

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2016 - 2018

THE PARRAMATTA RIVER CATCHMENT GROUP





This Strategic Plan is being delivered by the Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG). The PRCG is an alliance of local and State government organisations and the community who have the common purpose of making the Parramatta River a living river.

*Cover image credit (clockwise from left): Rosie Nicolai (image left and centre), Chris Frape, Greg Holland  
Image below: Greg Holland*



# CONTENTS

## **PART 1: BACKGROUND**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Regional context                            | 1 |
| Our Living River initiative                 | 3 |
| Parramatta River Catchment Group background | 5 |
| Our members                                 | 6 |
| The role of the PRCG                        | 7 |
| Current PRCG governance structure           | 7 |

## **PART 2: ABOUT THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Audience   | 10 |
| Development  | 10 |
| How the Masterplan is addressing our 9 Workstreams | 12 |

## **PART 3: STRATEGIC ACTIONS 2016-2018**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Overview   | 13 |
| Implementation Plan: Planning and Research         | 15 |
| Implementation Plan: Coordination                  | 18 |
| Implementation Plan: Advocacy                      | 23 |
| Implementation Plan: Communications and Engagement | 27 |
| Implementation Plan: Monitoring and Reporting      | 32 |

## **PART 4: RESOURCING THE PLAN** 34

## **PART 5: ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER PLANS** 35

# PART 1: BACKGROUND

## Regional context

The Parramatta River is the main tributary of Sydney Harbour and extends from Blacktown Creek in the west to the confluence of the Lane Cove River in the east. The Parramatta River catchment covers an area of 266 square kilometres that spans the local government areas of Ashfield, Auburn, Bankstown, Blacktown, Burwood, Canada Bay, Holroyd, Hunters Hill, Leichhardt, Marrickville, Parramatta, Ryde, Strathfield and The Hills Shire. The headwaters of the river are freshwater up until Parramatta city, where the river then becomes estuary.

Historically, lack of regulation and rapid industrial development along the river caused substantial degradation of the river.

The social and economic dynamics across the Parramatta River Catchment have changed over the past 20 years, with a population growth rate of 6.29% from 2006-2011, projected to accelerate further over the coming years. The community demographic across the catchment is extraordinarily diverse, as are people's interactions with the river.

The "Community Profile Analysis Parramatta River Catchment March 2013" provides a statistical overview of the cultural and social demographics of the catchment ([www.parramattariver.org.au/our-catchment/community-profile](http://www.parramattariver.org.au/our-catchment/community-profile)).

*Map of Parramatta River Catchment area, showing current local government boundaries*

The catchment covers an area of 266km<sup>2</sup>

Over 750,000 people live within the catchment

Extraordinarily diverse in terms of both social and cultural demographics



The river has a history of pollution and neglect

Gradual improvements to water quality over the last 20 years



Residential and business development are now replacing these old industrial sites and, with this, community demographics are changing. Gentrification is occurring along the river as high value is placed on having close proximity to a waterway. Community expectations are shifting and people are looking for quality open space and recreational experiences along the river.



*Cycleways and recreational areas along the Parramatta River. Bottom photo by Rosie Nicolai.*

With advances in regulation and technology, the condition of the river has been improving. Rapid population growth and development could see this reversed, unless a proactive catchment-wide approach is implemented. Investment in natural resource outcomes is currently very low, but the social and economic benefits to making the river swimmable again is high.

## Our Living River initiative

In December 2014, the PRCG launched the Our Living River initiative, with the following new vision, purpose and mission:

**Our Vision: Sydney deserves a world class river**

**Our Purpose: To make the Parramatta River a living river**

**Our Mission: To make the Parramatta River swimmable again by 2025**



Glades Bay Baths, c1951. Photo: Ryde Library and Information Services

The whole of the Parramatta River was swimmable once, and it can be again

For instance, parts of the river and its catchment, including Dawn Fraser Baths, Cabarita beach, Chiswick Baths and Lake Parramatta, are currently swimmable, except after heavy rains. We want to make more areas along the Parramatta River swimmable again for all of our communities to enjoy.

Map of Parramatta River swimming spots, past and present





Other global cities, such as New York and London, are also taking the plunge and setting similar goals for their cities. Copenhagen and Boston have already achieved it and proven that major urban rivers can be made swimmable and can become the essence of urban life again.

More background information on the Our Living River initiative can be found at [www.ourlivingriver.com.au](http://www.ourlivingriver.com.au).

*International urban river swimming locations (clockwise from left):*

*Harbour Baths, Copenhagen, photo by Chris Norton Riley*

*River Thames (concept), London, photo by StudioOctopi/Picture Plane*

*Charles River, Boston, photo by Anita Diamant*



## Parramatta River Catchment Group background

The Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) was formed in 2008 and is an alliance of local and State Government agencies and the community who are working together to make the Parramatta River swimmable again. Financial Members include all 13 Councils within the catchment area, Sydney Water, the Environment Protection Authority, Department of Planning and Environment, and Greater Sydney Local Land Services. Parramatta Park Trust, NSW Fire Brigade, Roads and Maritime Services, the Department of Primary Industries and the Office of Environment and Heritage are Associate (non-financial) Members to the group, as are 5 elected community members.



### Parramatta River Catchment Group timeline

**2008:** Parramatta River Catchment Group formed, and hosted by the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority

**2009:** Memorandum of Understanding developed that outlines how each member will participate collaboratively in the PRCG and signed by the following Councils: Ashfield, Auburn City, Bankstown City, Blacktown City, City of Canada Bay, Holroyd City, Hunters Hill, Leichhardt Municipal, Parramatta City, City of Ryde, Strathfield, as well as the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (formerly Department of Environment and Climate Change), Department of Primary Industries (formerly Department of Water and Energy), NSW Fire Brigade, NSW Roads and Maritime Services (formerly NSW Maritime), Parramatta Park Trust, Greater Sydney Local Land Services (formerly Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority) and Sydney Water.

**2012:** Burwood Council becomes a financial member of the PRCG. PRCG Terms of Reference endorsed by PRCG Full Group.

**2013:** Parramatta City Council becomes the new host of the PRCG, and long standing Coordinator resigns.

**2014:** New Coordinator appointed, and Our Living River initiative launched with the mission to make the Parramatta River swimmable again by 2025.

**2015:** The Environment Protection Authority and The Hills Shire Council join the PRCG as financial members

**2016:** Department of Planning and Environment joins the PRCG as a financial member



## Our members

The following organisations are current financial members of the PRCG:



The following organisations are associate members of the PRCG:



## The role of the PRCG

The PRCG provides an overarching strategic and coordination role for the catchment, primarily focusing on activities where a catchment-wide effort makes more sense and can achieve greater outcomes than each agency working individually.

