



**Parramatta River
Catchment Group**



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

MEDIA RELEASE

14 November 2025

PRCG supports call for increased governance and funding to make more Western Sydney's rivers swimmable

The Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) welcomes the release of *Our Active Rivers: Western Sydney River Communities* by Business Western Sydney, launched last week at the Western Sydney Rivers Symposium. The report presents a compelling vision for enhancing the health, accessibility, and safety of Western Sydney's waterways through greater investment, improved governance, driven by the creation of more natural swimming sites.

PRCG Coordinator, Alexi Gilchrist, said the report's recommendations strongly align with the PRCG's long-term priorities to improve water quality through expanded access to natural swim sites, and recognises the lack of catchment governance and investment as key challenges.

"Business Western Sydney's report rightly identifies that cleaner, healthier waterways are critical to the region's liveability and resilience as our population grows and temperatures rise," Mr Gilchrist said.

"For more than a decade, the PRCG has been working towards this same goal – making the Parramatta River and its tributaries swimmable again through evidence-based planning, coordinated action, and sustained community engagement."

Following the dissolution of the NSW Catchment Management Authorities in 2013, the PRCG has led a collaborative, multi-agency initiative to improve management of the Parramatta River, improving river health and expanding access to safe swimming sites. The group's Swim Site Activation Framework provides a rigorous, methodical process for assessing the suitability of potential swim locations, considering water quality, safety, accessibility, cultural values, and community benefit.

The upcoming opening of Bedlam Bay in Gladesville later this month marks the achievement of the driving mission of the PRCG – the delivery of three new public swim sites by 2025, including Bayview Park Baths (2022) and Putney Beach (2024). This milestone demonstrates the importance of collaboration between councils, state government organisations, and community partners in restoring the ecological and social value of urban waterways.

Mr Gilchrist said that *Our Active Rivers* recognises the need for greater leadership and investment from state and federal governments to achieve its broader vision of a healthier, more liveable Western Sydney.

"The report highlights what the PRCG has long advocated – improving waterway health improves community health and wellbeing, but this requires stronger governance and sustained funding for blue green infrastructure, embedded within planning frameworks," he said.

"We value Business Western Sydney's contributions in bringing attention to these priority issues and look forward to working together to build healthier waterways and more liveable communities across Western Sydney."

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About the PRCG

The PRCG is an alliance of local and state government organisations and community groups that are working together to improve the 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 Council, Hunter's Hill Council, Inner West Council, Strathfield Municipal Council, Sydney Water, and NSW Environment Protection Authority. For more information, visit: ourlivingriver.com.au.

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