

PARRAMATTA RIVER CATCHMENT GROUP

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



**Parramatta River**  
Catchment Group



**LET'S MAKE OUR RIVER  
SWIMMABLE AGAIN BY  
2025**



## RECOGNITION OF THE RIVER'S TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways within the Parramatta River catchment and extend our deepest respects to their Elders, both past and present.

We recognise and honour the rich and enduring cultures, beliefs, and traditions of First Nations peoples, who have maintained a profound connection to Country for thousands of years. Their knowledge and wisdom are invaluable to improving the health of this land and its waterways.

We celebrate the ongoing contributions of First Nations communities to the cultural and social fabric of our region. Their insights and practices play a crucial role in enhancing our understanding of sustainability and environmental stewardship.

This land is, was, and always will be Aboriginal land. We are committed to fostering respectful relationships that honour this legacy and support the ongoing vitality of First Nations cultures.

Illustrations created by Leanne Watson Redpath

## PARRAMATTA RIVER CATCHMENT GROUP

The Parramatta River Catchment Group is a member-based alliance of local and state government agencies and community groups that are collaborating to restore the health of the Parramatta River and create vibrant, natural spaces for the community and wildlife to thrive.

The *Our Living River* initiative, launched in 2014, established a new vision, purpose and mission:

- We believe Sydney deserves a world-class river
- To make Parramatta River a living river
- To make Parramatta River swimmable by 2025.

In 2018 we released *DUBA, BUDU, BARRA: Ten Steps to a Living River – the Parramatta River Masterplan*. This 10-step plan outlines the actions needed to improve the waterway and ecological health of the catchment, focusing on stormwater management, community engagement, litter prevention, water-sensitive urban design, and land-use planning. The plan also seeks to raise awareness of First Nations history and culture, incorporate traditional knowledge into planning, and strengthen leadership in catchment management.

### FINANCIAL MEMBERS



### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS AND OTHER KEY CONTRIBUTORS





## A WORD FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON



The 2024-25 financial year has been a dynamic and productive period for the Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG), with new leadership, stronger partnerships, and significant progress toward making the river swimmable.

In July, the PRCG began a new chapter with its relocation to Inner West Council as host agency where staff will be based for the next five years. We welcomed Alexi Gilchrist as Coordinator and Camila Driberg as Riverkeeper, along with the return of Nadia Young in the new role of Senior Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Officer, and Angela Dunnett as Stormwater Compliance and Education Engagement Officer. This team has provided renewed energy and direction for our programs and strategic goals.

Our September Riverfest celebration showcased a variety of community events, including our flagship World Rivers Day gathering at Parramatta Park, a webinar on revitalising urban rivers, litter clean-ups, workshops, and talks.

In October, we were proud to be recognised at the Keep Australia Beautiful Awards for the Our Living River mission and the Designing with Country Framework. In December, we welcomed Melissa Cate Christ to the team as Project Officer for the Bank Naturalisation and Planning of Priority Corridors project.

The start of 2025 saw the successful opening of the new swim site at Putney Beach, an event well-attended by community members and council representatives.

At our March Full Group meeting, I was proud to be elected as Chairperson of the PRCG, joined by Councillor Kerrie Fergusson of Inner West Council as Vice Chairperson.

This year's *Get the Site Right* campaign saw continued strong participation, underscoring the importance of collaboration between councils, agencies, and industry to prevent runoff from polluting waterways. The blitzes were better aligned with other council inspections and supported by new educational resources.

In April, we joined the Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP for the announcement of federal funding for a new swim site at Cockatoo Island. The PRCG was also featured as a case study in the Resilient Sydney Strategy 2025-30, further demonstrating our role in shaping urban waterway resilience.

Looking ahead, we are preparing for the official opening of Bedlam Bay in late 2025 – achieving our goal of three new swim sites by the end of the year. We are also commencing a review of the Parramatta River Masterplan and the development of a new strategic plan to guide the next phase of our work.

I thank our member agencies and supporters for their ongoing commitment and look forward to leading the PRCG into its next chapter as we continue working together to build a more liveable and resilient river catchment.

**Councillor Penny Pedersen**  
Chairperson  
Parramatta River Catchment Group

## 2024-25 AT A GLANCE



New PRCG team commences at new host organisation, Inner West Council.