The PRCG's key areas of responsibility include:

- ~ Planning and research
- ~ Coordination
- ~ Advocacy
- ~ Communication and engagement
- ~ Monitoring and reporting

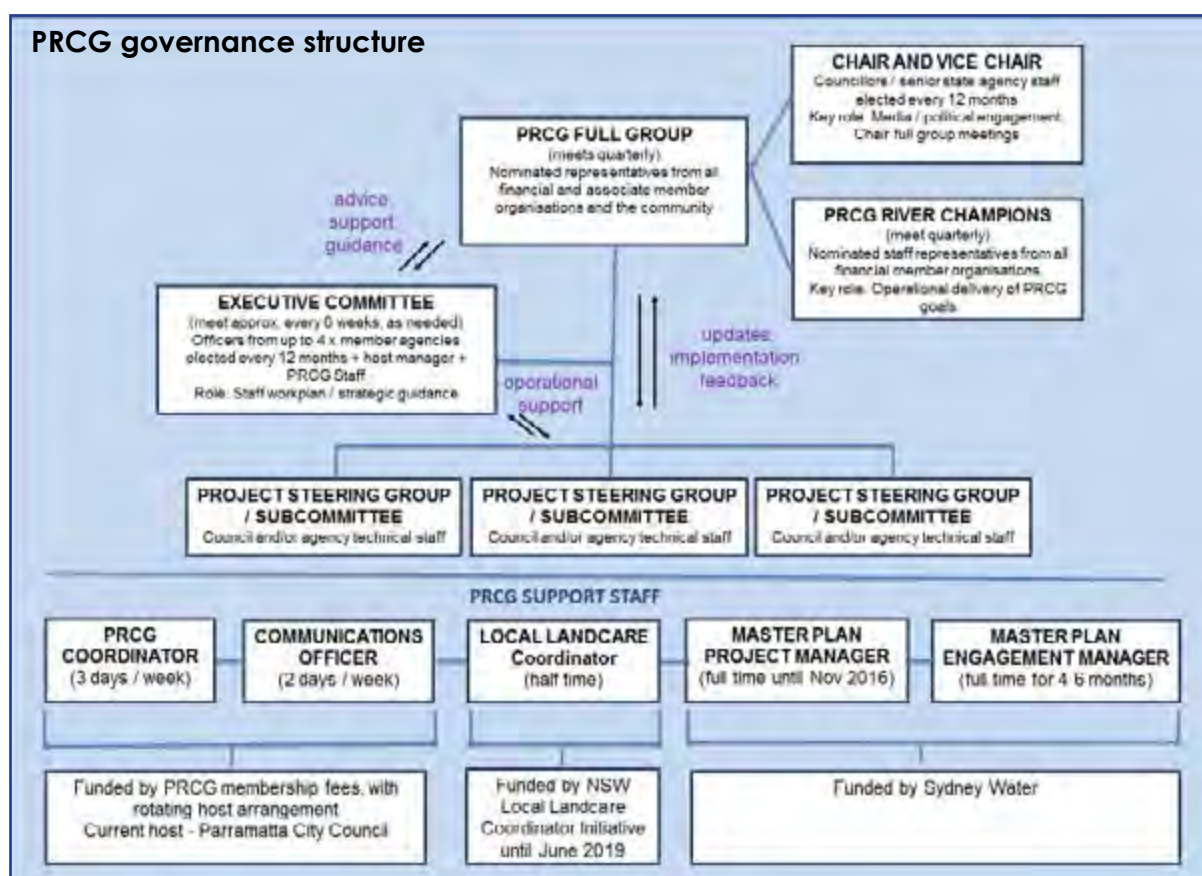
Our individual members and other agencies are responsible for undertaking local implementation, including local planning, regulatory activities and on ground works. The individual actions of our member organisations contribute substantially towards our collective mission, but are not specifically included in this strategic plan.

Further information on how the PRCG operates can be found in the Terms of Reference.

## Current PRCG governance structure

To help deliver our activities, the PRCG is currently supported by 3 dedicated part-time staff (1.5 full time equivalents). These staff will be hosted at Parramatta City Council until June 2018, at which time the PRCG host organisation will be re-elected. The PRCG host organisation is nominated and elected every 3 years, in order to share the administrative load between members and also to provide fresh perspectives for the PRCG officers. In addition, the PRCG is supported by nominated representatives from each member organisation who contribute to the PRCG Full Group, PRCG subcommittees and other PRCG projects, as relevant.

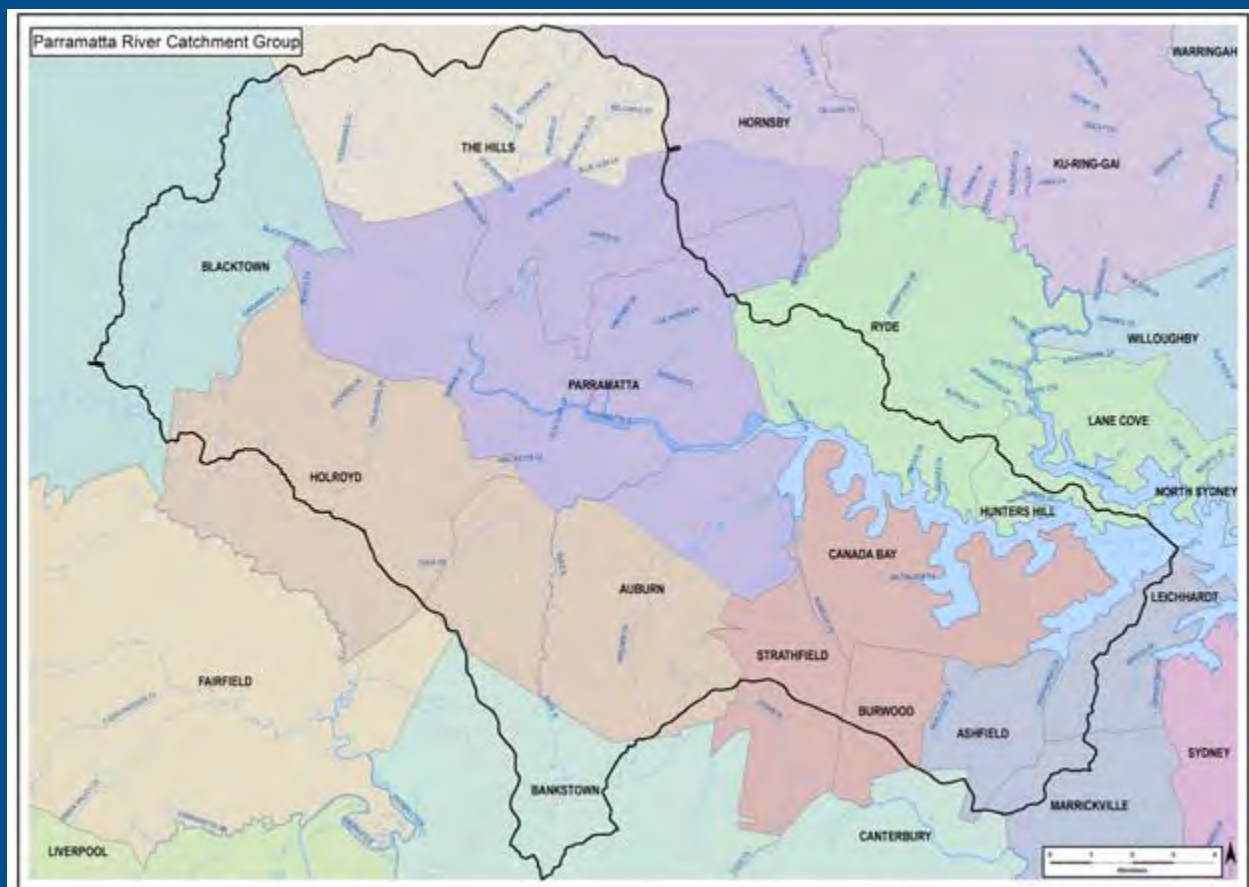
In 2016, Sydney Water has also funded and will host 1 dedicated full time staff member for 12 months to project manage the development of the Parramatta River Masterplan on behalf of the PRCG, and an additional staff member for 4-6 months to manage the Stakeholder Engagement process for the Masterplan.





