.



Swimming Site Activation

In 2016–2017, we developed a swim site activation framework to help assess the suitability of each site for swimming and other potential activation options. The framework considers a range of site assessment criteria under three categories: feasibility, vulnerability and desirability. The framework was initially applied to three representative swimming sites to demonstrate how it can be used to design future activation options for a site.

In 2017–2018, we used this framework to assess all 12 shortlisted swimming sites along the river. A qualified urban planner undertook full, high level assessments at each site. We also held on-site community focus groups at all 12 potential swimming sites, the aim of which was to identify which aspects of a swim site make it desirable. A further 131 people completed online site desirability surveys through Sydney Water Talk. This gave us valuable insight into what people think about the current sites and what they would like to see there in future.



KEY RESULTS

- Site vulnerability assessments were conducted at all 12 short-listed sites.
- Sediment screening study assessed the sediment quality at six sites: Bayview Park, Brays Bay, Kissing Point, Meadowbank, Quarantine Reserve and Silverwater Park.
- Cross-agency exposure pathways workshop was held to determine the methods for water and sediment quality analysis.
- Swimming site activation summary report developed.

Water Quality

To achieve our mission of making the Parramatta River swimmable again we need to understand the water quality needed for safe swimming. Research outcomes to date include:

- Investigation of how recreational water quality should be assessed in the Parramatta River;
- Technical analysis to understand current water quality in the Parramatta River and the creeks that flow into it;
- Detailed modelling across all local government areas to understand where swimming could be feasible in 2025 under a range of management scenarios; and
- Initial sediment analysis at six proposed swimming sites.

Additional water quality modelling will be undertaken in response to stakeholder engagement workshop discussion to assess:

- Combined scenarios;
- Number of swimming days per site for each season;
- Time after rainfall for levels to recover to swimmable conditions; and
- Percentage of time when people can swim.



KEY RESULTS

- ✓ Modelling indicates that water quality in the Parramatta River will decline under the current business as usual approach, given predicted development in the catchment.
- ✓ Water quality can be improved through a combination of additional planning controls for stormwater management, wastewater infrastructure and pet waste pollution initiatives.
- ✓ There is potential for more swim sites to be opened for natural swimming by 2025.







Stakeholder Engagement

Two key stakeholder workshops were held at major decision making points in the Masterplan development process.

The first workshop was held on 30 August 2017 and focused on prioritising swim sites and agreeing upon the management interventions needed to improve water quality. The output of this workshop helped to shape and direct the work undertaken in the second half of 2017, including additional water quality modelling, an exposure pathways workshop, conducting onsite vulnerability assessments at each swim site and staging the activation of each site.

The second workshop (22 March 2018), focused on capturing feedback and gaining agreement on the recommendations and pathways to action for the final Masterplan. The workshop was attended by 45 participants from 22 organisations, including state, local government and community representatives. All participants supported the ten draft recommendations and moving to the next stage of finalising the Masterplan. Feedback focused on amendments to the pathways to action and suggestions for which stakeholders would be key to governance.

Participants also agreed with the need to appoint a lead coordinating body and agreed, in principle, for