New Chairperson, Cr Penny Pedersen (City of Ryde), and Vice Chairperson, Cr Kerrie Fergusson (Inner West Council).



\$80K NSW EPA Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy grant to develop integrated litter roadmap.



2 Keep Australia Beautiful NSW Sustainable Cities Awards.



30+ community and stakeholder engagement events and activities.



Putney Beach swim site officially opened on 17 January 2025.



Federal government commits \$10.2M for a proposed swim site on Cockatoo Island/Wareamah.



Our Living River initiative featured as a case study in the Resilient Sydney Strategy 2025-30.





## KEY PROJECTS, CAMPAIGNS, AND EVENTS

### Parramatta River Bank Naturalisation and Planning of Priority Corridors project

The Parramatta River Bank Naturalisation and Planning of Priority Corridors project is a three-year, \$1 million funded initiative aimed at enhancing riparian areas in the Parramatta River catchment. Its goals include developing policies to protect existing vegetation, identifying priority revegetation sites, and implementing on-ground works.

Stage 1 was completed in August 2024 with the completion of the prioritisation framework and shortlist of priority sites by Civile, in collaboration with the project working group.



Consultation with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water in late 2024 established that the project funding is sufficient to produce shovel-ready concepts, and one to two small-scale capital works projects.

A part-time Bank Naturalisation Project Officer commenced in December 2024 who has facilitated consultation with member councils to further refine and identify scope of works for the shortlist of sites (to six). Procurement is currently underway to engage a consultant for concept and detailed designs. These outcomes offer councils a unique opportunity to identify and plan restoration works for future grant funding.



### Stormwater Compliance and Education Program

The Stormwater Compliance and Education Program focuses on improving stormwater management, building council capacity, strengthening litter prevention, and expanding the reach of the Get the Site Right campaign.

Key actions this year included the distribution of stormwater maintenance guidelines to councils and contractors, delivery of the PRCG Stormwater Subcommittee Roadshow to identify current council stormwater management practices, and development of a Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) Maintenance Compliance Framework.

Work also began on the WSUD Uplift Project as part of Step 4 – Standardise the Standards to streamline planning controls, embed water quality targets, and support consistent compliance and education around WSUD.

The PRCG secured \$80,000 through the NSW EPA's Waste and Sustainable Materials (WASM) Grant to develop an Integrated Litter Roadmap, aiming to align with NSW litter reduction targets and support future strategic funding. A consultant will be engaged to lead the roadmap development in 2025-26.

*Images: (Left) Staff inspect one of the shortlisted creeks; (Above) Angela Dunnett talks to Inner West residents about the impact of stormwater runoff.*

### Coastal Management Program

Following the 2023 decision to split the Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program, the PRCG is progressing a Coastal Management Program (CMP) for the Parramatta and Lane Cove River catchments. The CMP aims to manage coastal zones by addressing hazards, protecting natural and cultural values, supporting sustainable growth, and building resilience to climate

change and population growth. It also strengthens agency collaboration and improves access to funding.

Five councils, including Lane Cove, have expressed interest in participating, with the City of Parramatta nominated as the Delivery Partner. A working group has been established, a draft Memorandum of Understanding prepared, and a draft funding application is being finalised for circulation.



### Get the Site Right

The Get the Site Right campaign aims to reduce sediment-laden runoff entering waterways by improving erosion and sediment control compliance on construction sites across NSW.

Jointly delivered by the Parramatta River Catchment Group, Cooks River Alliance, Georges Riverkeeper, Sydney Coastal Councils Group, WaterNSW, and the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), the campaign includes two inspection blitzes each year, during which councils and the EPA conduct site visits and take enforcement action where needed.

During the October 2024 blitz, 748 sites were inspected, with 56.4% found compliant by the end of the campaign. Councils issued \$357,410 in fines for compliance breaches, including poor sediment controls and unsecured building waste.

In 2025, the blitzes were moved to March and August to better align with other council inspection schedules.

Twenty councils and the EPA participated in the month-long blitz in March, inspecting 867 sites and recording a compliance rate of 48.3 per cent. More than 70 penalty notices were issued, totalling \$404,780 for breaches such as tracking sediment off the site and poor stockpile controls.



