



# Northern Beaches Waterways and Catchments Action Plan



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## Executive summary

Northern Beaches Council set clear aspirations and commitments in relation to waterways and catchments in *Protect, Create, Live – Northern Beaches Environment and Climate Change Strategy 2040* (the strategy). This action plan has been prepared to identify how we will embed these strategic directions into our operations and support key stakeholders, partners and the community as a whole in taking action.

This plan provides a list of actions to be implemented over the next four years to address issues relating to waterways and catchments. The plan will be revised annually to retain its relevance and alignment with our Delivery Program and Operational Plan.



## Why a waterways and catchments action plan is needed

This action plan responds to community outcomes for Environmental Protection and Environmental Sustainability in *Shape 2028: Northern Beaches Community Strategic Plan*, *actions in Towards 2040: Northern Beaches Local Strategic Planning Statement*, and a series of clear and ambitious aspirations and commitments in the Strategy. We need to accelerate action to improve the condition of our waterways. We have a series of aspirations and commitments to help us achieve our goal of catchments and waterways.

- Healthy and resilient
- Valued and enjoyed by our community
- Protected and enhanced as part of an integrated system linking built, natural and cultural elements

For the purposes of this plan, waterways include built (stormwater system) and natural (creeks and streams) networks that convey runoff and stormwater from upper catchments to receiving waters such as our beaches, estuaries and lagoons.



## Committed to change



### Our Aspirations

Improve the condition of all our waterways.

### Commitments



Protecting our receiving waters and riparian areas



Protecting and improving the condition of creeks and riparian vegetation



Minimising threats to aquatic ecosystems



Reducing the impact of urban runoff on our waterways



Actively working to keep single use plastics and other litter out of our network.

## Our actions so far

We are committed to improving the condition of all our waterways, and have already done a lot.

### Completed projects:

- Adopted the Water Management for Development Policy, which supports our commitment to protecting and enhancing the aquatic and terrestrial natural environment while ensuring protection of property and the public.
- Adopted a Zero Waste to Ocean Charter which strengthens our framework to manage and improve water quality and minimise waste entering our waterways.
- Maintained 249 Water Quality Devices (WQDs) resulting in the removal of a total of 1265 tonnes of pollution from our devices in the 2020/21 financial year.
- Constructed new stormwater quality improvement infrastructure at North Steyne, Manly and Dee Why Beach.
- Investigated stormwater quality improvements and water sensitive urban design at Balgowlah, Freshwater Beach, Shelley Beach and Cabbage Tree Bay.
- Through rates harmonisation, we implemented a unified Stormwater Management Service Charge. The harmonisation of this fee enables us to directly implement programs to protect our environment.
- Carried out 10 years of a water quality monitoring program in four coastal lagoons, expanding this in the last four years to include Pittwater.
- Completed a 3-year grant-funded program at Curl Curl Lagoon, planting 3000 plants to restore habitat and amenity.
- Trialled the use of floating wetlands to improve water quality and habitat, initially at Curl Curl Lagoon and now investigating their use at Manly Lagoon.
- Improved foreshore protection, access and open space at Lagoon Park at Manly Lagoon.
- Constructed a mini wetland, bank stabilisation works and a vehicle and pedestrian crossing at Fern Creek, Warriewood, which has created habitat for the endangered Red-crowned Toadlet.
- Reduced risk and improved environmental condition in a number of creeks through emergency response and creek stabilisation works.
- Continued to carry out bush regeneration in the riparian areas of creeks and lagoons.
- Carried out a Waterways and Riparian Lands Review to support the LEP/DCP process.

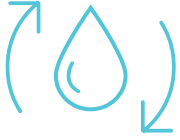
## Improve the condition of all our waterways

We are working towards a vision of catchments and waterways that are healthy and resilient, valued and enjoyed by our community. We are working to protect and enhance them as an integrated system, connecting built, natural and cultural elements.