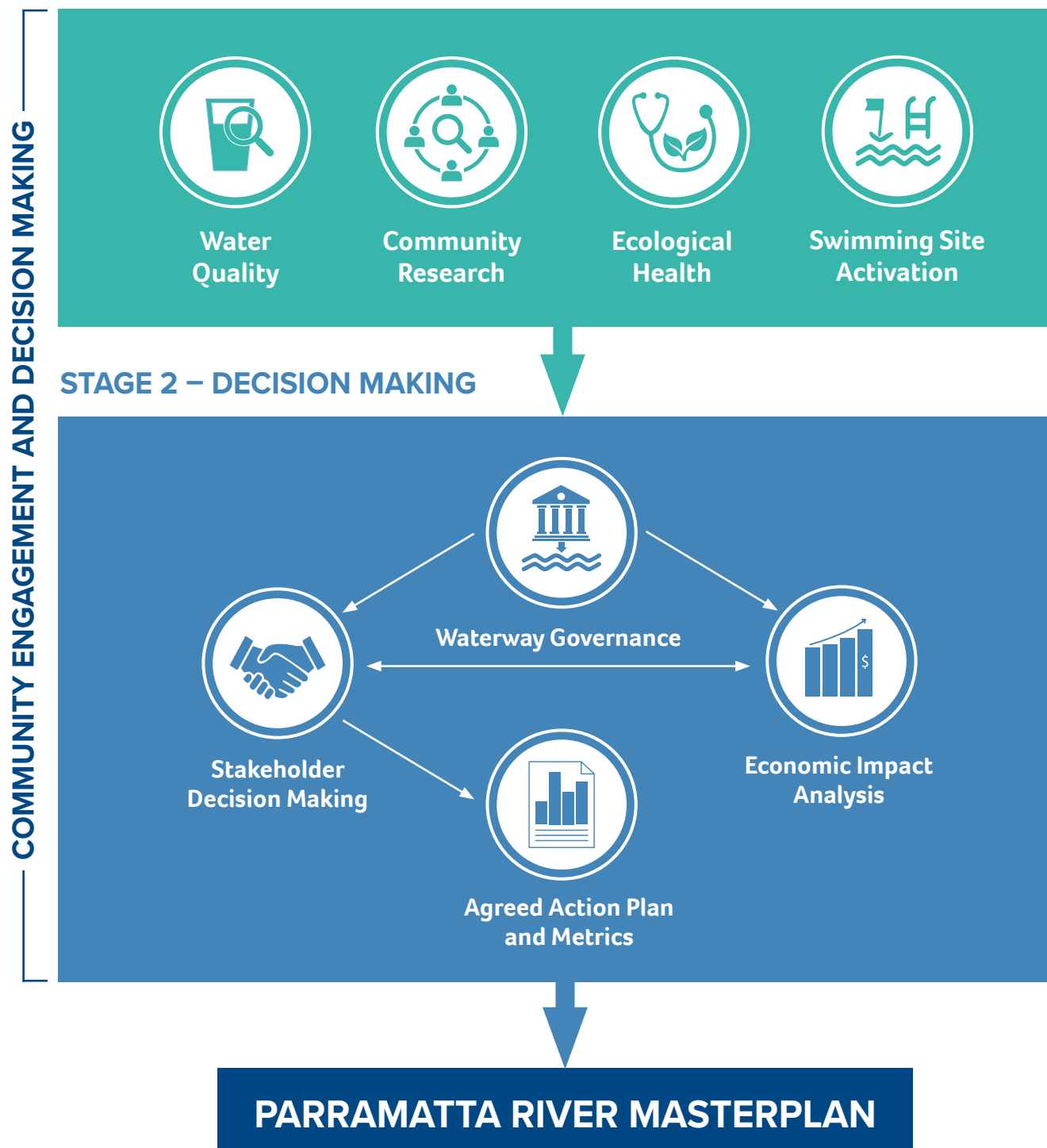


Sydney Water to take this role. This agreement was qualified with the need to further define the lead agency's scope and responsibilities and that the collaborative nature of the PRCG be maintained and strengthened.

Following the second workshop, a cross-agency working group was formed to work through the options and recommend the preferred governance model for delivering the Masterplan. This included defining the lead agency role and developing a strengthened memorandum of understanding for all PRCG partners. Work on this commenced in May 2018.

Masterplan Process

STAGE 1 – BACKGROUND RESEARCH (COMPLETED)



This process aligns with the *Risk-based framework for considering waterway health outcomes in strategic land-use planning decisions* (2017) developed by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and Environment Protection Authority. This approach considers links between development, waterway health and the community's uses and values of the waterways, and is consistent with the ISO risk management standard.

Economic Impact Analysis

A critical part of the Masterplan development involves determining the return on investment and overall net benefit to Greater Sydney that the proposed investment to improve river quality and river and land-based recreation opportunities could potentially deliver.

The first stage of the Economic Impact Analysis included a scoping study to assess the overall economic benefits. In July 2017, Mr Mladen Kovac, Director Economics, Office of Environment and Heritage took on the lead to scope the details for the Economic Analysis, with economists from both Dept of Planning and Environment and Sydney Water who participated as Technical Group members.

Office of Environment and Heritage provided financial support for the scoping study.

A full economic analysis, to be funded by Sydney Water and NSW Environment Protection Authority, is now planned that will include:

1. An initial high-level analysis of the costs and benefits, including a carefully designed and detailed choice modelling exercise; and
2. Development of a high-level business case that summarises the overall costs and benefits and describes how development might proceed over time, with consideration of all potential revenue streams.

Assuming the high-level business case proves positive, more refined analysis on specific options may be undertaken at a later stage.



Waterway Governance

In 2017–2018 we developed a revised governance structure:

1. Waterway Governance Review

Dr Peter Davies, Dr James Hazelton and Linda Barach, from Macquarie University were commissioned by the PRCG to:

- Map the current organisational responsibilities and capacities across the catchment in relation to water quality, ecological health and swim site activation; and
- Develop alternative governance options to achieve our goals for the river.