As this plan is being written, the NSW Government has announced a proposal to amalgamate many Councils across NSW. In this proposal, the number of Councils within the Parramatta River Catchment would reduce from 13 to 7, with only one member Council, Blacktown City Council, not affected by boundary changes. Once the amalgamations take place, a review of the current group structure and membership fees will need to be undertaken to maintain the long term viability of the PRCG.

*Map of proposed council amalgamation areas*



*Map by Greater Sydney Local Land Services*

In November 2014, a targets workshop was held where PRCG members defined the meaning of swimmability and prioritised four initial issues on which to focus our efforts. The group recognised that making the river swimmable means different things to different people and specifically identified the following elements that signify a swimmable river:



**Water quality:**

clear water, less sewer overflows, less stormwater pollution and rubbish, Water Sensitive Urban Design



**Activation/destination:**

events, leisure, recreation, amenities, families having fun



**Healthy ecosystems:**

in the river, riparian zone and catchment; natural creeks



**An engaged community:**

a community that loves and cares for their waterways



**Business activation:**

thriving local businesses due to high visitation



**Easy access:**

public transport and connected cycleways and walkways





## PART 2: ABOUT THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This Strategic Plan covers the areas of joint work being undertaken by members of the Parramatta River Catchment Group, utilising membership funds and current and potential grants awarded to the PRCG. It does not attempt to cover the actions or responsibilities of individual members or other agencies.

### Audience

The primary audience for this plan is the PRCG's member organisations, project partners and interested community members.

### Development

This plan draws together outcomes from a range of PRCG planning workshops held across the last 3 years. It supersedes the draft PRCG Strategic Plan that was developed in 2013 before the establishment of the PRCG's current vision, purpose and mission. It does, however, incorporate targets and actions from all past workshops and plans, where relevant to our new mission and purpose.

Priority actions identified for 2016-17 by the two current PRCG subcommittees have also been incorporated into this plan. These subcommittees are the Estuary Management Group and Biodiversity Subcommittee, who are guided by the Parramatta River Estuary Coastal Zone Management Plan and Our Living Catchment Fauna and Habitat report respectively.

Our new vision, purpose and mission were developed through a workshop with representatives from all PRCG member organisations in August 2014, followed by input from PRCG Full Group members in September 2014.

The four prioritised issues were:

1. State government commitment
2. Water Sensitive Urban Design funding
3. Attitudes and connection to the river
4. Lack of clear identification of responsibilities

In the process of brainstorming short, medium and long term actions for each of these four issues, it became clear that we needed to undertake a series of research-based projects in order to best inform our targets and preferred pathways for how we make the river swimmable again.

The mission was officially launched on 3 December, 2014. To help build support for the mission from all levels of government and the community, the Our Living River community engagement campaign was also launched and community members were invited to show their support by voting for their favourite swimming spot at [www.ourlivingriver.com.au](http://www.ourlivingriver.com.au).

By March 2016, approximately 5,200 votes had been lodged for where people want to swim.

In 2016/17, development of the Parramatta River Masterplan has become a major focus, made possible through a significant financial contribution from Sydney Water and support from all our members and other partners. This Masterplan will outline the preferred pathways to overcome the issues we have identified to achieving our mission.

To provide us with evidence-based options from which to select these preferred pathways, we will first undertake a series of background research projects under the themes of:

- ~ water quality
- ~ ecological health
- ~ urban form
- ~ waterway access
- ~ community preferences
- ~ waterway governance

This will be followed by an extensive stakeholder and community engagement process to select which options to include in the Plan.

There is also a range of other strategic actions outlined in this PRCG Strategic Plan that we will progress at the same time as developing the Parramatta River Masterplan. This includes actions that:

- a) are ongoing, core responsibilities of the PRCG
- b) address actions in other regional plans and/or
- c) have been identified as priority actions by the PRCG Full Group at previous meetings and workshops to help achieve our current mission.



## How the Masterplan is addressing our 9 Workstreams

At the PRCG workshop in August 2014, we identified 9 key work streams that need to be addressed to make the river swimmable again. The Masterplan will provide an evidence-based approach to how we can address these 9 issues, namely:



### **POLLUTION –**

Water quality modeling will be undertaken to identify expected pollutant levels at the swimming sites in a range of policy and intervention scenarios. In particular identifying what levels of intervention would be required for direct contact recreation by 2025.



### **BIODIVERSITY –**

The Masterplan will review the ecological condition of the waterway and foreshores. As part of this indicator species and communities that represent waterway health will be identified to be monitored in the future to demonstrate progress.



### **COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIPS –**

The Masterplan is being undertaken as a collaborative project run by the PRCG, with elements being funded and run by various partners. The work will be heavily informed by community preferences research and major stakeholder engagement.



### **DESIGN AND INFRASTRUCTURE –**

Through the work on urban form and waterway access planning opportunities for urban activation to allow public safety, engagement and access to the river will be identified to establish a sense of place at key sites along the Parramatta River.



### **TRANSPORT –**

Planning opportunities to improve public transport, cycle and pedestrian routes to key river areas, and allow public safety around swimming spots, will be considered through the work on urban form and waterway access.



### **FUNDING –**

In the development of the Masterplan work will be done to understand community preferences and analyse the economic impact of a swimmable Parramatta River. This will provide a framework for funding for future initiatives to improve the river.



### **POLICY –**

To assess waterway governance we will map the current organisational responsibilities and current capacities across the catchment for waterway management. This will also offer some resolution of alternate options to achieve our goals for the river.



### **EDUCATION –**

The Masterplan will give a clear direction, action plan and way of assessing progress to our goals. This will provide direction and content to be used to educate the community on the PRCG's plans for the river and how they can contribute.



### **RECREATION & EVENTS –**

The work to make Parramatta swimmable will ultimately build greater opportunities for recreation in the Parramatta River. The Masterplanning process itself will also have outputs that will naturally link to community and stakeholder engagement events.