With more than 20 councils now regularly participating in Get the Site Right, a memorandum of understanding was introduced to formalise involvement and improve reporting of data. New resources were also developed, including a site maintenance checklist, a customisable educational flipchart with local imagery, and an information leaflet for home builders and renovators.

*Images: (Left) Council regulatory staff conduct a site inspection; (Above) Example of poor erosion and sediment controls.*





### Mcllwaine Park upgrade

In 2024–25, the Parramatta River Catchment Group contributed to a series of interpretive signs installed at Mcllwaine Park, Rhodes, as part of the City of Canada Bay's \$1.6 million upgrade.

Officially opened in early 2025, the project enhanced existing community facilities, including a playground, barbecue shelters, an amenities building, and a refurbished Putt-Putt course – complementing earlier upgrades in 2023 such as the discovery rockpools, saltmarsh area, and sandy beach.

The PRCG collaborated with Council on three foreshore panels highlighting the area's cultural, environmental, and ecological significance. The signs share stories of the Parramatta River's First Nations history, colonial heritage, and local biodiversity, while promoting the importance of foreshore restoration for the long-term health of the river.

The signs help inform and engage the community, fostering a stronger connection to the river and encouraging care for this revitalised natural space.

### Resilient Sydney Strategy

In April 2025, the Parramatta River Catchment Group joined the City of Ryde and Sydney Water at the launch of the Resilient Sydney Strategy 2025–2030.

The strategy presents a regional vision to build resilience through collaboration, equity, sustainability, and preparedness. It highlights the importance of green and blue spaces in supporting liveability, Caring for Country, and environmental stewardship.

Developed with input from over 30 councils, including all 10 PRCG member councils, and organisations such as Sydney Water, the strategy features the PRCG's work to restore the Parramatta River as a case study.



### Durumbura Dhurabang Project

Over the past year, the PRCG participated in the Durumbura Dhurabang project stakeholder workshops led by Dr Jo Anne Rey from Macquarie University. The workshops explored the formation of a Dharug, women-led catchment group for the Lane Cove River and collaborative research projects, and the restoration of cultural fire practices in Lane Cove National Park. There was also an opportunity to discuss ways the PRCG could support waterway health outcomes in the Lane Cove River catchment.



### Australian Museum exhibition

The PRCG was invited to take part in the *About the Future Now* exhibition at the Australian Museum, highlighting local efforts for a sustainable future. Riverkeeper Camila Drieberg and Ambassador Julia Strykowski shared their stories through digital portraits and personal narratives. The exhibition also featured dioramas showcasing innovative climate solutions. Camila later joined a panel discussion at the Museum to speak about PRCG's work and engage with the audience on the importance of healthy urban waterways.

*Images: (Clockwise from left) Adriana Genova and Kylie McMahon (City of Ryde), Nadia Young (PRCG), and Caleb Ferry (Sydney Water) at the Resilient Sydney Strategy launch; Petrina Nelson (City of Canada Bay), Nadia Young, Alexi Gilchrist, and Camila Drieberg (PRCG) at the Mcllwaine Park upgrade opening; 'About the Future Now' exhibition participants; Swimmable Cities Summit delegates.*



### Right to Swim and Rights of Nature movements

During 2024–25, the PRCG has deepened its engagement in the global Right to Swim and Rights of Nature movements. In July, the PRCG joined Sydney Water and over 30 global founding signatories for the official launch of the Swimmable Cities Charter. The initiative promotes the right to swim, urban swimming culture, and the sacredness of water.

As part of Riverfest in September, the PRCG hosted a webinar with speakers from Swimmable Birrarung and Regen Melbourne, showcasing efforts to revive river swimming across Australia and globally. Ongoing engagement with the Birrarung Council in Melbourne has also offered valuable insights into the recognition of the Birrarung Yarra River as a living entity under the Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017.

The PRCG participated in the First Nations Water Forum in March, hosted by Greater Sydney Local Land Services and Western Sydney University, where discussions centred on First Laws, the Rights of Nature, and water's cultural and spiritual significance.

In June, the PRCG Coordinator Alexi Gilchrist attended the Swimmable Cities Summit in Rotterdam while on leave, joining over 200 delegates from over 20 countries to share ideas and explore solutions for making urban rivers clean, swimmable, and central to city life.