This involved a review of state agency and council operating requirements and assessment of governance issues from technical studies and reports, supported with interviews of senior staff in state government and a workshop with key local government stakeholders. This was a bridging project between stages 1 and 2 of the Masterplan development process.

2. Governance Workshop

The Governance Workshop aimed to capture feedback and gain agreement on the recommendations and pathways to action for the final Masterplan and to discuss and identify options for future governance including identification of a lead agency. There was support for pitching the Masterplan as a manifesto that can be easily understood and therefore supported by a broad audience. There was also wide support for the ten draft recommendations presented, with agreement that they would form the basis of the Masterplan. Feedback focused on amendments to the pathways to action and suggestions for which stakeholders would be key to governance.

Dr Peter Davies of Macquarie University presented the outcomes and recommendations from the waterway governance review, highlighting that the current governance of waterways is complex, confusing and inconsistent and clearly demonstrating a need for a revised governance framework. The review foremost recommended establishing a lead state agency with sufficient powers, funding and whole-of-government support to drive delivery of the Parramatta River

Masterplan which generated discussion. This is specifically referenced in Recommendation 10 in the draft Masterplan.

It was agreed that a lead coordinating body be appointed and, in principle, for Sydney Water to take this role. The decision was qualified with the need to further define the scope and responsibilities of the lead agency, and to ensure that the PRCG's collaborative nature is preserved and strengthened.

3. Parramatta River Masterplan Reference Group

The Parramatta River Masterplan Reference Group met on 21 May 2018 and endorsed the formation of a cross-agency working group to work through the options and recommend the preferred governance model for delivering the Masterplan. The working group will be Chaired by Cllr Penny Pedersen, the current Vice Chair of the PRCG, and will include up to three council representatives nominated by the PRCG Executive Committee as well as a representative from each of the Greater Sydney Commission, Department of Planning and Environment, Office of Environment and Heritage, NSW Environment Protection Authority, NSW Health and Sydney Water.

4. Aboriginal Leadership

Work commenced on Aboriginal Leadership project to support the Masterplan governance. It is envisaged that Aboriginal involvement in the Masterplan and future river management would be underpinned by the following key elements:

- River management is co-defined, co-developed and co-managed with Indigenous partners.
- Indigenous knowledge, stories and values are embedded in river planning and decision making.
- Indigenous voices and representatives are involved in decision making at all levels.
- Swim site design, river quality and ecological health solutions will be site-specific and reflect the cultural and environmental context.
- Aboriginal engagement will be underpinned by the principles of free prior and informed consent, inclusion, respect for Indigenous perspectives, and primacy of traditional custodians and their knowledge.

WORKING TOGETHER

Coordinating collaborative efforts across this network to deliver positive outcomes for the river in a more efficient and effective way.



JOINT DECISION MAKING

- **Quarterly Full Group and Officer meetings** held with all PRCG member agencies and community representatives to discuss and agree upon our actions and goals for the river and catchment, hosted by Inner West Council, City of Canterbury-Bankstown and City of Canada Bay. Our fourth meeting was held on a ferry on the Parramatta River (7 December 2017) to enable everyone to see and learn about the future swim sites along the river.
- **Cross catchment groups meeting** to evaluate and plan the 'Get the Site Right' joint campaigns and collaborate on other joint initiatives.
- **Parramatta River Masterplan Governance Workshop** was held to agree the governance of the Masterplan.
- **PRCG Executive Committee meeting** was held six times during 2017-18 to guide the development of the Masterplan, determine priorities for the group and key budget decision planning for the Masterplan launch.
- **Biodiversity subcommittee meeting:** this meeting has stimulated members to commence this year's joint annual reporting on their habitat corridor sites.
- **Masterplan Reference Group meeting:** an outcome from this was the formation of a working group to work through the options and recommend a preferred governance model for delivering the Parramatta River Masterplan.
- **Inaugural Riverfest! working group meeting** was held to commence planning for this year's Riverfest and develop a strategy to build Riverfest into a much larger festival over the next three years.

- The **PRCG Education Subcommittee** was recently established to develop cross-catchment education campaigns that complement compliance efforts and address priorities in the Parramatta River Masterplan.

FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships with university and other scientific organisations including:

- **Western Sydney University** student investigations of the impact of dog faecal pollution, potential for local creek splash play and the presence of microplastics in a freshwater creek.
- **Macquarie University** student assessment of the River Aware Toolkit and photographic survey of channel erosion along the Parramatta River.
- **UNSW** PhD student investigating water sensitive retrofits: an interactive tool to engage households with downstream water quality.