We will work towards this goal in these key areas:

1. Improve water quality
2. Reduce litter and single use plastics
3. Improve natural waterways
4. Enhance sustainable recreation and enjoyment
5. Manage risk and compliance
6. Research, collaboration and innovation





## 1. Improve water quality

To improve water quality, we will:

- 1.1** Install, upgrade, audit and maintain water quality devices according to national and international best practice stormwater quality principles within our stormwater network
- 1.2** Include water management and integrated water cycle management in planning instruments and apply instruments in the assessment of development.
- 1.3** Investigate ways to encourage improvements in management and maintenance of privately-owned water quality devices.
- 1.4** Promote integrated water cycle management and integrate water sensitive urban design measures into built form developments through the LEP and DCP planning framework.
- 1.5** Respond to pollution incidents by removing pollutants from waterways where possible and disposing of them responsibly.
- 1.6** Engage with state government in major projects such as road works, precinct planning and land releases to ensure impacts to waterways are minimised, water quality is maintained or improved, and impacts are addressed during construction.
- 1.7** Prepare a stormwater quality / water cycle strategy which will identify stormwater quality targets and prioritise public and private stormwater infrastructure needs.







## 2. Reduce litter and single use plastics

To reduce litter and single use plastics we will:

- 2.1** Introduce new litter and rubbish removal programs and investigate opportunities for improvements and efficiencies in our existing programs.
- 2.2** Investigate and implement innovative strategies to combat litter and single use plastics.
- 2.3** Expand our network of stormwater quality improvement devices (SQIDs) and continue to improve management of existing SQIDs.



## 3. Improve natural waterways

To work towards more natural waterways, we will:

- 3.1** Prepare detailed mapping of all creek lines with a view to establishing a prioritised creek restoration/rehabilitation strategy.
- 3.2** Ensure green corridors along waterways are incorporated into new precincts or areas subject to urban intensification by including requirements in our new planning framework.
- 3.3** Continue bush regeneration and weed control in creek and lagoon environments while maintaining in-stream and terrestrial habitat.
- 3.4** Undertake creek rehabilitation works to stabilise banks, enhance riparian areas, protect assets, improve safety and amenity and reduce erosion. Use natural and locally available materials like sandstone in creek stabilisation works to replicate natural conditions where possible.
- 3.5** Minimise development impacts on waterways and aquatic ecosystems through the planning framework.
- 3.6** Identify modified waterways (or sections of waterways) that can be restored to their natural state and seek funding to undertake those works.



#### 4. Enhance sustainable recreation and enjoyment

To enhance and manage sustainable recreational access while protecting environmentally sensitive waterways we will:

- 4.1 Incorporate principles of environmentally sustainable access to waterways into open space and recreation strategies.
- 4.2 Incorporate safe and sustainable access trails along watercourses where appropriate.





## 5. Manage risk and compliance

To manage risk, we will:

- 5.1** Address safety issues such as eroding banks, dangerous trees and debris in waterways.
- 5.2** Undertake environmental monitoring and maintenance on contaminated sites that impact our waterways.
- 5.3** Work to prevent unlawful actions and pollution incidents in our waterways through education, monitoring and enforcement, and respond to incidents promptly as they occur to minimise impact.
- 5.4** Manage flood risk through proactive management of waterways including maintenance of Manly Lagoon low flow pipes, and the required clearances at the entrance to Narrabeen Lagoon.
- 5.5** Implement key policy and strategy documents such as the Narrabeen Lagoon Entrance Management Strategy and other floodplain management studies and guides.
- 5.6** Prepare for and respond to storm and pollution events through maintenance of a critical assets register and ensure these are checked when trigger events are forecast.





## 6. Research, collaboration and innovation

Continuing our long tradition of research, innovation and collaboration with key agencies, we will:

- 6.1. Partner with research organisations, government agencies and other Councils on projects that deliver research, collaboration and innovation.
- 6.2. Integrate the findings and recommendations from research and innovation projects in Council's management of waterways and catchments.
- 6.3. Work collaboratively with all government and non-government stakeholders to implement effective and coordinated management of waterways and catchments.

## Measuring, monitoring, and reporting

Along the way we will measure, monitor and report on what we are doing, to make sure we are always tracking towards the aspirations and commitments in the Protect. Create. Live - Environment and Climate Change Strategy.

### What we will do

- Continue to monitor water quality in accordance with methods approved by State government.
- Improve waste measuring, monitoring and reporting methodologies for water quality device cleaning.
- Incorporate important creek and waterway measures in a user-friendly online dashboard so the community can follow our progress towards the commitments and aspirations.





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