## Masterplan Research Projects

Water Quality Modelling

Ecological Health

Community Research

Urban Form and Waterway Access

Economic Impact Analysis

Waterway Governance

Stakeholder Engagement

# PART 3: STRATEGIC ACTIONS 2016-2018

To progress our mission, the PRCG will seek to deliver the following strategic actions in 2016-2018 under its 5 key pillars of responsibility. The following pages outline how we will achieve each strategic action. Some of these actions will be undertaken using existing resources, while others rely on additional funding or in-kind resources to be achieved.

|                               | <b>PLANNING &amp; RESEARCH</b><br><br><i>To map the preferred pathways to achieve our mission and purpose</i>   | <b>COORDINATION</b><br><br><i>To keep us all focussed on working together to deliver our mission and purpose</i>   |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Catchment-wide Benefit</b> | The health of the river is influenced by everything that happens within the catchment area. Catchment-wide planning and research are needed to make the river swimmable again.  | There is a huge number of organisations with responsibilities for aspects of land and water management. Working collaboratively across organisations can deliver outcomes for the river in a more efficient and effective way.   |
| <b>Strategic Actions</b>      | 1.1. Develop a Parramatta River Master Plan to map the preferred pathways to making the river swimmable again<br>1.2. Develop a Parramatta River Green Grid via an interconnected network of parks and green spaces that integrates enhanced water quality outcomes with development, transport, biodiversity and social outcomes | 2.1. Continue to coordinate quarterly PRCG Full Group and PRCG Officer meetings to facilitate information sharing and decision making across agencies<br>2.2. Continue to coordinate PRCG biodiversity subcommittee to enhance priority habitat corridors and encourage more desirable animals to swim in the river<br>2.3. Continue to coordinate PRCG Estuary Management subcommittee to gazette and implement the Parramatta River Coastal Zone Management Plan<br>2.4. Develop and implement joint compliance and education campaigns to reduce pollution entering the river<br>2.5. Review the governance and financial structure of the PRCG, particularly in light of Council amalgamations |

## ADVOCACY

*To facilitate the changes needed to achieve our goal*

## COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

*To better connect our communities to the river and its tributaries and build the capacity needed to make it swimmable again*

## MONITORING & REPORTING

*So we can all see how we are tracking towards our mission and improve our approach along the way*

Joint advocacy on issues affecting the river and catchment is more cost effective than each agency undertaking these efforts individually.

In our information and technology-rich modern society, simple and effective communication is critical to reaching the million plus people that live and move through the catchment.

Reporting as one entity on the state of the river makes it easier for our stakeholders and the broader community to see the bigger picture of where we are at and what needs to be done

- 3.1. Advocate and secure funding for priority actions
- 3.2. Advocate for positive policy changes to infrastructure, planning and environment legislation needed to help make the river swimmable again
- 3.3. Advocate for low wake ferries to replace the current RiverCat ferry fleet to improve access to and safety of new swimming sites
- 3.4. Advocate for more integrated management of recreational amenity across jurisdictional boundaries along the river and its tributaries

- 4.1. Continue to support capacity building activities for agency staff and other land managers to build the knowledge and skills needed to make the river swimmable again
- 4.2. Maintain community interest and involvement in making the river swimmable again via the Our Living River communications campaign
- 4.3. Continue to promote and celebrate activities and events along the Parramatta River and its tributaries that connect with the vision of Our Living River
- 4.4. Establish an Urban Landcare Program that supports existing and new volunteers in undertaking activities that reduce pollution and enhance aquatic biodiversity

- 5.1. Report on the past, present and future state of the river, as it relates to swimmability via establishment of a Riverwatch monitoring program
- 5.2. Report on progress towards the PRCG Strategic Plan to our stakeholders and the community



# PLANNING & RESEARCH

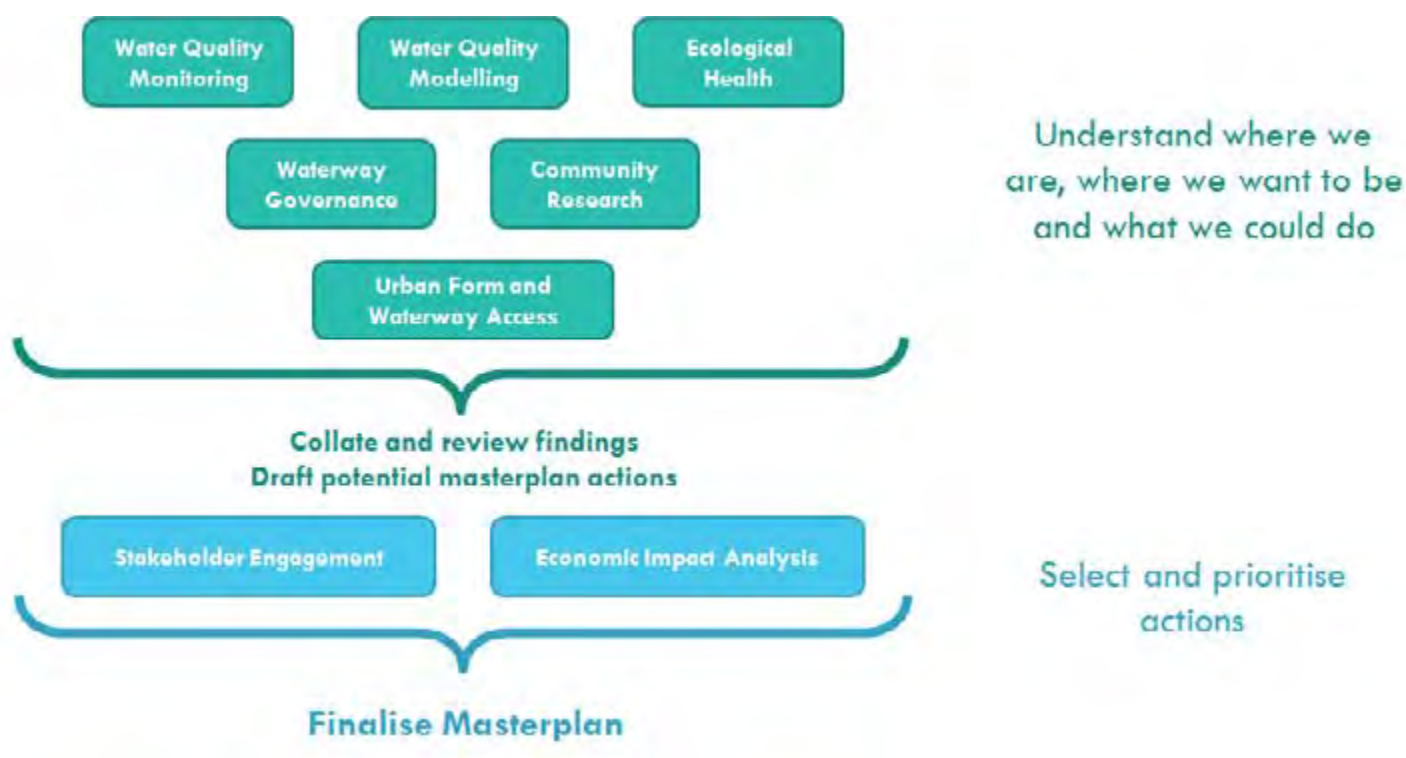
## Strategic Action 1.1

Develop a Parramatta River Masterplan to map the preferred pathways to making the river swimmable again

## BACKGROUND

To set targets and identify the preferred pathways to make the river swimmable again, we need to develop an evidence-based Masterplan for the river that is well informed by our stakeholders and local communities. The Masterplan will centre around key swimming sites and map out clear pathways for how we will make these sites swimmable again. We will undertake a series of background projects over the next 12 months to inform the final plan.

