

RIVER USERS HAVE LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

As part of our life and livelihood, the Georges River catchment is a much-loved part of the local environment for over 1.2 million residents and countless visitors. From intact pristine wilderness to urban cityscapes the Georges River flows through the changing landscapes of southern Sydney, providing a place for people to unwind and participate in a wide range of leisure activities. The catchment is home to several dozen cultural and linguistic backgrounds, a signature of contemporary Australia. Georges River users are a cross-section of the entire catchment community, whose interests, hobbies and uses of the river are as diverse as the broader population.



NPA Macarthur Bushwalkers

The NSW National Parks Association is a non-profit organisation and the Macarthur branch, located in Campbelltown, is the largest community bushwalking group in the state. Like most bushwalking groups, they are interested in conservation and hold education and awareness raising events at monthly meetings.

NPA Macarthur have been instrumental in the confirmation of platypus populations in the Georges River, and the protection of platypus habitat. For more, visit [NPA Macarthur Bushwalkers](#).

“Children need to grow up with the river, and get back to the trees and trails.” Ken, Simmo’s Beach

Ken, Simmo’s Beach Caretaker



“There’s more kayakers,” says Ken, the caretaker at Simmo’s Beach in Macarthur Fields when asked about the changes he’s seen after 23 years in his job with Campbelltown City Council. Ken’s the first one you’ll see if you litter in the park. “I feel like it’s my river,” says Ken, where he spends much of his time educating adults about the impacts of rubbish. He’s worried environmental education happens too late for many people. “Children need to grow up with the river, and get back into the trees and trails. That would make a big difference to its health.”

Uncle Lew Solberg



Lifetime residents of the Georges River remember a time when the foreshores were crawling with crabs, prawns and water rats, and the mullet jumped recklessly. Lew Solberg has lived in the mid-Georges River since he was a child, and used to swim in Cabramatta Creek and Warwick Farm every summer. The biggest change over the years, says Solberg, is the density of people who have moved into the catchment. “The river started declining, but it’s better now that councils are involved,” says Solberg. “There needs to be lifelong interest from our [leaders], to stay focused on protecting the river. Most importantly we need to educate the children, that is very important to me.”

“The environment is a living thing, it’s keeping us alive.” Dean Kelly, NPWS



Barefoot Waterskiing Club, Liverpool

Georges River residents may not know that “world class water skiing conditions” describes the Helles Park stretch near Moorebank. Ken Derry and his son Keenan know the area well, being members and trainers at the NSW Barefoot Waterski Club headquarters in Helles Park. In 2013, both came back from Texas as World Champions. Currently, 4 out of a possible 6 World Champions are Australians.

The natural conditions of the Helles Park site are ideal because of the high, vegetated banks which disperse wake and block the wind. These days, father and son are trainers for the 25-member Club, and for other beginners during ‘Come And Try Days.’

“It’s a family generated sport,” says Brendon Chattaway, Club Vice President. “First the Dad comes in, then kids and grandpas get involved in everything from judging to the concessions.” The next State competitions are likely to take place in Helles Park in 2015. For more information, visit [NSW Barefoot Waterski Club](#).

Fishcare Volunteers, NSW Department of Primary Industries



Bob Audsley started in 2001 with Fishcare Volunteers for the Botany Bay region, a program funded by fishing licenses and NSW DPI. Fishcare Volunteers work with fishers, students, Scouts and boating groups to raise awareness about sustainable fishing techniques, rules and regulations, and habitat protection.

Audsley acknowledges that though pollution used to be the biggest problem on the river, today the illegal take of undersized fish is the biggest threat to sustainable fishing. Audsley has logged over 5000 hours as a volunteer, and coordinates a team of dedicated volunteers assisting DPI Education Officers across the Sydney metro area. “I do it because I love fishing,” he says. Visit [NSW DPI Fisheries](#).

“The river started declining, but it’s better now that councils are involved.” Uncle Lew Solberg



Sailability, Kogarah Bay Sailing Club

In 2001 the Kogarah Bay Sailing Club in Dover Park introduced *Sailability* to the Georges River community, allowing people with a disability to enjoy sailing. With assistance from Kogarah City Council and NSW Maritime, *Sailability* runs two programs for special needs children and anyone with a disability, providing instruction and enjoyment to 160 students and elderly in 2012-13.