# PARRAMATTA RIVER MASTERPLAN UPDATE



## STEP 1: GET SWIMMING

This step focuses on maintaining, enhancing, and promoting existing swimming spots on the Parramatta River. City of Parramatta completed upgrade works at Lake Parramatta, funded by a \$905,000 NSW Government Places to Swim grant.

The site reopened on 25 October 2024 with improvements including a gently sloping entry, handrails, and a new lifeguard viewing platform. An automatic water quality warning system was also installed, which uses rainfall data to monitor water conditions. This system feeds real-time updates to the City of Parramatta website to keep visitors informed.

## STEP 2: KEEP WATCH

The aim of this step is to implement a comprehensive water quality monitoring program to ensure the safety and swimmability of the Parramatta River. Sydney Water's RiverWatch™ supports councils to monitor water quality and provide daily forecasts using predictive models for each of the three priority swim sites at Bayview Park, Bedlam Bay, and Putney Beach. Callan Park is monitored separately by NSW Beachwatch.

Each site was monitored for over 12 months before construction began to ensure it was safe for swimming. Water quality forecasts have been online since 2022 for Bayview Park Baths and 2024 for Putney Beach, with Bedlam Bay's model in development for release ahead of its late 2025 launch.



## STEP 3: CREATE NEW SWIM SITES

This step focuses on increasing designated swim sites along the Parramatta River. This year's highlight was the opening of Putney Beach in January (see full report on page 14).

Hunter's Hill Council has completed construction of the Bedlam Bay enclosure, and is undertaking further site upgrades to improve accessibility prior to the opening.

Inner West Council progressed the Callan Park Tidal Baths, finalising the concept design and development application, and is working with Sydney Water to assess potential swim site locations at Mort Bay.

Following the federal government's announcement committing \$10.2 million for a swim site at Cockatoo Island/Wareamah, the PRCG has resumed discussions with the Harbour Trust to support its delivery.

*Images: (Top left) Upgraded Lake Parramatta; (Above) Water Quality Analyst Laura Morsillo from Sydney Water tests the water at Mort Bay.*



## STEP 4: STANDARDISE THE STANDARDS

Step 4 aims to establish consistent land-use policies and planning mechanisms across the entire Parramatta River catchment. Over the past year, the Blue Green Index was piloted as part of an urban renewal project being undertaken by the DPHI Property and Development Group's at the confluence of Darling Mills and Toongabbie Creeks in North Parramatta. Additional work involved consulting on a pilot project to implement WSUD Compliance and Maintenance Frameworks at Inner West Council.

## STEP 5: REDUCE STORMWATER RUNOFF

This step focuses on reducing the impact of stormwater on the health and swimmability of the Parramatta River. In 2024-25, the PRCG worked closely with the Stormwater Subcommittee to advance several initiatives through the Stormwater Compliance and Education Program.

The Stormwater Roadshow brought together member councils, Sydney Olympic Park Authority, and Maritime Services to identify local priorities and key challenges in managing WSUD (Water Sensitive Urban Design) assets.

Sydney Water hosted a WSUD project bus tour for council and catchment staff, while PRCG developed a WSUD fact sheet and is partnering with Inner West Council on a pilot program to support education around WSUD maintenance. The PRCG also supported

a Stormwater NSW webinar on erosion and sediment control in November 2024.

Sydney Water and the PRCG co-authored a paper for the Ozwater'25 Conference titled *Yarra v Parra*, comparing Sydney and Melbourne's approaches to reconnect people with their urban rivers. The paper was presented at the conference in May by Nerida Taylor (Sydney Water) and Matt Sykes (Regen Melbourne).