- Four papers on the Parramatta River Masterplan have been accepted and will be presented in a dedicated 1.5 hour Learn Inspire Transform (LIT) session at this year's **International Riversymposium**, being held in Sydney from 14-18 October 2018.

BUILDING CAPACITY ACROSS COUNCILS

- Continued collaboration with Sydney's other catchment groups on shared issues affecting Sydney's waterways, such as the 'Get the Site Right' education and compliance campaign.
- Member and active participant of the **Splash Steering Group**. Splash is a collaborative network that aims to build capacity in people and organisations around sustainability, liveability, productivity and climate resilience.

OUR NETWORK



Key achievements include:

- 70 compliance staff trained in erosion and sediment control to support the **'Get the Site Right'** initiative in collaboration with Department of Planning and Environment, Cooks River Alliance, Georges Riverkeeper and Sydney Coastal Councils Group.
- Two 'Get the Site Right' webinars for compliance staff to provide a refresher on Get the Site Right and what to look for on site. These were presented by PRCG Coordinator, Sarah Holland Clift, and Department of Planning and Environment's Michael Frankcombe and were recorded and shared for additional training purposes.
- **Powell's Creek naturalisation project** officers' tour.
- Officers' presentation on the revitalisation of **Los Angeles River**.
- Two cross-agency **Masterplan Economic Analysis Technical Group** meetings.

COLLABORATING ACROSS CATCHMENTS

- Annual review of actions in the **Coastal Zone Management Plan** complete and publicly reported on the Our Living River website.
- PRCG representation on the **Sydney Harbour Estuary Processes Study Technical Group** and **Splash Steering Committee**.
- Member of the **Greater Sydney Local Land Services** Community Advisory Group.

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITIES

- Development of a **Riverkeeper Network** program to support community river care activities and complement council education programs by focusing on private lands across the catchment.
- Consistent messages delivered to our communities via joint media campaigns, hard copy materials and online resources.

COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING

A certified plan for the river's coastline:

- Continued implementation and public reporting on the progress of the **Parramatta River Estuary Coastal Zone Management Plan**.
- On 15 March, the PRCG Coordinator participated in a preliminary risk workshop as part of a **Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program** Scoping Study.
- **Masterplan Economic Analysis Technical Group, Parramatta River Masterplan Project Control Group** still in operation.
- Masterplan Technical Groups made up of agency staff and academic experts.
- **Masterplan Reference Group** meeting held, hosted by Sydney Water, with PRCG representatives and senior state government agency officials to oversee development of the Masterplan.





Get the Site Right

The multi-award winning initiative, 'Get the Site Right', is a joint educational and compliance campaign that highlights the important role developers play in cleaning up the river to make it swimmable again.

The campaign targets erosion and sediment control on construction and building sites, and also aims to raise awareness about the effects of sediment laden runoff on our waterways.

With all of the new construction and development taking place, sediment such as sand, soil and mud can run off building sites into stormwater drains and into the Parramatta River, impacting aquatic plant and animal life and people's enjoyment of the river.

Launched by the Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) in 2016, Get the Site Right is now supported by the Cooks River Alliance, Georges River Riverkeeper, Sydney Coastal Councils Group, Lake Macquarie City Council, NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Department of Planning & Environment, and more than 20 councils.

The first two campaigns run by the PRCG in 2016-2017 found that around half of building sites were compliant with their erosion and sediment controls, highlighting the need to sustain and expand efforts in educating developers and the community about the importance of reducing sediment runoff.

In 2017-2018, two more month-long campaigns were held and the campaign expanded to over 20 council areas across Sydney and the Central Coast.

Campaign results highlight the value of working together to raise awareness of erosion and sediment control and target large-scale offenders to protect our city's waterways.

Results from the May 2018 Get the Site Right compliance blitz showed that there was a 75% compliance rate on sites where site managers had a good understanding of erosion and sediment control. This contrasted with sites where the site managers' understanding was poor and compliance was only 9%.



Education was also a factor in the improvement seen between repeat site inspections, where the compliance rate was only 42% at sites on first visit compared to 75% on the repeat visit.

Results also showed that there were a number of developers with multiple sites across several local government areas (LGAs) which were fined or given warnings to clean up most of their sites. For example, one developer had eight sites inspected in three local government areas, where all sites were non-compliant.

During the November 2017 campaign, a total of 891 commercial and residential sites across Sydney were inspected, of which 683 sites were by member councils in the Parramatta River Catchment. Sixty per cent of sites were found to be compliant.

During the May 2018 campaign, 746 sites were inspected across Sydney and the Central Coast, with \$212,412 in fines issued. On the one-day compliance blitz held on 16 May, more than 100 council officers were out in force and 498 sites were inspected.