The literature review and identification of core monitoring parameters in Strategic Action 5.1 will feed directly into the water quality modelling component of the plan, which will identify a range of intervention scenarios to make the sites swimmable again.



## TIMEFRAME

|              |                     |
|--------------|---------------------|
| 2016 – 2017  | Plan development    |
| 2018 onwards | Plan implementation |

| ACTION  | PERFORMANCE MEASURES   |
|---|--|
| <b>A</b> Identify expected pollution levels for at least 6 pilot swimming sites under a range of policy and intervention scenarios using a refined water quality model that integrates sewer and stormwater pollution   | <b>A</b> Project scoped with technical committee; Report developed outlining outcomes of water quality modelling for each pilot swimming site                        |
| <b>B</b> Review the ecological condition of the water and foreshores and develop recommendations for making the river more swimmable for native fauna   | <b>B</b> Project scoped with technical committee; Indicator species and communities identified; Report on ecological condition assessment developed                  |
| <b>C</b> Assess the overall economic benefits of returning the Parramatta River to swimmable conditions, including analysis of productivity of the Parramatta River catchment area, growth projections, and the added value that an activated river and foreshore would have in accelerating renewal and development investment | <b>C</b> Project scoped with technical committee; economic assessment complete and report developed  |
| <b>D</b> Undertake specific community research on preferences and willingness to pay for potential options that could be canvassed within the Master Plan and connect these to possible funding mechanisms  | <b>D</b> Project scoped with technical committee; Survey of community preferences and willingness to pay conducted; report developed                                 |
| <b>E</b> Map the current organisational responsibilities and capacities across the catchment for water-way management and offer alternate options to achieve goals for the river  | <b>E</b> Project scoped with technical committee; Report developed, with clear, graphical representation of responsibilities   |
| <b>F</b> Identify planning opportunities for urban form activation at future swimming sites along the river, focusing on the 6 pilot sites  | <b>F</b> Project scoped with technical committee; Urban form activation plan developed, with landscape design options focussed on each of the 6 pilot swimming sites |
| <b>G</b> Undertake an extensive stakeholder engagement process and develop sustainable partnerships to develop and deliver the Parramatta River Master Plan   | <b>G</b> Engagement activities undertaken; evaluation reports developed  |
| <b>H</b> Rolling together the above projects, develop an evidence-based strategic plan that maps out how to make the Parramatta River swimmable again by 2025, centred around 6 key swimming sites  | <b>H</b> Catchment wide strategic plan developed that maps out how to make Parramatta River swimmable again by 2025, centred around 6 key swimming sites             |

## RESOURCING

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Lead:</b>          | Full time Master Plan project manager for 12 months (provided by Sydney Water) and PRCG Coordinator      |
| <b>Support:</b>       | PRCG Communications Officer  |
| <b>Action A:</b>      | \$200,000 provided by Sydney Water   |
| <b>Actions B – F:</b> | Funding / lead agencies to be determined   |
| <b>Action G:</b>      | Stakeholder engagement officer provided by Sydney Water<br>\$50,000, contributed by PRCG membership fees |

# PLANNING & RESEARCH

## Strategic Action 1.2

Develop a Parramatta River Green Grid to enhance integrated water quality outcomes and improve access to and along the river

## BACKGROUND

Making the Parramatta River swimmable again can provide a huge range of benefits to our communities, including greater liveability, social connections, biodiversity, better public amenities, healthy living, business opportunities and increased property value. Improved access to the river and its tributaries will be key to enabling our communities to realise many of these benefits. The NSW Government's 'A Plan for Growing Sydney' identifies the plan to build a Sydney Green Grid: an interconnected network of Sydney's parks and green spaces. The PRCG will seek resourcing to develop the Green Grid for the Parramatta River catchment area, which integrates transport, development, community outcomes, biodiversity, green cover and water quality improvements in a way that achieves positive outcomes for the river. As population and development rapidly increase over the next 10 years, the Green Grid will form a strategic base for prioritising green space connections across the catchment and help to realise the full benefits of a swimmable river.

## TIMEFRAME

|              |                                   |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2016 – 2018  | Secure resources and develop plan |
| 2018 onwards | Implement plan                    |

| ACTION   | PERFORMANCE MEASURES  |
|--|---|
| <b>A</b> Secure resources to develop Green Grid for the Parramatta River catchment that integrates water quality outcomes with recreational, transport, development and social outcomes across the catchment | <b>A</b> Number of funding applications submitted and/or funding secured  |
| <b>B</b> Engage with relevant land managers to develop a Green Grid Implementation Plan  | <b>B</b> Steering group established, with Terms of Reference, and Parramatta River Green Grid Implementation Plan developed |
| <b>C</b> Implement relevant green infrastructure projects identified within the plan   | <b>C</b> As per monitoring, evaluation and reporting plan developed as part of this project                                 |

## RESOURCING

To be determined



## Strategic Action 2.1

Coordinate quarterly PRCG Full Group and PRCG Officer Meetings and regular Executive Committee meetings to facilitate information sharing and decision making across agencies

## BACKGROUND

The Parramatta River Catchment Group Full Group is the over-arching decision-making body. It will provide strategic direction to the Coordinator, the Executive Committee and the Working Groups. The Full Group is made up of nominated representatives from all member organisations and from nominated community groups that exist within the Parramatta River catchment area. It is empowered to do all things necessary and convenient to implement its mission, aim and objectives.

The Executive Committee acts as the committee of management for the Group, and shall assist in the delivery of the Group's objectives by supporting the Coordinator with the operational functions of the Group.

### TIMEFRAME

|                |                     |
|----------------|---------------------|
| Every 3 months | Full group/officer  |
| Every 2 months | Executive Committee |

### ACTION

A Organise quarterly PRCG Full Group and Officer meetings and bimonthly Executive Committee meetings

### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

A Briefing papers and agenda developed; 4 x meetings held per year; minutes disseminated; number of people attending; actions arising completed

### RESOURCING

Lead: PRCG Coordinator

# COORDINATION

## Strategic Action 2.2

Continue to coordinate PRCG biodiversity subcommittee to enhance priority habitat corridors, help implement the urban Landcare program and encourage more desirable animals to swim in the river

## BACKGROUND

The PRCG biodiversity subcommittee successfully launched the Our Living Catchment Fauna and Habitat Report in 2015, and are now working to enhance priority habitat corridors identified in this report.

### TIMEFRAME

|          |                               |
|----------|-------------------------------|
| Action A | Biannually                    |
| Action B | As identified by subcommittee |

| ACTION   | PERFORMANCE MEASURES  |
|--|---|
| A Coordinate PRCG Biodiversity subcommittee meetings   | A 2 x meetings held per year  |
| B Coordinate implementation of priorities identified by PRCG subcommittee, including i) onground rehabilitation and monitoring of priority habitat corridors; ii) advocating for habitat corridors to be integrated into relevant legislation and planning; iii) promoting 'Being aware about biodiversity' training package to councils | B Sites monitored annually and data collated into centralised database; meetings held and/or letters written to relevant agencies |

### RESOURCING

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Lead:    | PRCG Local Landcare Coordinator                             |
| Support: | PRCG member Councils and Greater Sydney Local Land Services |

## Strategic Action 2.3

### Continue to coordinate PRCG Estuary Management subcommittee to gazette and implement the Parramatta River Coastal Zone Management Plan

## BACKGROUND

The Parramatta River Estuary Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) was completed in 2013 and has been adopted by all agencies with actions within the Plan. The PRCG is nominated as the lead agency to coordinate implementation of the 22 committee actions identified within the plan.

