

PARRAMATTA RIVER CATCHMENT GROUP



ANNUAL REPORT 2015 – 2016

THE PARRAMATTA RIVER CATCHMENT GROUP

Established in 2008, 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.



OUR PURPOSE

To make the Parramatta River a living river

OUR MISSION

To make Parramatta River swimmable again by 2025

OUR VISION

We believe Sydney deserves a world class river

WORD FROM OUR CHAIR

2015-16 has been a year of planning, partnerships, community engagement and on ground success for the Parramatta River Catchment Group.

A key focus has been the development of an evidence-based Masterplan. This Masterplan, to be completed in early 2017, will provide the roadmap for how we make the river swimmable again by 2025. We formally welcomed the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Department of Planning and Environment and The Hills Shire Council as financial members to the group, thereby cementing the key partnerships needed to turn our mission into reality.

We have also continued to drive the Our Living River public awareness campaign to connect and engage with many of the million or so people that live, work and play around the river and creeks that flow into it. The newly established Riverkeeper Network is supporting on ground community action to improve river quality, while the new compliance taskforce between the EPA and member Councils will see more coordinated compliance campaigns to prevent pollution entering the river.

Next year we look forward to resourcing and commencing our planned Riverwatch monitoring program to collectively monitor and report on the health of the river and our progress towards 2025.

We thank all of our financial members and supporters for their continued commitment to work together towards this awesome goal, and give a special thank you to City of Parramatta for hosting our valued PRCG staff. Our mission is possible, and we are well on our way to achieving it!