AWARDS

- Finalists, 2018 Australasian Riverprize.
- Highly Commended Award, 2017 NSW Local Government Excellence in the Environment Awards in the Natural Environment Protection & Enhancement: On-Ground category.
- Highly Commended Award, 2018 NSW Stormwater Awards.



KEY ACTIVITIES

- ✓ 3 x PRCG Regulatory subcommittee planning and review meetings.
- ✓ Letters to private certifiers and articles in industry publications to notify builders of upcoming blitz.
- ✓ Stall at the Sydney Home Show to educate home builders, renovators and landscapers on the importance of erosion and sediment control.
- ✓ Erosion and sediment control guidelines, signage, brochures and posters, including some language translations.
- ✓ 2 x promotional campaign videos.
- ✓ 3 x erosion and sediment control training workshops for compliance officers – November 2018 campaign.
- ✓ 2 x Get the Site Right training webinars for compliance officers – May 2018 campaign.
- ✓ Consumer brochures and posters at local Bunnings stores.



COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Building support from the local communities that live, work and move through the catchment area to help make Parramatta River swimmable again.

Throughout 2017-2018, the PRCG engaged with broad audiences and communities throughout the catchment, through a wide range of communications events and activities:

PROFESSIONAL EVENTS

Our Living River featured in several presentations at the 20th International Riversymposium held in Brisbane from 18-20 September 2017. PRCG Coordinator, Sarah Holland Clift, gave two presentations on 'Making the Parramatta swimmable again: from pipe dream to reality' and 'Ecological health and swimmability'. Dr Paul Hackney, City of Parramatta, presented on 'Returning Swimming to Lake Parramatta – a 72-year Journey'. Dr Lydia Cetin, Jacobs Consulting, presented on 'integrated catchment river modelling of the urban Parramatta River to support achieving swimmability targets'.

The PRCG Coordinator was one of three keynote presenters at Sustainability Talks: Cultural and Natural Heritage at Macquarie University on 11 October 2017.

OTHER EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Throughout 2017-2018, the PRCG also took part in several other community events, including:

- Australasian Bird Fair on 4-5 November
- Concord Carnival (City of Canada Bay) – 15 October
- Granny Smith Festival (City of Ryde) – 21 October
- Burramatta NAIDOC Science of the Eel display – 8 July
- City of Ryde World Environment Day celebrations – 3 June

- Riverkeeper talk planned as part of City of Ryde's World Water Day on 25 March with eels, water dragons and our mascot, the eastern long-necked turtle
- Paddle NSW Paddlefest – 18 February 2018.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



20+ community events



Wide range of promotional collateral



22 media features



1254 followers across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram; 50+ posts/tweets per month, attracting 600+ interactions per month (likes, shares, retweets).



6600+ votes lodged for favourite swimming spots along the river



700+ active e-newsletter subscribers



91,900+ page views and 37,600+ sessions by 28,300+ users to date.

Riverfest! 2017

Riverfest! 2017 promised something for everyone and didn't fail to deliver. Co-hosted with Cumberland Council at the Duck River Picnic Area in Auburn on 12 August, the event was attended by more than 1300 people and showcased some of the fun and different ways people can connect with the Parramatta River and its tributaries.

State MPs on both side of government came along to show their support, including Luke Foley, Dr Geoff Lee, and Julia Finn. Presentations on the plans for the Parramatta and Duck Rivers were given by our PRCG Chair, Clr Jerome Laxale, City of Parramatta Council's Administrator, Amanda Chadwick, Cumberland Council's Administrator, Viv May, and Greater Sydney Commission's Central West District Commissioner, Professor Ed Blakely.

Cumberland Council used the event to kick off community consultation around a Masterplan for Duck River, with 365 votes lodged on the day for the community's vision for Duck River.

People of all ages enjoyed the range of activities and entertainment on offer, including:

- Launch of the 'Painted River' art project, where over 100 attendees painted their vision for Duck River assisted by practising artists.
- Free cycling tours along Duck River by community-based cycling group, Addventageous.
- Signings and photos with former Wests Tigers' player Shaun Spence and Timmy the Tiger.
- Music by award-winning soloist Tash Eloise and blues band, The Pinks.
- Stalls by many of our partners and local community groups, showcasing Our Living River, our mascots and ways we can better care for our rivers and catchment.