### TIMEFRAME

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Action A | 2016                                      |
| Action B | As determined by Estuary Management Group |

| ACTION   | PERFORMANCE MEASURES  |
|--|---|
| A Coordinate application to the Minister requesting formal gazettal of the CZMP            | A CZMP certified and included in the Local Government gazette |
| B Coordinate implementation of priority actions identified by the Estuary Management Group | B As per Strategic Actions 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 5.1              |

### RESOURCING

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Lead:    | PRCG Coordinator, with nominated annual Chair and minute-taker  |
| Support: | Estuary-based member organisations; Office of Environment and Heritage; Department of Primary Industries; Roads and Maritime Services |



# COORDINATION

## Strategic Action 2.4

### Develop and implement joint compliance and education campaigns to reduce pollution entering the river

## BACKGROUND

While we are developing the Master Plan, there is a range of on ground actions that our member organisations and the community are already doing or can do to improve water quality for swimming. We will form a PRCG compliance subcommittee who will work together to develop and implement joint compliance and education programs to reduce pollution entering the river. This subcommittee is to be made up of EPA and Council officers who are Authorised Officers under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 and have responsibility for the regulation of industry and potential polluters within the Parramatta River Catchment. By doing this, we can deliver greater outcomes for the river than could be achieved by each organisation working independently.

## TIMEFRAME

2016 onwards

| ACTION  | PERFORMANCE MEASURES  |
|---|---|
| <b>A</b> Establish a PRCG subcommittee with nominated members from the EPA and PRCG Councils  | <b>A</b> Subcommittee established, with Terms of Reference  |
| <b>B</b> Through this subcommittee, develop and implement priority joint compliance and education programs, as determined by the subcommittee | <b>B</b> Joint compliance and education programs developed by subcommittee; results and findings of each campaign reported back to the full group upon completion |

## RESOURCING

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>Lead:</b>    | EPA nominated representative; PRCG Coordinator    |
| <b>Support:</b> | Nominated members of PRCG Regulatory subcommittee |

## Strategic Action 2.5

### Review the governance and financial structure of the PRCG following Council amalgamations

## BACKGROUND

As this plan is being written, the NSW Government has announced a proposal to amalgamate many councils across NSW. In this proposal, the number of Councils within the Parramatta River Catchment would reduce from 13 to 7, with only one member Council, Blacktown City Council, not affected by boundary changes. Once the amalgamations take place, a review of the current group structure and membership fees will need to be undertaken.

## TIMEFRAME

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Action A | In preparation for Council amalgamations |
| Action B | Following Council amalgamations          |

| ACTION   | PERFORMANCE MEASURES  |
|--|---|
| A Identify the threats and opportunities to the PRCG in light of impending Council amalgamations                               | A Threats and opportunities identified, in consultation with PRCG officers, and considered in upcoming coordination and advocacy activities |
| B Undertake a review and revision of the current PRCG group structure and membership fees in response to Council amalgamations | B Review undertaken; revised model presented to PRCG Full Group   |

## RESOURCING

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Lead:    | PRCG Coordinator   |
| Support: | PRCG Executive Committee; PRCG officers; PRCG Full Group |

## Strategic Action 3.1

### Advocate and secure funding for priority actions

#### BACKGROUND

The ability to deliver on this plan relies on available resources. While many of the actions within this plan can be completed utilizing available resources obtained through membership funds, partner support or grants awarded, additional resources will need to be leveraged to enable the full plan to be fully implemented.

#### TIMEFRAME

As identified within this Implementation Plan

#### ACTION

A Secure funding and in-kind support for actions within this plan that are not yet resourced

#### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

A Funding and in-kind support obtained

#### RESOURCING

To be determined



## Strategic Action 3.2

Advocate for positive policy changes to infrastructure, planning and environment legislation needed to help make the river swimmable again

### BACKGROUND

Leadership at the State level is needed to facilitate the policy changes necessary to make the river swimmable again. The PRCG will engage with the newly established Greater Sydney Commission and Department of Planning and Environment to encourage relevant State policy and planning documents to reflect the community's desire to make the river swimmable again and enjoy the multiple benefits this can bring.

#### TIMEFRAME

|          |               |
|----------|---------------|
| Action A | February 2016 |
| Action B | Ongoing       |

| ACTION   | PERFORMANCE MEASURES   |
|--|--|
| <b>A</b> Develop a PRCG position paper on key planning and policy issues that need to be addressed to make the river swimmable again                                 | <b>A</b> Position paper developed  |
| <b>B</b> Advocate for NSW Department of Planning and Environment and the Greater Sydney Commission to address key issues strategically at a state coordination level | <b>B</b> Meetings held; advocacy letters written; engagement activities undertaken |

#### RESOURCING

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| Lead: | PRCG Coordinator; Support: PRCG Executive Committee |
|-------|---|

## Strategic Action 3.3

Advocate for a lower wake replacement for the current RiverCat ferry fleet to improve access to and safety of new swimming sites

## BACKGROUND

This outcome was identified in the Parramatta River Estuary Coastal Zone Management Plan, and was prioritized as one of the key issues to advocate for over the next 2 years. It is important that we balance swimming with other recreational demands for the river, including the use of the RiverCats, and that the design of any new ferries reduces the wave impact on future swimming sites.

### TIMEFRAME

Ongoing until RiverCats are replaced

### ACTION

**A** Advocate to the Minister for Transport and Transport for NSW requesting that any new RiverCats along the Parramatta River designed in a way to reduce impacts on the river and future swimming sites

### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

**A** Advocacy and engagement activities undertaken (e.g. letters, submissions, meetings); new river friendly ferries introduced

### RESOURCING

PRCG Coordinator; PRCG estuary-based councils

## Strategic Action 3.4

# Advocate for more integrated management of recreational amenity across jurisdictional boundaries along the river and its tributaries

## BACKGROUND

This outcome was identified within the Parramatta River Estuary Coastal Zone Management Plan and was prioritised as one of the key issues to progress over the next 2 years. To achieve our purpose of making the Parramatta River and its tributaries living waterways for all to enjoy, it is important that we consider the many ways that the community wants to use and interact with our waterways.

### TIMEFRAME

2016 – 2018

| ACTION   | PERFORMANCE MEASURES  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>A</b> Secure resources and undertake a recreational needs analysis for areas of the catchment that currently do not have one</p> | <p><b>A</b> Funding applications developed; resources sourced; needs analysis conducted; strategy developed</p> |
| <p><b>B</b> Advocate for the implementation of recommendations identified in existing strategies (e.g. for Duck River)</p>             | <p><b>B</b> Advocacy and engagement activities undertaken (e.g. submissions, letters, meetings)</p>             |

### RESOURCING

To be determined

# COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

## Strategic Action 4.1

Continue to support capacity building activities for agency staff and other land managers to build the knowledge and skills needed to make the river swimmable again

## BACKGROUND

As the governing authorities over land and water management within the catchment, our member council and agency staff and other land managers will have a critical role in helping to achieve our mission to make the river swimmable again. It is important to invest in resources and training that support these staff in fulfilling this role, and it is more resource efficient to share such resources and training across land managers than for each organisation to be responsible for developing these on their own.