Clr Jerome Laxale
Parramatta River Catchment
Group Chair



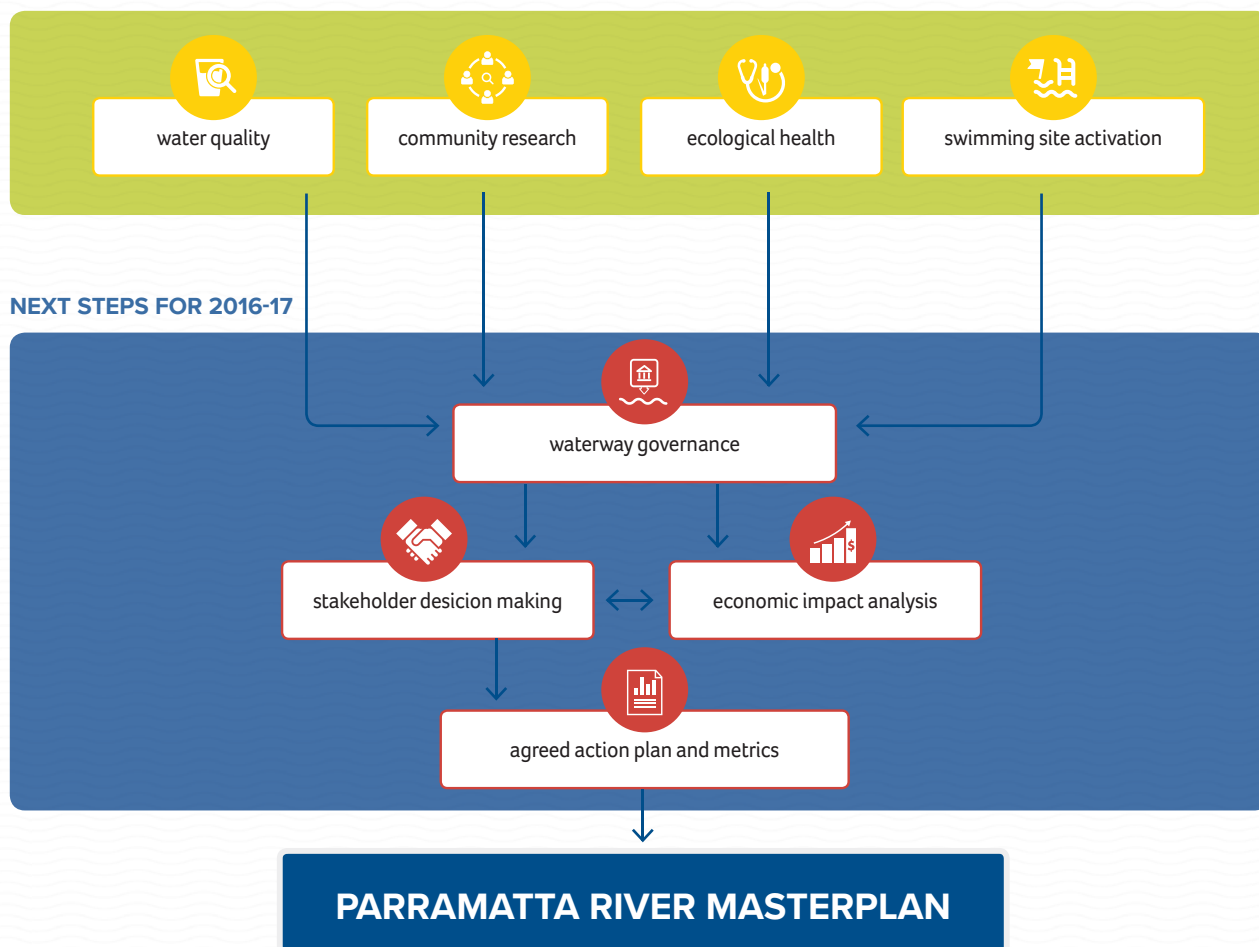


CATCHMENT-WIDE PLANNING & RESEARCH

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

In 2015-16 we made good progress towards the Masterplan through gaining endorsement for the process, securing the necessary resources, establishing Technical Groups and the overarching Reference Group, appointing a Project Manager and commencing the background research needed to inform the Plan.

RESEARCH PROJECTS COMMENCED IN 2015-16





WORKING TOGETHER

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

PRCG members and associate members meet quarterly to discuss issues and review progress towards our strategic plan. These meetings are attended by representatives from all financial members, other supporting agencies and the community.

OUR NETWORK



JOINT COMPLIANCE INITIATIVES

Establishment of a PRCG Regulatory Subcommittee to implement joint compliance education campaigns to reduce pollution, with the first initiative set to tackle sediment and erosion control

CONNECTING VOLUNTEERS AND ENHANCING HABITAT CORRIDORS

Establishment of the Riverkeeper network program to support river care activities

Councils coordinating efforts to enhance habitat corridors through the *Our Living River Fauna and Habitat Report* recommendations

CAPACITY BUILDING ACROSS COUNCILS

Active involvement in and endorsement of the Splash network; a council support network for information sharing, staff capacity building and advice regarding Water Sensitive Urban Design

A CERTIFIED PLAN FOR THE RIVER'S COASTLINE

Formal certification and adoption of the Parramatta River Estuary Coastal Zone Management Plan in accordance with Section 55G of the Coastal Protection Act (appearing in the NSW Government Gazette No 56 on 1 July 2016), a joint collaboration of 8 Councils and 5 State authorities with management responsibility for the Parramatta River estuary

Progress made by relevant authorities on more than half of the Actions within the Plan

CROSS CATCHMENT COLLABORATION

Working in partnership and sharing information and approaches across catchments with the Sydney Coastal Councils Group, Cooks River Alliance, Georges River Combined Councils Committee and the Derwent Estuary Group

Representing PRCG member interests on the Greater Sydney Local Land Services Metro Community Advisory Group and the Greater Sydney Local Land Services Local Government Advisory Group

CONNECTING OUR MEMBERS

Enhancing information sharing and collaboration across agency staff through quarterly Officer meetings and topic-based workshops including:

- Cooperative Research Centre for Water Sensitive Cities statutory planning for Water Sensitive Urban Design
- Sydney Water and Local Government Healthy Waterways
- How recreational water quality should be assessed in the Parramatta River
- Parramatta River Masterplan water quality modelling



ADVOCACY

Joint advocacy with our partners on issues affecting the river and catchment to provide a united voice for change to achieve our goals.