KEY RESULTS

- ✓ 1300+ people attended
- ✓ 10 community stalls
- ✓ Launch of the 'Painted River' art project
- ✓ Community consultation around Duck River Masterplan





Riverkeeper Network

The Riverkeeper Network was officially launched in 2016 and is supported by funding from the Greater Sydney Local Land Services and Landcare NSW Local Landcare Coordinator Program. The program focuses on engaging with community groups, schools, businesses and government organisations to raise awareness of the *Our Living River* mission and find ways they can help to improve the health of the Parramatta River, its tributaries and surrounding environment.

During 2017-2018, the Riverkeeper Network participated in a diverse range of events and activities:

- **Riverkeeper Network Meetings:** City of Canada Bay, Blacktown City Council, The Hills Shire Council, Probus, City of Ryde and Hunters Hill Council.
- **Community presentations:** Talkin' Turtles, Western Sydney University students, Ladies' and Seniors' Clubs.
- **Community projects and partnership grants:**
 - Bundilla Scouts, River Aware (funded by Greater Sydney Local, Land Services) bike tours with Addventageous.
 - The PRCG Coordinator and Riverkeeper were invited to join the Murama Cultural Centre

Advisory Council, which is an official working group that will provide strategic advice and oversight for Murama initiatives, including the development of the Murama Cultural Centre on the Parramatta River.

- **Riverkeeper Ambassador supported events:**
 - Science of Eels show (planned by Cathy Merchant and supported by the Riverkeeper)
 - Vineyard Creek (Paula Coleman)
 - Fishways Ecological Bike tours – Addventageous has conducted five tours with more than 100 participants. Tours now occur monthly with Addventageous staff self-sufficient in delivering message.
 - Burramatta Eel stall.
 - Years 5 and 6 students, St Oliver's Primary School, Harris Park.
 - World Water Day – Dragons Eels and Turtles (planned by Cathy Merchant in conjunction with City of Ryde Council, and supported by the Riverkeeper – 24 March 2018).
 - The Riverkeeper supplied material and training for Sydney Living Museum 2018 Eel Festival.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



66 Riverkeepers



6 affiliates



4 Riverkeeper Ambassadors



5 Riverkeeper Network events



3 Riverkeeper Network projects underway



7 Riverkeeper Ambassador supported events



4 'Culturing the River' activities



5 workshops, talks and seminars

- Our Riverkeeper attended a YMCA Stakeholder luncheon and identified opportunities for the YMCA to promote/support youth members service programs around a swimmable river.
- Our Living River was represented in the 'Gear-up Girl' bike ride on 11 March by our Riverkeeper and Ambassador from Addventageous.
- **Educational development and support:**
 - Earthwatch Australia – Teacher Professional Development workshop: Inspiring students through citizen science, showcasing the godwits.
 - The Riverkeeper recorded a video teaching unit with WSU Dr Kalika Navin Doloswala for use in an ongoing course in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts to enable students to explore how communities from other places engage with and use water-based resources.
 - The Riverkeeper recorded a series of videos with WSU Ms Maryella Hatfield on Vineyard Creek about the importance of ecological health and the Riverkeeper Network for incorporation into WSU educational programs.



St Oliver's Primary School, Harris Park

In March 2018, our Riverkeeper, Jacinta Green, invited students in years 5 and 6 at St Oliver's Primary School in Harris Park to become Riverkeepers. The students took part in a guided cycling tour of the Parramatta River by one of our Riverkeeper Ambassadors, Charlene Bordley from Addventageous.

They then researched and developed their plans on ways to make the Parramatta River swimmable again by 2025, which they presented to the school community

and members of the Our Living River team. This project is a wonderful example of ways in which students can engage with their local waterways and surrounding environment and consider ideas for future sustainability.

Many thanks go to the students and staff of St Oliver's Primary School, especially Mr Anthony Matthews, Charlene Bordley from Addventageous, Lisa Kollaras from City of Parramatta, and Landcare NSW for their support with this project.

ADVOCACY

Joint advocacy with our partners on issues affecting the river and catchment helps provide a united voice for our communities and waterways.

During 2017-2018, the PRCG made submissions to the planning of future policies impacting the environment and waterways:



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ State Environmental Planning Policy (Environment) Explanation of Intended Effect, which will consolidate planning for a number of water catchments, waterways and urban bushland into the one document, including the Sydney Harbour Regional Environment Plan.
- ✓ Greater Sydney District Plans for the Central City, Eastern City and North districts, which provide direction for the implementation of the draft Greater Sydney Region Plan at a district level to create a link between regional and local planning. The final District Plans include specific sections on the Parramatta River and reference the Parramatta River Catchment Group, the Parramatta River Masterplan and the mission to make the river swimmable again.
- ✓ Greater Parramatta Interim Land use and Infrastructure Plan.
- ✓ Greater Parramatta to Olympic Peninsula Plan, including a presentation to the Greater Sydney Commission's Greater Parramatta to Olympic Park Coordinating Committee.
- ✓ Draft Camellia Town Centre Masterplan.
- ✓ City of Parramatta Environmental Sustainability Strategy, which features the mission to make the Parramatta River swimmable again and ecological health mascots.
- ✓ City of Canterbury-Bankstown Community Strategic Plan, endorsing the plan to improve local waterway health.