Ken Herbert has been with KBSC since its early days, and has helped to oversee *Sailability* through its growth. *Sailability* has taken both cash and infrastructure donations from community business, humanitarian and philanthropy groups. “*Sailability* runs on volunteers, enthusiasm for sailing and community goodwill,” says Herbert. Visit [Sailability Online](#).

Liverpool SES



River residents across Australia are lucky to have State Emergency Services (SES) volunteers. Groups respond to roughly 50 local jobs each year, ranging from downed trees and roof damage, to land searches and swift water rescues. SES branches are occasionally called out of state to assist too.

SES volunteers are “people who are interested in giving back to the community and improving their skills,” says Russell Moore, a 20-year volunteer with Liverpool SES. Liverpool SES often uses Chipping Norton Lakes for flood boat training. Moore has been personally involved with the river since “they pulled the dredges out” in 1993. Moore says he would like to see upgraded signage around the Lake to enforce the 8 knot speed limit. Visit [SES NSW](#).



St George Rowing Club, Como

Wake up early and you’re likely to see rowers from the St George Rowing Club breaking the glassy Georges River waters. The club had 69 rowers ranging in age from 15 to 89 in 2012-13.

“It’s busy with other boats at times but lovely, especially seeing the sunrise and sunset from the water,” said Becky Bates (pictured left with Elyse Niall) about training on the River. Bates had a good year, taking one gold, four silver and one bronze medal at the NSW State Grade Championships. Her goals are to represent NSW and the Australian National team. Does it feel close? “I’ve definitely envisioned it, but it feels far off,” she smiles.

The St George Rowing Club had its most successful year, finishing 2nd and 3rd in the NSW Premiership, and achieving points totals overall for the NSW Rowing Association Premiership Shield.

“The Georges has some of the best conditions” when the wind is down, says Bates. She has built lasting friendships with Club members and teammates. Visit [St George Rowing Club](#).

Towra Team, Kurnell

Dean Kelly has long been a community educator and ecologist, most recently as the Coordinator of the Towra Team, funded by National Parks and Wildlife Service. Over several years, the Team developed works and education opportunities for 20 La Pouse Aboriginal community members, who have a strong association with Towra Point and Botany Bay.

“The environment is a living thing, it’s keeping us alive,” says Kelly. “These youth were learning how to understand and interact with environmental science at the ground level.” Kelly says the future of river management should focus on long-term, regional partnerships that combine field-based science and provide meaningful career paths for students and trainees.

Stan Konstantaras, South Sydney Amateur Fishing Association



It’s the winding nature of the Georges River that gives anglers the habitat, cover, scoured-out holes for hiding baitfish, and where big predators like Mulloway (Jewfish) can rest during the day before venturing out at night. When the big fish move at dusk, so do the anglers, under the cover of darkness.

Cold winds, heavy dew, rain; in fact the more miserable the more Mulloway anglers love it. From the freshwater at Liverpool to the waters of Botany Bay, on any given night, an angler on a bank at 2am is chasing silver and pitting his wits against the mighty Mulloway. With many caught and released and the odd fish taken home, the Georges River fishery has become legendary around the traps and is spoken about in hushed tones by those who know. For every expert out there, there are 10 times that number of novices out having a go and slowly learning the secrets of silver.

With the Georges River having bounced back over the years, local anglers are ever willing to report and liaise with local NSW Fisheries Officers to ensure that all follow the rules and are fishing sustainably. Report illegal activity to the Fishers Watch Phone Line at 1800 043 536. Visit [South Sydney AFA](#).



Find us on Facebook

www.georgesriver.org.au

Georges River, NSW



RIVERKEEPER PROGRAM REPORT CARD 2012-2013

The GRCCC represents Local Government in the Georges River Catchment of NSW. Member councils include Bankstown City, Campbelltown City, Fairfield City, Hurstville City, Kogarah City, Liverpool City, Rockdale City, Sutherland Shire and Wollondilly Shire Councils. The Riverkeeper Program is an initiative of GRCCC member councils with a collective responsibility for the health of the Georges River catchment. The GRCCC is currently hosted by Hurstville City Council. Copyright GRCCC Riverkeeper Program Report Card 2012-2013. Design and cover photo by D. Kuhn.



TOTAL CATCHMENT RUBBISH COLLECTION

Riverkeeper Program teams provide broad-scale removal of rubbish from the river's foreshores, creeks and tributaries. Member councils identify rubbish 'hotspots' on the river.