*Images: (Top) Nerida Taylor (Sydney Water) and Alexi Gilchrist (PRCG) at the Ozwater'25 Conference; (Above) Sydney Water bus tour participants at Powells Creek, North Strathfield.*

## COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

- 30+ community and stakeholder events
- 19 media items
- 3,423 followers across social media channels; 23 posts per month (averaged); 8% average engagement rate per post
- 746 e-newsletter subscribers
- Our Living River website: 18,000 users, 13,034 engaged sessions, 56,621 page views, 3.1 page views per user
- 282 Riverkeeper Network Facebook followers
- 3 Riverkeeper Ambassadors
- 19 Associate Organisations



## STEP 6: IMPROVE OVERFLOWS

The aim of this step is to reduce wet weather overflows from the wastewater network, to support swimming in the river. A key achievement this year was the completion of Sydney Water's three-stage work program to reduce the volume of stormwater entering the wastewater network. This reduces the likelihood of overflows occurring when it rains.

Within the upper and mid Parramatta River catchments, the program involved repairing 575 manholes and 200 emergency relief structures, relining 17km of pipes, and smoke testing and rectification of illegal sewer connections on properties.



## STEP 7: INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY

This step focuses on encouraging community engagement in activities aimed at reducing pollution and improving the health of the Parramatta River.

This year's Riverfest featured a wide range of activities (see full report on page 18). We also supported key community events such as Clean Up Australia Day, the Ryde Sustainability Festival, and North Parramatta Heritage Day.



For the third consecutive year, we partnered with UNSW and Inner West Council to support first-year landscape design students in developing concept designs for potential swim sites.

Our coordination of the Parramatta River and Waterways Network (PRAWN) continued through quarterly meetings and site visits to build capacity on managing urban river health throughout the catchment.

In March, Angela Dunnett presented at a meeting of the Inner West Sustainable Schools Network on the impact of stormwater runoff and the PRCG's efforts to improve waterway health.

## STEP 8: BRING IN NATURE

Step 8 aims to enhance biodiversity in the Parramatta River catchment, using the river's five iconic species as indicators of the area's overall health.

This year, the PRCG supported citizen science and conservation initiatives including the 1 Million Turtles project, the Bar-tailed Godwit campaign, and the Powerful Owl project.

*Images: (Left) PRCG team at the North Parramatta Heritage Festival; (Top) Angela Dunnett demonstrates the impact of stormwater runoff using a catchment model at the Inner West Sustainable Schools Network meeting; (Opposite) PRCG team with other agency representatives at the First Nations Water Forum.*



In June 2025, the PRCG convened a cross-council meeting to develop a shared vision for the management of the Toongabbie Creek catchment. The Group also contributed to the Greater Sydney Regional Landcare Bushcare Forum in May 2025, delivering a presentation, hosting a stall, and planning field trips to Cabarita Beach and McIlwaine Park to showcase foreshore activation.

## STEP 9: REPORT BACK REGULARLY

This step aims to maintain clear communication with stakeholders and the community about the Masterplan's progress. The Our Living River dashboard was updated quarterly following each PRCG Full Group meeting. The Riverkeeper also provided monthly updates, along with regular financial and technical reports, to the Greater Sydney Landcare Network, which funds the project.

The 2023-24 Annual Report was released in December 2024. Work is underway on the Masterplan Review Report, which will assess progress and highlight key achievements and challenges. A new prospectus is also in development to promote the PRCG's purpose, priorities, and strategic direction.

## STEP 10: CREATE CLEAR LEADERSHIP

The aim of this step is to provide strong leadership and advocate for coordinated waterway management. The PRCG continued to strengthen relationships with First Nations organisations on key issues such as waterway governance and the Rights of Nature, participating in the Healing Ngunna workshop, the First Nations Water Forum, and workshops led by the Durumbura Dhurabang initiative at Macquarie University.

The PRCG is implementing recommendations from its 2024 strategic and operational review to develop a new strategic plan that will guide the Group's future direction and key priorities and shape the next Masterplan for the Parramatta River catchment.

In December 2024, the PRCG Coordinator addressed the IPART Public Hearing in support of Sydney Water's price review, emphasising the vital link between wastewater infrastructure and waterway health.

Other highlights this year included the Our Living River initiative being featured in the Resilient Sydney Strategy and participation in the global Swimmable Cities Charter.





## Putney Beach official opening

Putney Beach was officially opened to the public on 22 January 2025 by the Hon. Paul Scully MP, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, alongside City of Ryde Mayor Trenton Brown.

The site features a netted swimming enclosure, a sandy beach accessible at low tide, outdoor showers, and wide sandstone steps with handrails – designed to ensure safe and inclusive access to the water.

