

Under Embargo: 10:00am 18 October, 2018

Swimming into the future: Parramatta River Masterplan reveals three new swimming sites

- *Ten Steps to a Living River*, the cornerstone of the Parramatta River Masterplan, launches today at Putney Park.
- The plan outlines Sydney's ambition to join world-class rivers such as Copenhagen, Berlin, London and New York.
- Swimming sites at Putney Park, Mcllwaine Park in Rhodes East and Bayview Park in Concord to open by 2025.
- In 2017, Parramatta had 22 (460%) more days above 35 degrees Celsius than it did in 1967.
- Parramatta had 16 (230%) more days above 35 degrees Celsius than Sydney CBD did in the same year.

Thursday 18 October, 2018: The Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) has launched the Parramatta River Masterplan to the public today in Putney Park, including the announcement of three new swimming sites by 2025.

The Masterplan sets out agreed actions to make the Parramatta River a world-class, swimmable river again, based on scientific studies and community consultation, and centred on *Ten Steps to a Living River*.

PRCG Chair and Councillor Mark Drury said, "We are proud to announce the new swimming locations of Putney Park, Mcllwaine Park in Rhodes East and Bayview Park in Concord to open by 2025, joining current swimming sites at Cabarita Park beach, Chiswick Baths, Dawn Fraser Baths and Lake Parramatta."

Nine other sites are still under consideration for the future, increasing options for swimmability in years to come for the Central Sydney region.

"With this year on track to be among the five hottest years since records began 120 years ago, and experts projecting the trend to continue, the announcement will be a welcome relief for our growing population who might otherwise need to travel longer distances to cool off," Cllr Drury said.

The Parramatta River catchment area is currently home to over 750,000 residents, with significant infrastructure development around the river underway and an expected 64% increase in high density residential development by 2025.

The Greater Sydney Commission's Environment Commissioner Rod Simpson said, "The health of the river has been improving over the last few decades, but if we don't act now, the new pressures placed on Sydney's infrastructure will likely see the river degrade. Water quality modelling by the Parramatta River Catchment Group and Sydney Water shows that water quality can be further improved, even with predicted development in the catchment, with additional management interventions."

"This is why the Masterplan has been developed and a comprehensive management plan is needed: to plan for the required works, with a commitment to ongoing monitoring to give the public confidence about water quality. The Parramatta River is the heart of the Central River City: a home for nature and an oasis for the millions of people who live near it."

Cllr Drury explained the Masterplan is only the beginning.

"We all have a role in making the river swimmable again, so good management of building sites, picking up your dog's droppings and not littering are just three ways community can help create a swimmable river," said Cllr Drury. "35 agencies and over 15,000 people have had input into the many stages of this visionary plan, to ensure that it provides real outcomes for our local communities".

The PRCG is an alliance of councils, government agencies and community groups, who, through the *Our Living River* initiative, is working together to make the Parramatta River swimmable again by 2025. The Masterplan is being delivered as a collaborative effort across all agencies, led by Sydney Water.

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Key highlights

- In 2017, Parramatta had 460% (22) more days above 35°C than it did in 1967.
- In 2017, Parramatta had 230% (16) more days above 35°C than Sydney CBD did in the same year.
- Three new swimming locations will be opened by 2025, joining current swimming sites at Cabarita Park beach, Chiswick Baths, Dawn Fraser Baths and Lake Parramatta.
- Nine other sites on the river are still under consideration for the future.
- The total area of the **catchment** is 257 square kilometres and the total length of waterways in the catchment is 222.4 kilometres.
- The catchment spans 11 local government areas: Blacktown, Burwood, Canada Bay, Canterbury Bankstown, Cumberland, Hunters Hill, Inner West, Parramatta, Ryde, Strathfield and The Hills Shire. These councils have all been directly involved in the Masterplan development.
- Development is booming at an unprecedented rate, with high and medium density housing predicted to increase by 64% and 58% respectively by 2025. Science shows that water quality can be improved, even with this predicted development, but additional management beyond the current Business as Usual will be needed. *Ten Steps to a Living River* is the cornerstone of the Parramatta River Masterplan, which articulates the changes needed to secure the future of the Parramatta River and creeks that flow into it for generations to come. For access to the full report <http://www.ourlivingriver.com.au/>
- This ten-step Masterplan has had input from 35 agencies and more than 15,000 community members in its many stages.
- The Masterplan is being launched in line with the International Rivers *symposium*, 14-17 October, being held in Sydney for the first time. The symposium provides an international forum for examining best practice in river and watershed management.
- The Masterplan launch will also form part of Riverfest! 2018, a 10-day series of events and activities on and around the Parramatta River, from 12-21 October.

Interview and photo opportunities

- PRCG Chair, Mark Drury
- Mayor, City of Ryde, Jerome Laxale or Mayor, City of Canada Bay, Angelo Tsirekas
- Dr Ian Wright, water quality expert, Western Sydney University
- Riverkeepers – Joanne Taranto, Cathy Merchant, Charlene Bordley
- Environment Commissioner/Urban Designer, Rod Simpson
- Members of the public who can speak to their excitement for the new swimming sites and their use of the current swimming sites.

Assets available:

- Rendered visualisations of the new swimming sites
- B-roll vision
- Images from Putney Park launch.

Additional photo opportunities:

Riverfest!: Riverfest! is the premier annual community festival for *Our Living River*, from Friday, 12 October and Sunday, 21 October, which celebrates the Parramatta River and all of our local waterways that flow into it. Fourteen events are already planned as part of Riverfest!, including cycling tours, a river cruise, tree planting, kids' art and nature workshops, litter clean-ups, a bus tour and even park yoga! Riverfest! events' information can be found at:

<http://www.ourlivingriver.com.au/blog/2018-riverfest/>

About Our Living River

The *Our Living River* initiative is being delivered by the Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG). The PRCG is an alliance of councils, State Government agencies and community groups who are working together to improve the Parramatta River and the creeks that flow into it. Members include: Blacktown City Council, Burwood Council, City of Canterbury-Bankstown Council, City of Canada Bay Council, Cumberland Council, Hunters Hill Council, Inner West Council, City of Parramatta Council, City of Ryde Council, Strathfield Municipal Council, Department of Planning and Environment, Environment Protection Authority and Sydney Water. For more go to: www.ourlivingriver.com.au

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