ACHIEVEMENTS

During 2015-2016, the PRCG made submissions to the planning of future policies impacting the environment and waterways:

- ✓ Submission and roundtable consultation in the IPART Review of Sydney Water's pricing
- ✓ Input into the Greater Sydney Commission District Planning process
- ✓ Consultation with Senior Strategic and Statutory Planners on a State Planning Policy for Water Sensitive Urban Design
- ✓ Submission to the 2016 Biodiversity Conservation Bill
- ✓ Assurance from the NSW Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, The Honourable Andrew Constance MP, that minimising ferry wash is a key criteria in the design for the new fleet of river vessels
- ✓ Presentation of a Business Case for a Riverwatch Monitoring Program to the Office of the NSW Minister for the Environment



NEW PARTNERSHIPS

The PRCG has directly engaged with political figures and government decision makers and has welcomed new partnerships with key agencies to strengthen the alliance needed to effect positive changes to the river and its management.

- The PRCG welcomed The Hills Shire Council, the NSW Environment Protection Authority and NSW Department of Planning and Environment as new financial members

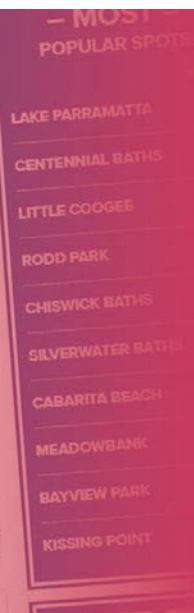
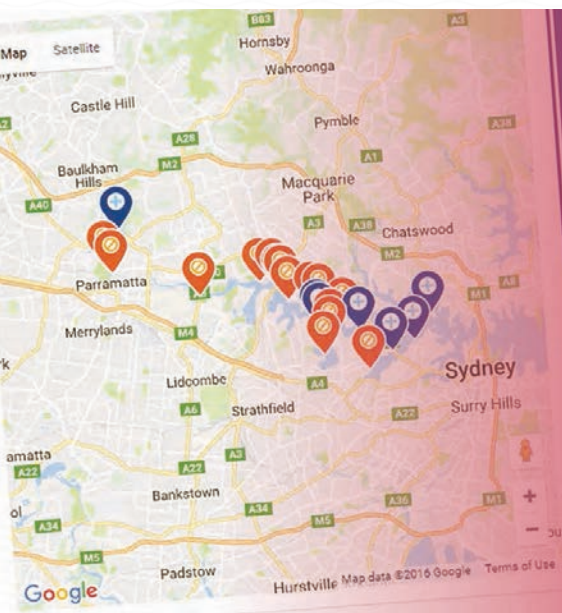
- The Parramatta River Masterplan Reference Group was formed with Senior Managers from key authorities, including:
 - Greater Sydney Commission
 - Office of Environment and Heritage
 - Department of Planning and Environment
 - Sydney Water
 - NSW Environment Protection Authority
 - Local Councils, represented by the PRCG Chair and Vice Chair
- Other partners and river ambassadors in 2015-16 have included:
 - Royal Life Saving Australia
 - Wests Tigers Football Club
 - F.I.T.A. (Fraternity in Truth Association)
 - Academics from Western Sydney University, Macquarie University, University of NSW and University of Sydney
 - The Dragon Sports Association





COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

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



3 MILLION PEOPLE REACHED with over 40 local, state and national media features



700 FOLLOWERS across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, gathering an average of almost 30,000 views and 600 online interactions per month



Over 5,500 VOTES lodged for favourite swimming spots along the river



20+ COMMUNITY EVENTS in areas throughout the catchment, engaging with broad audiences and communities



645 ACTIVE SUBSCRIBERS to our e-newsletter, an increase of over 200%



7,500 UNIQUE VISITORS to the website and 25,000 page views, of which 74% are new visitors



MONITORING & REPORTING

To scientifically monitor our progress towards our mission, we have established the baseline and protocols needed for a Riverwatch Monitoring Program, which we look forward to resourcing and commencing soon.