### TIMEFRAME

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Action A | 2016  |
| Action B | Quarterly, and as opportunities arise           |
| Action C | As needs are identified by member organisations |

| ACTION  | PERFORMANCE MEASURES  |
|---|---|
| A Document Council policies and undertake a council needs analysis on Water Sensitive Urban Design  | A Report developed and disseminated; recommendations presented to PRCG Officers                                       |
| B Capture and share onground achievements across member agencies through PRCG officer meetings and other activities                                 | B PRCG officer meeting minutes, annual evaluation survey to identify changing needs and opportunities for improvement |
| C Promote and help coordinate relevant programs and training to member agency staff, as relevant (e.g. Being awareness about Biodiversity training) | C Number of events supported; qualitative feedback from agency staff on activities and events supported               |

### RESOURCING

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Lead:    | PRCG Coordinator<br>Macquarie University 4th year Planning student |
| Support: | PRCG agency staff  |



# COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

## Strategic Action 4.2

Maintain community interest and involvement in making the river swimmable again via the Our Living River communications campaign

## BACKGROUND

The Our Living River communications campaign was launched in December 2014, to build support for the initiative and report publicly on progress. The communications campaign initially revolved around our website at [www.ourlivingriver.com.au](http://www.ourlivingriver.com.au), where people were asked to show their support for the mission by voting for where they want to swim. This was supported by regular updates through media and social media, and the Our Living River e-newsletter, local ambassadors, including sports people, academics, local and State politicians, our PRCG representatives and local community groups, community events, face to face interactions, and the development of brochures, posters, banners, interactive stalls and other promotional and events materials.

More recently, we launched a summer social media campaign to boost our followers and enable us to utilise this communications platform more effectively as we move forwards. We will continue to build support and report on progress through all of these channels going forwards.



## TIMEFRAME

Ongoing, particularly as milestones are achieved

## ACTION

- A** Involve the community in the Our Living River campaign and selection of future swimming sites by voting for where they want to swim along the river
- B** Continue to develop and implement the Our Living River Communications Plan to promote and report on Our Living River outcomes to the community

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- A** Number of votes received for a favourite swimming site
- B** Media articles, e-newsletters, social media engagement, website engagement, face to face contact, events

## RESOURCING

**Lead:** PRCG Communications Officer  
**Support:** PRCG member organisation's marketing and communications staff  
 \$10,000 PRCG membership fees

# COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

## Strategic Action 4.3

Promote and celebrate activities and events along the Parramatta River and its tributaries that connect with the vision of Our Living River

### BACKGROUND

The Parramatta River was once the lifeblood of Sydney, and can be again. We will help promote and celebrate a diverse range of activities and events along the Parramatta River and across the catchment that help to achieve our vision that Sydney deserves a world class river and our purpose to make the Parramatta River a living river.

#### TIMEFRAME

Ongoing

| ACTION  | PERFORMANCE MEASURES  |
|---|---|
| <b>A</b> Support events across the catchment that connect with Our Living River through event materials and display, and promotion via social media, media, our website and e-newsletter, as relevant | <b>A</b> Number and type of events, promotional activities undertaken, level of engagement achieved |

#### RESOURCING

**Lead:** PRCG Communications Officer  
**Support:** Council / agency staff

## Strategic Action 4.4

Establish an Urban Landcare Program that supports existing and new volunteers in undertaking activities that reduce pollution and enhance aquatic biodiversity

### BACKGROUND

Without the efforts of thousands of volunteers each year, the river and its catchment would not be in the condition that it is today. To make the river swimmable again, we need to support a range of volunteer activities as well as educate the broader community in how they can help improve the health of the river. We will build an urban Landcare program across the Parramatta River that supports new and existing activities and groups that together can help make significant improvements to the health of the river. Such a program will link closely with the other workstreams outlined above, to demonstrate how urban Landcare activities contribute to the combined effort of making the river swimmable again. This program will also incorporate and provide support to the Our Living Catchment Fauna and Habitat program that continues to be implemented by the PRCG Biodiversity subcommittee. This program is currently supported by the NSW Government Local Landcare Initiative until June 2019.

### TIMEFRAME

Until June 2019

| ACTION   | PERFORMANCE MEASURES   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>A</b> Research examples of successful urban Landcare activities elsewhere</p> <p><b>B</b> Synthesise and evaluating the success of past and present activities within the catchment</p> <p><b>C</b> Map current interest groups across the catchment and preferred engagement and support methods for each</p> | <p><b>A – C</b> Education and engagement strategy targeting key groups developed in line with a detailed Monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework as part of this funding initiative</p> |
| <p><b>D</b> Develop and secure resources, as needed, for key projects</p>  | <p><b>D</b> Level of funding and in-kind support secured</p>   |

### RESOURCING

**Lead:** PRCG Local Landcare Coordinator, supported by NSW Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative  
**Support:** Biodiversity subcommittee and PRCG community representatives.  
 Funds to be identified for specific projects, as they are prioritised



# MONITORING & REPORTING

## Strategic Action 5.1

Establish a Riverwatch monitoring program to report on the past, present and future state of the river as it relates to swimming

## BACKGROUND

A range of water quality monitoring projects have been undertaken along the Parramatta River and its tributaries over the years by many agencies. These projects have been undertaken for different purposes using a large variety of sampling techniques. There has never been a catchment-wide, holistic monitoring program for the river. Such a program is critical to enabling us to strategically focus our management efforts, as well as to report publicly to our community on where and when they can swim.

### TIMEFRAME

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Action A-C | 2016 – business case developed and first season of monitoring commenced |
| Action D   | 2017-18 – ongoing Riverwatch monitoring program established             |

| ACTION  | PERFORMANCE MEASURES  |
|---|---|
| A Undertake a comprehensive literature review and identify key water quality indicators for swimming    | A Literature review completed and key water quality indicators identified |
| B Establish a baseline of past and present water quality as it relates to swimming                      | B Baseline narrative prepared, with associated catchment scorecard        |
| C Develop a business case for a future Riverwatch monitoring program                                    | C Business case developed   |
| D Engage State government to establish an ongoing Riverwatch program for the Parramatta River catchment | D Ongoing Riverwatch program resourced and commenced                      |

### RESOURCING

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Action A-C |  |
| Lead:      | PRCG Coordinator and Executive Committee member  |
|            | Project management, coordination and reporting by PRCG staff; \$34,000 provided by Sydney Water and the Councils of Ashfield, Canada Bay, Hunters Hill, Leichhardt, Parramatta and Ryde; in-kind contributions of data and expertise from other PRCG members |
| Action D   | NSW OEH and other PRCG partners as determined by business case   |

## Strategic Action 5.2

### Report on progress towards the PRCG Strategic Plan to our stakeholders and the community

## BACKGROUND

It is important to track progress and report regularly to all of our stakeholders and community on progress being made, to maintain the momentum towards achieving our mission and make improvements as needed.