The launch event attracted hundreds of local residents who enjoyed water races,

giveaways, and a floaty party, highlighting strong community support and enthusiasm for the new site.

Special recognition goes to Kylie McMahon from City of Ryde, who championed the project from its inception, as well as to the Councillors, Council staff, and community members who helped turn the vision into reality.

The event also acknowledged the vital contribution of the Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG), whose ongoing

work to improve river health played a key role in making this swim site possible. It was wonderful to celebrate the occasion with representatives from several PRCG member agencies, including the City of Canada Bay, City of Parramatta, Hunter's Hill Council, and Sydney Water.

The project was jointly funded by the NSW Government through its Places to Swim program, in partnership with the City of Ryde. Daily water quality forecasts for Putney Beach are available via the Our Living River website.

*Images: 1. PRCG Member Agency representatives celebrate the Putney Beach opening; 2. Kylie McMahon, City of Ryde Executive Officer – City Resilience, welcomes guests; 3. Mayor Trenton Brown and the Hon. Paul Scully MP, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces officially open Putney Beach; 4. City of Ryde Councillors join in the celebration; 5, 7, 9. Community members enjoy the new swim site; 6. Mayor Trenton Brown takes a dip; 8. Council staff cook the celebratory sausage sizzle. (Images courtesy City of Ryde).*



## LANDCARE/RIVERKEEPER PROGRAM

The Riverkeeper Program continues to play a vital role in connecting individuals, community groups, councils, and state government organisations in collective efforts to care for the Parramatta River catchment. Co-funded by the PRCG and Landcare NSW, the program draws on Landcare's extensive support network and educational resources to build capacity across the region.

In May, the Riverkeeper collaborated with Local Land Services and Greater Sydney Landcare to support the Greater Sydney Regional Landcare Bushcare Forum. The contribution included a presentation, stall, and a planned field trip to Cabarita Beach and McIlwaine Park to highlight foreshore conservation efforts, which was cancelled due to wet weather.



The Parramatta River and Waterways Network (PRAWN) was established in 2024 to connect local environmental groups and support coordinated action to improve waterway health and biodiversity. Facilitated by the Riverkeeper, PRAWN met quarterly for site visits and discussions, including a fish health planning session, a visit to the Habitat Nursery in Ryde, and habitat-focused tours of Toongabbie and Whites Creeks.

In early 2025, the PRCG received a Local Small Commitments Allocation Grant to strengthen



citizen science in the Lane Cove Electorate (Ryde and Hunters Hill LGAs). This two-year initiative includes hands-on community workshops, such as Rapid Appraisal of Riparian Condition training, to support bushcare volunteers in assessing changes that affect waterway health.

Other events the Riverkeeper participated in this year include:

- Heritage Day at Parramatta North (May 2025)
- Seven Hills Festival (April 2025)
- Australian Museum *Future Now* Exhibition panel discussion (April 2025)
- Clean Up Australia Day (February 2025)
- Open Day at Carnarvon Golf Course (February 2025)
- Turtle Day (November 2024)
- Youth Eco Summit (September 2024)
- Wistaria Gardens Festival (September 2024)
- Footprints EcoFest (August 2024).

*Images: (clockwise from top left) PRAWN site visit to Toongabbie Creek, Sue Savage Park, Toongabbie; PRCG and Sydney Water teams at the Youth Eco Summit, Newington Armory; Ocean Crusaders clean-up at Haslams Creek; Murama Healing Space team at the Regional Landcare Bushcare Forum Awards.*



## Key Collaborators

Our key collaborators are essential to achieving broader catchment-wide impact. This year, we partnered with three inspiring organisations to improve waterway health and build stronger community connections.

### Ocean Crusaders

Ocean Crusaders is a waterway cleaning organisation specialising in the removal of large and hard-to-reach debris. In December 2024, they spent two weeks along the Parramatta River, focusing on Silverwater, Duck Creek, and the Bay Run. Supported by over 70 volunteers and using a crane truck, barge, and kayaks, they removed around 50m<sup>3</sup> of litter, filling four 15m<sup>3</sup> skip bins.

