

# Understanding Stormwater

## - For Strata Properties



Parramatta River  
Catchment Group



LET'S MAKE OUR RIVER  
SWIMMABLE AGAIN BY  
2025



Good stormwater management protects our waterways by reducing pollution and supporting healthy environments. Using Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) and simple actions like proper waste disposal and regular stormwater system maintenance helps keep our natural spaces safe and enjoyable for people and wildlife.

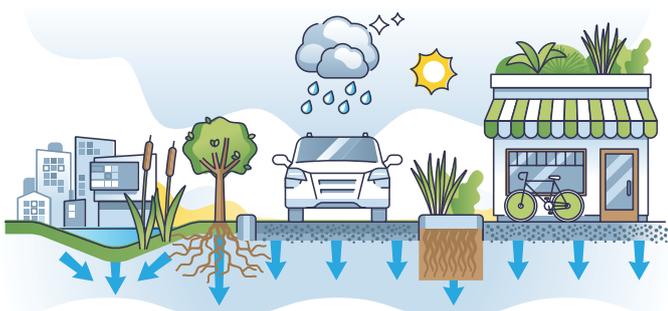
### What is stormwater?

Stormwater is rain that runs off hard surfaces into gutters and drains, flowing through pipes directly into creeks, rivers, and oceans without treatment – unlike wastewater, which is treated before release. As it moves, stormwater picks up pollutants like litter, chemicals, sediment, oil, and debris. When it flows fast, especially during heavy rain, it can cause erosion, flooding, and pollution.



Water flowing into a rainwater storage tank

Examples of WSUD include green infrastructure such as tree planting, permeable paving, and wetlands that absorb and filter stormwater. Rainwater harvesting systems like green roofs, tanks, and onsite detention, often located underground or in basement carparks, capture and store runoff. Gross Pollutant Traps (GPTs) also help by catching litter and pollutants before they reach waterways.



### What is Water Sensitive Urban Design?

Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) is a way to manage rain and stormwater in our cities that protects water quality and the environment. It uses features like rain gardens, green roofs, and porous pavements to filter and clean stormwater before reaching waterways. WSUD also helps cities manage climate change and reduces stress on water systems, making our cities more resilient and sustainable.

### Why is stormwater management important?

Well-designed and maintained stormwater systems help capture pollutants like sediment and litter before they enter our waterways, protecting water quality, wildlife, and recreational areas. Managing urban waterways is essential for healthy catchments, which provide critical wildlife habitats and valuable natural spaces for the community to enjoy.



## Stormwater management for strata properties

Correctly installing and maintaining stormwater devices, in both new and existing developments, is essential to reduce flood risk, protect water quality, and comply with local development requirements.

Local Development Control Plans (DCPs) outline stormwater requirements in their condition of development. These may include:

- a) Having a certain amount of landscaped area that allows for water seepage.
- b) Installing minimum standards for water efficiency under Sustainable standards for residential development (BASIX tool).
- c) Installing stormwater devices to reduce flooding and capture and treat sediment, litter, and other pollutants.
- d) Developing a Stormwater Management Plan for clearing a building site, construction, and post occupancy operation and maintenance of stormwater devices.

Your strata should have a plan showing stormwater device locations and their cleaning and replacement schedule.

Strata properties may be subject to a positive covenant requiring maintenance of stormwater devices in new or existing developments.

Lodged with NSW Land Registry Services and prepared by a solicitor or surveyor, these legal agreements may impose land use restrictions. Failure to maintain devices may result in regulatory action.

## Landscaping or building works – Get the Site Right!

If your strata property is undergoing landscaping or building upgrades, ensure erosion and sediment controls are in place to prevent soil, vegetation, and litter from being washed or blown off the site.

Failure to manage your site properly can lead to fines under the POEO Act.

'Get the Site Right' is an initiative that promotes proper on-site controls to prevent runoff and protect waterway health during construction. Find out more: [ourlivingriver.com.au/getthesiteright](http://ourlivingriver.com.au/getthesiteright)

## Save time and money with good stormwater management

Managing stormwater assets well reduces pollution and flooding, helping you avoid costly repairs or replacements. Even small actions can make a big difference!

- All property owners and contractors have a responsibility to prevent water pollution.
- Let maintenance staff, gardeners, and building managers know that sweeping, hosing, or blowing debris into stormwater drains causes pollution and may result in fines.
- Clear vegetation and litter from drains regularly, and dispose of them properly, to prevent blockages and reduce flood risk.
- Regularly check and maintain stormwater devices on your property to keep them working properly.



**For more information on stormwater management, contact your local council, scan the QR code, or visit: [ourlivingriver.com.au/waterquality](http://ourlivingriver.com.au/waterquality)**

The Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) is an alliance of councils, state government agencies, and community groups working to restore the Parramatta River and make it swimmable again by 2025. Through its Masterplan, the PRCG aims to improve water quality and catchment health by managing stormwater, reducing litter, and promoting Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD). For more information, visit: [ourlivingriver.com.au](http://ourlivingriver.com.au)

