

Media Release

6 March 2023

Parramatta River Catchment Group welcomes confirmation of new river swim site at Callan Park

The Parramatta River Catchment Group's (PRCG) vision to make the Parramatta River swimmable again has progressed further following last week's announcement by Inner West Council committing to the development of the Callan Park Tidal Pool in Lilyfield.

The new swim site will be located on the western side of Callan Point, adjacent to the Waterfront Drive Sporting Ground. The proposal includes a fifty-metre pool incorporating swimming lanes, an extensive jetty and two moored pontoons. The west Callan Point seawall will also undergo an ecological restoration.

Council has undertaken two years of extensive water quality monitoring, environmental impact research, river depth and floor quality testing to ensure the site is safe for community use.

The original tidal baths were located near the site of the existing Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre and operated from 1905 to 1958.

The announcement comes just four months after the City of Canada Bay reopened Bayview Park Baths in Concord after being closed for more than 50 years. Hundreds of local residents and visitors have taken advantage of the new swim site to cool off during the recent warm weather.

The reintroduction of river swimming at Callan Point is the culmination of years of research and planning by the PRCG to improve the health of the Parramatta River. In 2018 the PRCG launched a ten-step masterplan working closely with Sydney Water and our other partner councils and state government agencies to address different aspects of ecological and waterway health, in areas such as stormwater management, litter prevention, water sensitive urban design, and land-use planning.

PRCG Chair, Councillor Mark Drury, said that Inner West Council's commitment to progress the swim site at Callan Point is another key milestone in the mission to make the Parramatta River swimmable again by 2025.

"We've seen the high level of community interest in natural swimming spots following the opening of Bayview Park Baths last year and at Marrinawi Cove at Barangaroo, more recently," Cr Drury said.

"With average temperatures in Sydney expected to rise by three degrees over the next few decades, the need for more natural places for people and wildlife to escape the heat will be even more important."

Three more sites are targeted for swimming on the Parramatta River in the next few years: Bedlam Bay, (Gladesville), McIlwaine Park (Rhodes), and Putney Park (Putney). These add to the existing sites at Cabarita Park beach, Chiswick Baths, and Dawn Fraser Baths in Balmain.

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About the PRCG

The PRCG is an alliance of local and state government agencies and community groups that are working together to improve health of the Parramatta River and its tributaries. Members include: Blacktown City Council, Burwood Council, City of Canterbury-Bankstown Council, City of Canada Bay Council, City of Parramatta Council, City of Ryde Council, Cumberland City Council, Hunter's Hill Council, Inner West Council, Strathfield Municipal Council, Sydney Water, Department of Planning and Environment, and Environment Protection Authority. For more information visit: www.ourlivingriver.com.au.

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