### Maritime Emissions Reduction Coalition

Maritime Emissions Reduction Coalition (MERC) is a social enterprise focused on helping the maritime sector decarbonise and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

MERC first engaged with the PRCG through the Parramatta River and Waterways Network (PRAWN) to explore opportunities for collaboration. MERC and the PRCG are collaborating to explore a range of options to reduce the environmental and ecological impacts of boats on the Parramatta River estuary.



### Murama Healing Space

Murama Healing Space, at the Newington Armory in Sydney Olympic Park, is a culturally safe environment where First Nations youth and communities can connect, heal, and strengthen their identity through art, culture, and storytelling. The PRCG has collaborated with Murama on several initiatives, including the design of interpretive signage along the Wangal Walk and support for the Junior Rangers Program.

In May 2025, the PRCG nominated Murama for the First Nations Collaboration Award at the Greater Sydney Regional Landcare Bushcare Forum, where they were honoured as the award recipient.

The PRCG looks forward to continuing its partnership with Murama, including support for the forthcoming Murama Youth Summit and further additions to the Wangal Walk.





### Riverfest 2024

Riverfest is the Parramatta River Catchment Group’s annual celebration of the river and its creeks. This year’s program offered a diverse range of events and activities showcasing some of the many ways the community can enjoy and care for the catchment.

The week-long festival included a webinar on revitalising the Parramatta and Birrarung/ Yarra Rivers and other urban waterways, featuring speakers from the PRCG, Swimmable Birrarung, Regen Melbourne, and Sydney Water. Other events included local litter clean-ups, bush regeneration, wetland and bird walks, kids’ trivia, and a practical workshop on rainwater harvesting.

A highlight of this year’s program was *Paint the River for World Rivers Day*, held at Parramatta Park. Led by Dr Leo Robba and Dr Ian Wright from Western Sydney University, the event invited community members to express their vision for a healthier river through art, supported by scientific insights and a mobile water testing lab.

For the first time, we hosted *Between the Tides* – a sound installation featuring recordings from the Parramatta River and surrounding wetlands, curated by Dr Cameron Webb from the University of Sydney. The event also featured stalls offering environmental activities for children, including Streamwatch and Sydney Water’s ‘Wonders of Water’ van, as well as practical advice on sustainable living.

Many thanks to all the participants, partners, supporters, and volunteers who made this year’s Riverfest such a success – helping to raise greater awareness about the importance of caring for our waterways and green spaces.

Images: (from top) Local residents paint their vision of the Parramatta River at the Paint the River for World Rivers Day event; Dr Cameron Webb, Dr Ian Wright, and Dr Leo Robba demonstrate the ‘Between the Tides’ sound installation; Volunteers celebrate their litter collection at the Toongabbie Creek Clean-up; A local family pick up litter at the Spring Clean for the Shorebirds event, Drummoyne.

## PRCG FINANCIAL REPORT (2024-25)

INCOME		\$
Carryover funds 2023-2024 FY		298,828
PRCG Full Group membership fees 2024-25 FY		242,741
Landcare Enabling Program		70,813
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$612,382</b>

EXPENSES			\$
Parramatta River Catchment Group	Salaries and on-costs		259,727
	Materials and services		39,360
Riverkeeper Program	Salaries and on-costs		85,060
	Materials and services		198
	Riverfest		11,761
<b>Total Expenses</b>			<b>\$396,106</b>

NET OPERATING RESULT		\$216,276
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Parramatta Riverbank Naturalisation project grant (2023-26) *		\$
Income		944,500
Expenditure		22,481
<b>Balance</b>		<b>\$922,019</b>

Stormwater Compliance and Education program grant (2023-27)**		\$
Income		768,792
Expenses		130,625
<b>Balance</b>		<b>\$638,167</b>

Small Allocation Grant – Monitoring River Health in Two Rivers Country		\$
Income		25,000
Expenses		2,200
<b>Balance</b>		<b>\$ 22,800</b>

EPA Waste and Sustainable Materials (WASM) Grant – Stream 2		\$
Income		80,000
Expenses		0
<b>Balance</b>		<b>\$80,000</b>

\*Total amount for Parramatta Riverbank Naturalisation project grant over three years is \$1,000,000.  
 \*\*Total amount for Stormwater Compliance and Education program grant over four years is \$800,000.





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