OTHER NOTABLE ACTIVITIES

- At their council meeting on 10 April 2018, City of Canada Bay Councillors supported the motion to nominate the River Activation of Brays Bay as their priority project for submission to the State Government's Precinct Support Scheme. This would include further investigation into the feasibility of encouraging river swimming at Brays Bay.
- At their council meeting on 22 May 2018, City of Ryde passed a motion to undertake a two stage process to activate Putney Beach swim site at Putney Park.
- Presentation at the Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue's 'Out There Summit' in the session on 'Planning for a cooler and greener Western Sydney'.
- A new Education Subcommittee has been established and an inception meeting was held on 21 February 2018. This group will complement efforts of the regulatory subcommittee and implement cross-catchment education projects that benefit Our Living River.



MONITORING AND REPORTING

PRCG FINANCIAL REPORT (2017-18)

INCOME		\$
Carry over – Member funds		138,941
Carry over – Enforceable undertaking		21,420
Carry over – Local Landcare Coordinator grant		13,172
Annual membership fees 2017-18		222,006
Grant funds (Local Landcare Coordinator)		50,000
Grant funds (Community Landcare Grant)		27,200
Grant funds (Greater Sydney Local Land Services Small Grant)		1,500
Office of Environment and Heritage contribution to Economic Analysis Scope		10,000
NSW Environment Protection Authority contribution to full Economic Analysis		80,000
Sydney Water contribution to full Economic Analysis		80,000
Office of Environment and Heritage Get the Site Right sponsorship		11,400
City of Parramatta Council contribution to Masterplan Design and Media		10,000
University of NSW in-kind contribution to recreational water quality monitoring		6,000
Total income		\$671,639
EXPENSES		\$
Salaries and on-costs (Coordinator and Communications Officer)		146,879
Salaries and on-costs (grant funded Riverkeeper)		52,837
Materials and contracts		117,568
Total expenses		\$317,284
NET OPERATING RESULT		\$354,355

We regularly report on progress to our stakeholders and community via our website, e-newsletter, social media channels and meetings.

OUR REPRESENTATIVES

CHAIR

- Clr Jerome Laxale, City of Ryde (Nov. 2015 – Nov. 2017)
- Clr Mark Drury, Inner West Council (Nov. 2017 –)

VICE CHAIR

- Clr Alan Haselden, The Hills Shire (Nov. 2015 – Nov. 2017)
- Clr Penny Pedersen, City of Ryde (Nov. 2017 –)

COUNCILLORS AND ADMINISTRATORS

- Blacktown City Council: Clr Susai Benjamin
- City of Canada Bay: Mayor Angelo Tsirekas, Clr Charles Jago
- City of Canterbury Bankstown: Clr George Zakhia
- City of Parramatta: Clr Phil Bradley, Clr Patricia Prociw
- City of Ryde: Clr Jerome Laxale, Clr Penny Pedersen, Clr Edwina Clifton
- Cumberland Council: Clr Glenn Elmore, Clr Ross Grove
- Hunters Hill Council: Clr Ross Williams
- Inner West Council: Clr Mark Drury, Clr Marghanita Da Cruz
- Strathfield Council: Clr Matthew Blackmore, Clr Maryanne Duggan
- The Hills Shire Council: Clr Alan Haselden

PARRAMATTA RIVER MASTERPLAN REFERENCE GROUP

- Clr Mark Drury – Chair, Parramatta River Catchment Group
- Clr Penny Pedersen – Vice Chair, Parramatta River Catchment Group
- Kevin Young – Managing Director, Sydney Water
- Paul Plowman – General Manager, Liveable City Solutions, Sydney Water
- Rod Simpson – Environment Commissioner, Greater Sydney Commission
- Phillip Birtles – PRCG Executive Committee Member & Sydney Water
- Daylan Cameron – Senior Team Leader, Water Floodplains & Coast, Greater Sydney, Office of Environment & Heritage
- Stephen Corbett – Director, Centre for Population Health, Western Sydney Local Health District, NSW Health
- Yolanda Gil, Director – Greater Parramatta Urban Renewal, Department of Planning & Environment