### TIMEFRAME

|          |                                |
|----------|--------------------------------|
| Action A | Annually                       |
| Action B | As key milestones are achieved |
| Action C | Plan update - 2018             |

| ACTION   | PERFORMANCE MEASURES   |
|--|--|
| A Develop an annual report on progress towards this PRCG Strategic Plan and disseminate to key PRCG stakeholders | A Report developed and disseminated to all PRCG full group members |
| B Report key milestones to the community via PRCG communications channels  | B Media, social media and e-newsletter engagement and website hits |
| C Review and update PRCG Strategic Plan following completion of the Parramatta River Master Plan                 | C PRCG Strategic Plan updated                                      |

### RESOURCING

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Lead:                | PRCG Coordinator and Communications officer  |
| In-kind:             | PRCG member Marketing & Communications teams |
| Design and printing: | \$5,000 PRCG Membership fees                 |

## PART 4: RESOURCING THE PLAN

The ability to deliver this plan relies on available resources. The following table outlines the resources committed, as at January 2016, to deliver on actions within the plan over the next 2 years. Additional resources will need to be leveraged to enable the plan to be fully implemented\*.

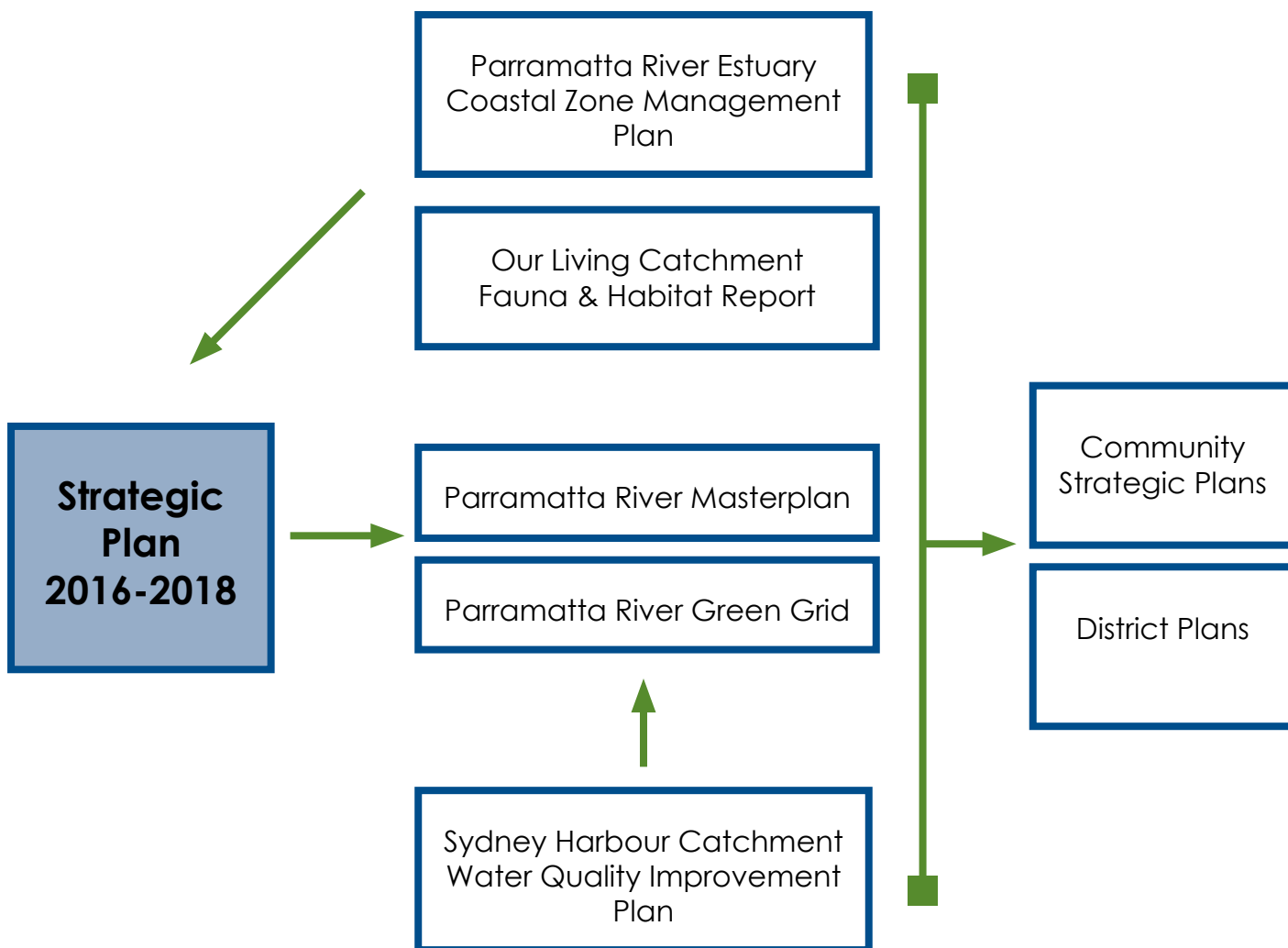
| Purpose of Funds  | Amount Committed<br>(ex GST)  | Funded by   |
|---|---|---|
| PRCG membership fees 2015-2016  | \$122,392   | All PRCG financial members  |
| Projected PRCG membership fees 2016-17                                | \$238,961   | All PRCG financial members  |
| Projected PRCG membership fees 2017-18                                | \$245,174   | All PRCG financial members  |
| Strategic analysis of water quality in the Parramatta River Catchment | \$38,000  | PRCG foreshore (Ashfield, Auburn, City of Canada Bay, City of Ryde, Hunters Hill, Leichhardt and Parramatta) and Sydney Water |
| Parramatta River Masterplan   | Up to \$200,000 plus in-kind contribution of one full time project manager for 12 months, and one stakeholder engagement manager for 6 months | Sydney Water  |
| Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative                                 | \$175,000, in \$50,000 per year installments until June 2019  | NSW Government  |

\* The NSW Minister for Planning, The Honourable Rob Stokes, has publicly announced his government's support for our mission to make the river swimmable again and confirmed this commitment in writing, and we have received written commitment from NSW Minister for the Environment, The Honourable Mark Speakman, that he will support the establishment of a Riverwatch Program for the Parramatta River. It is therefore anticipated that additional support will be forthcoming to fully implement this Strategic Plan.



## PART 5: ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER PLANS

This Strategic Plan interacts with a range of other local and regional plans, including the incorporation of key actions identified within the Parramatta River Estuary Coastal Zone Management Plan and the Our Living Catchment Fauna and Habitat Report for 2016 to 2018. Its implementation will see to the production of the Parramatta River Masterplan and Parramatta River Green Grid, providing regional context and priorities suitable for adoption into Community Strategic and District Plans.







# LET'S MAKE OUR RIVER SWIMMABLE AGAIN BY 2025



[ourlivingriver.com.au](http://ourlivingriver.com.au)