COMPLETED

- ✓ How water quality should be assessed in the Parramatta River catchment – a literature review
- ✓ Collation and analysis of all available monitoring data as well as development of a Parramatta River Swim Report to understand and report on how we are progressing with our mission
- ✓ Development of a business case for a future Riverwatch Monitoring Program

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

PRCG FINANCIAL REPORT, 2015-16

INCOME		\$
Carry over from 2014-15		66,908
Annual membership fees		122,392
Grant funds (Local Landcare Coordinator)		20,000
Additional agency contributions to PRCG projects		49,403
Enforceable undertaking negotiated by the EPA		200,000
Total income		\$458,703
EXPENSES		\$
Salaries and on-costs (Coordinator and Communications Officer)		97,619
Salaries and on-costs (grant funded Riverkeeper)		9,901
Contracts / Consultancies		66,972
Catering		757
Total expenses		\$175,249
NET OPERATING RESULT		\$283,454

In addition, Sydney Water contributed in-kind one full-time staff member (Parramatta River Masterplan Project Manager) from November to June, plus \$200,000 towards the Parramatta River Masterplan Water Quality Modelling Project.



OUR REPRESENTATIVES

CHAIR

- Clr Jerome Laxale, City of Ryde

VICE CHAIRS

- Clr Scott Lloyd (until May 2016), Clr Alan Haselden (May to June 2016)

COUNCILLORS AND ADMINISTRATORS

- Former Ashfield Council: Clr Monica Wangmann and Clr Mark Drury
- Former Auburn City Council: Clr Steve Yang, Clr Irene Simms,
- Cumberland Council: Mr Viv May
- Former Bankstown City Council: Clr Naji Peter Najjar
- City of Canterbury Bankstown: Mr Richard Colley
- Blacktown City Council: Clr Susai Benjamin, Clr Russ Dickens
- City of Canada Bay: Clr Angelo Tsirekas, Clr Pauline Tyrrell
- City of Ryde: Clr Jerome Laxale, Clr Denise Pendleton, Clr Terry Perram
- Former Holroyd City Council: Clr Pam Colman
- Hunters Hill Council: Clr Peter Astridge
- Former Leichhardt Council: Clr Frank Breen
- Inner West Council: Mr Richard Pearson
- Former Parramatta City Council: Clr Scott Lloyd, Clr Shahadat Chowdhury
- City of Parramatta Council: Ms Amanda Chadwick
- Strathfield Council: Clr Andrew Soulos, Clr Daniel Bott, Clr Raj Datta
- The Hills Shire Council: Clr Alan Haselden

PARRAMATTA RIVER MASTERPLAN REFERENCE GROUP

- Clr Jerome Laxale, Chair, Parramatta River Catchment Group
- Clr Alan Haselden, Vice Chair, Parramatta River Catchment Group
- Kevin Young, Managing Director, Sydney Water
- Kaia Hodge, Manager City Futures, Sydney Water
- Barry Buffier, Chair and CEO, NSW Environment Protection Authority
- Rod Simpson, Environment Commissioner, Greater Sydney Commission
- Natalie Camilleri, A/Director Strategic Planning, Greater Sydney Commission
- Tom Grosskopf, Director Metropolitan Branch, Office of Environment and Heritage
- David Trewin, Regional Manager Greater Sydney, Office of Environment and Heritage
- Geoff King, Director Place Based Coordination (Greater Parramatta), Department of Planning & Environment

STAFF REPRESENTATIVES OF MEMBER AGENCIES (including staff participating in the PRCG Full Group, subcommittees and technical groups)