- James Goodwin – Director, Sydney Industry & A/Regional Director Metropolitan, Environment Protection Authority (on behalf of EPA A/Chair and CEO Anissa Levy)
- Giselle Howard – A/Chief, Environmental Regulator, Environment Protection Authority
- Mladen Kovac – Director, Economics, Office of Environment and Heritage
- Petrina Nelson – PRCG Executive Committee Member & City of Canada Bay

STAFF REPRESENTATIVES OF MEMBER AGENCIES

(Includes staff participating in the PRCG Full Group, subcommittees and technical groups)

- Blacktown City Council: Tahina Ahmend, Amanda Or, Eric Brandao, Craig Bush, Yael Lang, Keysha Milenkovic, Tony Napoli, Kerry Robinson, Aditi Verma
- Burwood Council: Pablo Barreto, Tet Lim, Andrew McClure, Kundan Pokharel, Tai Trinh
- City of Canada Bay: Ju'eta Amir, Renae Barnes, Petrina Nelson
- City of Canterbury Bankstown: Nell Graham, Joanne McDonnell, Charmaine Robertson, Daniela Santucci
- City of Parramatta: Paul Hackney, Glenn Haskins, Patrick Haydon, Lisa Kollaras, Paul Lyth, Helen Papathanasiou, Stuart Pike, Steven Ross, James Smallson, Jeffrey Stein, Pino Todarello
- City of Ryde: Liz Berger, Sam Cappelli, Michelle Carter, Katie Helm, Kylie McMahon, Craig Redfern
- Cumberland Council: Nicole Collas, Kerrie Davies, Rita Milostnik, Nyambura Mwankiki, Stuart Nunn, Greg O'Donnell, Stewart Rodham
- Department of Planning and Environment: Chase Dingle, Michael Frankcombe, Anthony Pizzolato
- NSW Environment Protection Authority: Jane Burgett, Giselle Howard
- Hunters Hill Council: Cate Alder, Jacqui Vollmer
- Inner West Council: Harriet Ampt, Jean Brennan, John Duncombe, Deborah Lennis, Sarah Kamarudin
- Strathfield Council: Mark Latham, Simon Leiva, William Oslan, Cameron Ross, Patrick Wong
- Sydney Water: Phillip Birtles, Amanda Chimkievitch, Jonathon Dixon, Rodd Kerr, Hannah Lockie, Anne-Marie Mitchell, Ramesh Seneviratne
- The Hills Shire Council: Craig Bourke, Tim Meaker, Gerard Nolan, Ravi Singh

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS AND KEY CONTRIBUTORS

- Department of Primary Industries: Carla Ganassin
- Greater Sydney Local Land Services: Robert Adam
- Greater Sydney Landcare Network: Jeff Cottrell
- 100 Resilient Cities Program: Beck Dawson
- Office of Environment and Heritage: Meredith Campey, Peter Freewater, Mladen Kovac
- Parramatta Park and Western Sydney Parklands Trusts: David Kirkland
- Roads and Maritime Services: Mark Millington
- Sydney Olympic Park Authority: Kerry Darcovich, Jenny O'Meara, Swapan Paul

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- Brian Powyer, Association of the Greening of
- Douglas Meredith, Bidjigal Reserve Trust
- Antony Lewis, Blacktown and District Environment Group Inc.
- Zoe Kapetangiannis, City of Canada Bay Sustainable City Committee
- Annie Nielsen, Impreesa Bushcare
- Frank Breen, Ryde Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society

OUR LIVING RIVER AMBASSADORS

- Dr Peter Davies, Macquarie University
- Assoc. Prof. Stuart Khan, University of New South Wales
- Assoc. Prof. Gavin Birch, University of Sydney
- Dr Ian Wright, Western Sydney University
- Charlene Bordley, Addventageous
- Kellie Darley, ParraParents
- Cathy Merchant
- Wests Tigers
- Royal Life Saving

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2017-2018

- Phillip Birtles, Sydney Water
- Simon Leiva, Strathfield Council
- Petrina Nelson, City of Canada Bay
- James Smallson, City of Parramatta

PRCG STAFF

- Sarah Clift, PRCG Coordinator
- Jacinta Green, PRCG Riverkeeper
- Nadia Young, PRCG Communications Officer
- Anna Nekic-Kuczera, PRCG Administration Support Officer

Images by Nadia Young and Chris Frape.



OUR THANKS

Thank you to the City of Parramatta for generously hosting the PRCG staff, and to all of our members and supporters for their dedicated efforts over the past year to make the Parramatta River swimmable again.

FINANCIAL MEMBERS 2017-2018



ASSOCIATE MEMBERS AND OTHER KEY CONTRIBUTORS





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