

BECOME RIVER AWARE



LET'S MAKE OUR RIVER
SWIMMABLE AGAIN BY
2025





What is a catchment?

Rivers are naturally flowing waterways that play a very important part in our environment. The house and street where you live is in a river catchment – an area of land where water flows and collects when it rains. Even if you can't see them, rivers are extensions of our neighbourhoods.



What is stormwater?

Every drop of rain that falls on our streets and doesn't soak into the ground, ends up in the gutter as stormwater. It then runs through an underground system of pipes and eventually flows directly into the river, untreated. As it runs over roofs, paths and gutters it picks up and carries with it any pollutants it comes into contact with. The faster water moves on hard surfaces, the more particles it can pick up along the way. Fast moving water can also be a cause of erosion, flooding and poorer water quality.



What is wastewater?

Wastewater is the used water that goes down sinks, toilets and drains. This water is taken to a wastewater treatment plant and does not go directly to the river system. However, if the pipes that carry this water become blocked, cracked or damaged, they can cause an overflow of sewage into our homes, yards and rivers. Stormwater plumbed into sewerage systems can also cause sewage overflows.



What sort of things pollute the river?

- 💧 Fertilisers and chemicals
- 💧 Pet waste
- 💧 Detergents, oils and paints
- 💧 Fine particles you can't always see like microplastics
- 💧 Garden waste like grass, mulch and soil
- 💧 Rubbish and litter
- 💧 Untreated sewage overflow when there are blocked pipes.



What happens when a river is polluted?

Water that is polluted can look and smell bad. It can be unsafe for people to swim in or go near and can harm the things that live in the river.

RIVER AWARE

A living river reflects a healthy community and benefits our well-being and lifestyle. We all have a role to play in protecting our waterways. There are five simple actions we can do to help make our environment clean and safe for everyone to enjoy:



Keep garden materials away from wind and rain

- Sweep or blow leaves and dirt from driveways and curbs back onto garden beds or place into a bin
- Use a catcher when you mow
- Cover piles of dirt or mulch that could blow or wash away
- Never dump garden waste into drains, creeks or bushland



Grass clippings that end up in our waterways contribute to algal growth, depriving other marine animal and plant life of oxygen.



Picking up pet waste stops nasties washing away

- Carry pet waste bags when walking the dog or use bag dispensers at local parks
- Place bagged pet waste into the bin



Pet waste contains harmful bacteria and parasites that can spread diseases and cause serious illness in humans.



**COME
CLEAN**

Wipes, tissues, nappies and hygiene waste all belong in the bin

- Place a bin in the bathroom at home or use sanitary bins in public toilets
- Never flush wet or 'flushable' wipes down the toilet
- Never flush anything from a fish tank down the toilet



Waste products can clog drains and cause wastewater to back up and overflow into homes, backyards and local waterways.



**DO IT
ON YOUR
LAWN**

Washing a car this way will keep fine particles and soap out of the river

- Wash your car on the grass or use a commercial car wash
- Use a low phosphorus detergent sparingly



Detergents washed down stormwater drains can be harmful to marine animal and plant life.

KEEP IT CLEAR



The drain is for just for water – chemicals, oils, paints and litter don't belong here

- Store chemicals in closed, labelled containers
- Drop off old or unused chemicals to Community Recycling Centres
- Call Sydney Water immediately on 13 20 92 if you see water where it shouldn't be
- Check and maintain old and cracked pipes regularly using a licensed plumber
- Always pick up litter from parks and the street curb or verge
- Pick up any litter that has fallen on the ground after bin collection



Chemicals and microplastics can build up in marine organisms, harming them and the animals that feed on them, including us.



Everything we do in our homes, backyards, schools, workplaces and parks can affect the quality of water that runs off our streets and ends up in our local creeks and rivers.

Take the 'River Aware' pledge today to help make our waterways clean and safe for everyone to enjoy.

To find out more visit:

www.ourlivingriver.com.au/riveraware



Parramatta River
Catchment Group



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