- Blacktown City Council: Keysha Milenkovic, Natalie Payne, Moomtahina Ahmed, Carolyn Adamcewicz, Yael Lang, Craig Bush
- Burwood Council: Kundan Pokharel
- City of Canada Bay: Petrina Nelson, Rob Stevenson, Nicole Thompson, Anne-Claire Collee
- City of Canterbury Bankstown: Cherie Blackburn
- City of Parramatta (former Parramatta City Council): James Smallson, Helen Papathanasiou, Paul Hackney, Pino Todarello, Stuart Pike, Callantha Brigham, Merryn Spencer, WenNi Wong
- City of Ryde: Nilushi Disanayake, Kylie McMahon, Sam Cappelli, Nicola Booth, Sandra Payne, Denise Torres, Liz Berger, Craig Redfern, Nirodha Neupane
- Cumberland Council (former Auburn City Council): Chris Chung, Kerrie Davies, Samuel Barnard
- Cumberland Council (former Holroyd City Council): Mark Evens, Stewart Rodham, Stuart Nunn
- Department of Planning and Environment: Geoff King
- NSW Environment Protection Authority: Jane Burgett, Greg Sheehy, Ibrahim Muharrem, Brendan Haine, Paul Wearne
- Greater Sydney Local Land Services: Bill Dixon, Vanessa Keyzer
- Hunters Hill Council: Jacqui Vollmer, Cate Alder
- Inner West Council (former Ashfield Council): Janene Harris, Sarah Kamarudin, Adam Ward, Maurice Morsanuto
- Inner West Council (former Leichhardt Council): Mohammad Sikder, Jon Stiebel, Mario Mouxouris, Ryan Cole, Alex Wu
- Strathfield Council: Cathy Jones, Mark Latham, Alex Mackenzie
- Sydney Water: Kaia Hodge, Daniel Cunningham, Phillip Birtles, Manu Black, Rod Kerr, Pei Tillman, Jonathan Dixon, Natasha Abulfa
- The Hills Shire Council: Allan Gear, Lauren Vallejo, Andrew King, Craig Bourke, Lisa Willock, Tim Meaker

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

- Office of Environment and Heritage: Meredith Campey, Gus Pelosi, Daylan Cameron, Peter Scanes, Rebecca Swanson
- Roads and Maritime Services: Mark Millington
- Parramatta Park and Western Sydney Parklands Trusts: David Kirkland, David Brodie
- Department of Primary Industries: Carla Ganassin, Karen Astles
- Sydney Olympic Park Authority: Kerrie Darcovich

UNIVERSITY AMBASSADORS

- Macquarie University: Dr Peter Davies
- University of New South Wales: Assoc. Prof. Stuart Khan
- University of Sydney: Assoc. Prof. Gavin Birch
- Western Sydney University: Dr Ian Wright

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- Annie Nielson, Impeesa Bushcare
- Brian Powyer, Association for the Greening of
- Wayne Olling, Blacktown and District Environment Group Inc
- Tony Williams, Bidjigal Reserve Trust Board
- Cathy Merchant, Ryde Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society
- Zoe Kapetangiannis, City of Canada Bay Sustainable City Committee

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2015-16

- Cathy Jones, Corporate Strategy Coordinator, Strathfield Council
- Nilushi Disanayake, Sustainability Programs Coordinator, City of Ryde
- Chris Chung, Team Leader, Environmental Sustainability, Cumberland Council
- Keysha Milenkovic, Waterways Rehabilitation Officer, Blacktown City Council
- Phillip Birtles, Program Lead, Land and Waterways, Sydney Water
- James Smallson, Supervisor Open Space and Natural Resources, City of Parramatta

PRCG STAFF

- Sarah Clift, PRCG Coordinator (hosted by City of Parramatta)
- Jacinta Green, PRCG Local Landcare Coordinator (hosted by City of Parramatta)
- Lillian Hann, PRCG Communications Officer (hosted by City of Parramatta)
- Natalie Quinn, PRCG Masterplan Project Manager (hosted by Sydney Water)





OUR THANKS

Thank you to City of Parramatta Council 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 river swimmable again.



FINANCIAL MEMBERS 2015-2016:



ASSOCIATE MEMBERS AND OTHER KEY CONTRIBUTORS:



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