103,638 TOTAL KGs
28,332 TOTAL HOURS



TOTAL CATCHMENT BUSH REGENERATION

Regeneration teams are restoring degraded, remnant bushland on foreshores, creeks and tributaries across the catchment. Work is undertaken along the river system to improve ecological health and species biodiversity.

18,406 TOTAL M²
1,979 TOTAL HOURS

UPPER GEORGES RIVER, 2012-13

SUBCATCHMENT STATISTICS

RUBBISH COLLECTION = 20,218 KGs
COMMUNITY HOURS = 4,314

BUSH REGENERATION = 4,566 M²
COMMUNITY HOURS = 41

MID GEORGES RIVER, 2012-13

SUBCATCHMENT STATISTICS

RUBBISH COLLECTION = 60,130 KGs
COMMUNITY HOURS = 15,623

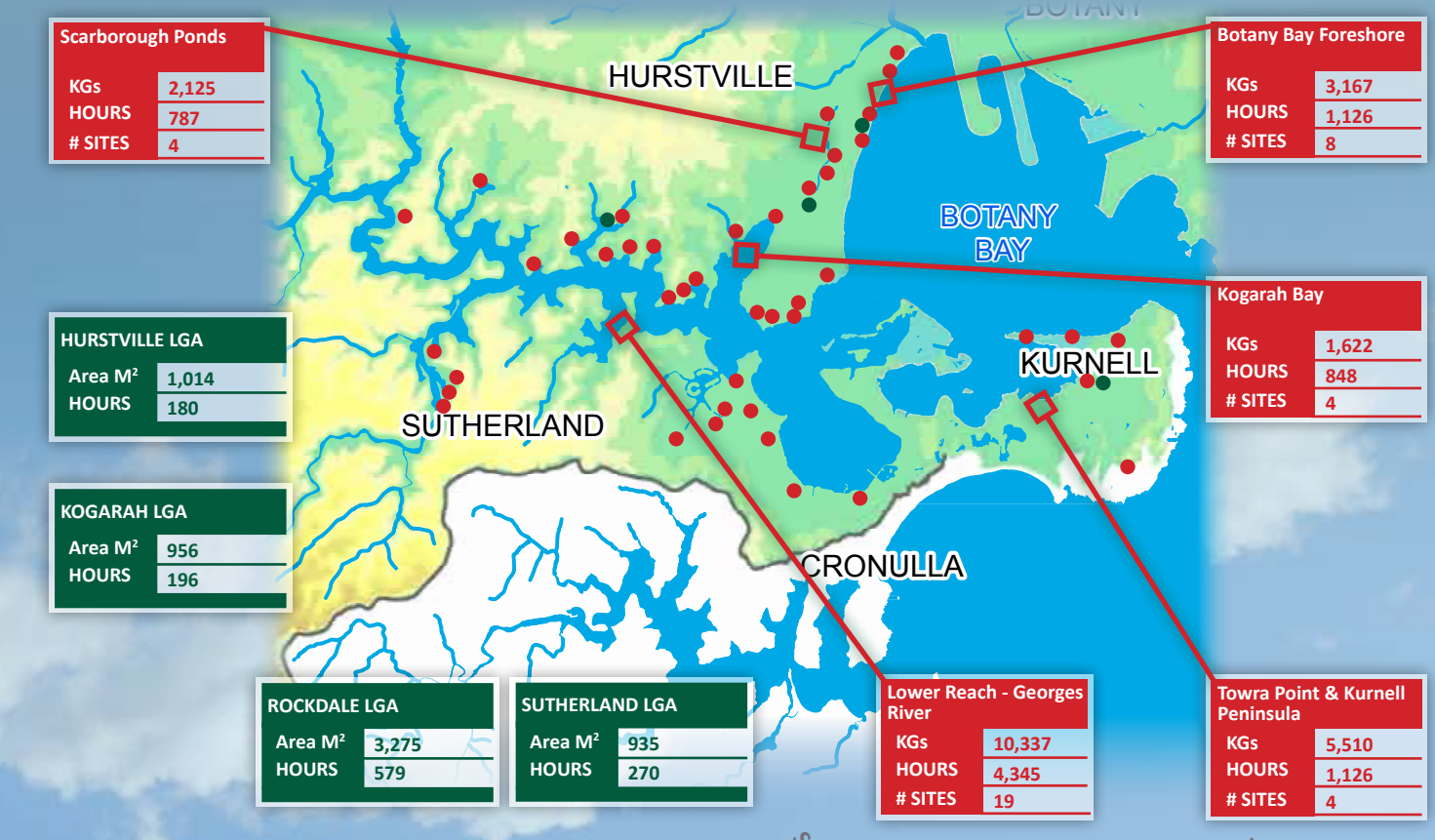
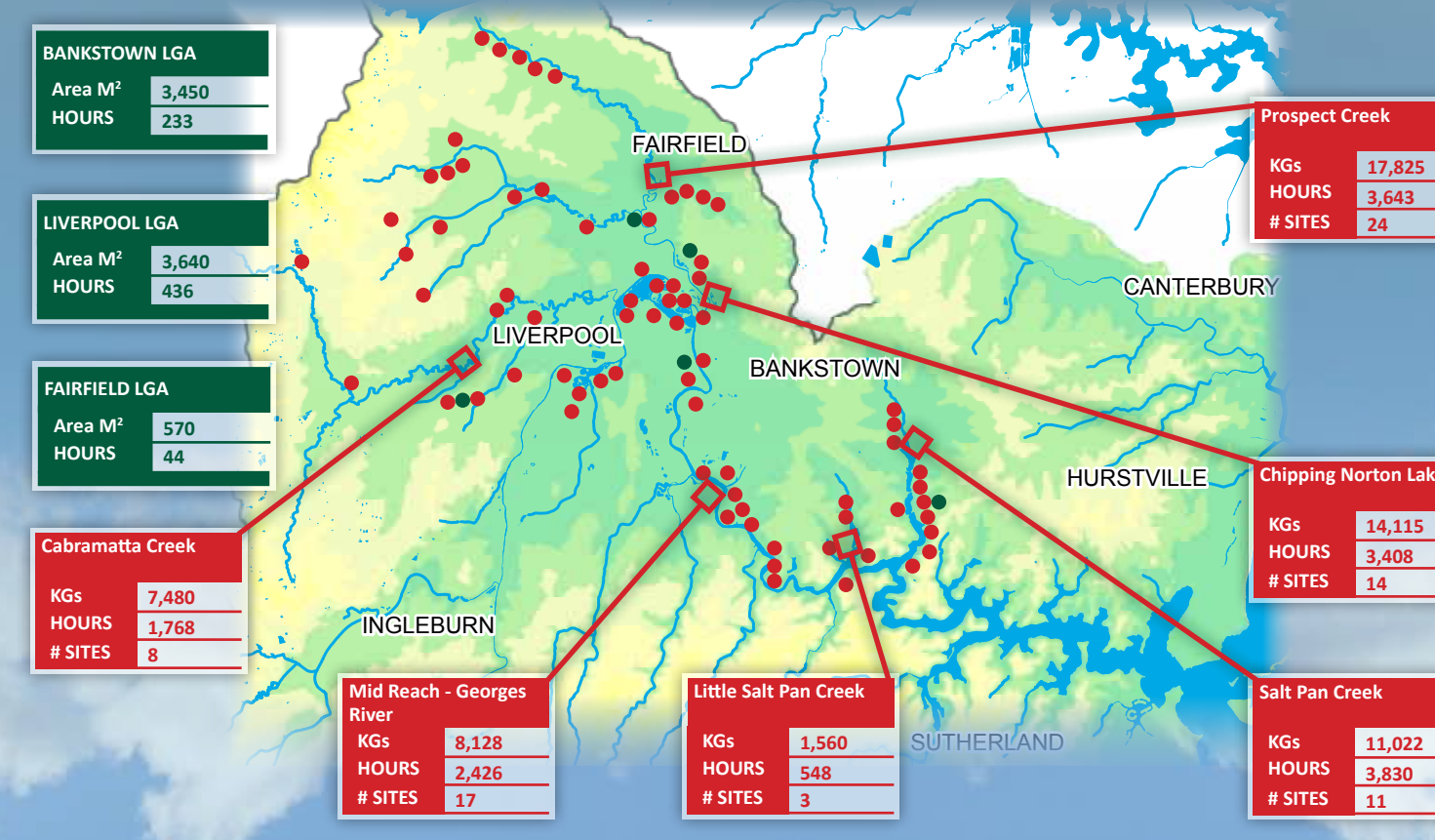
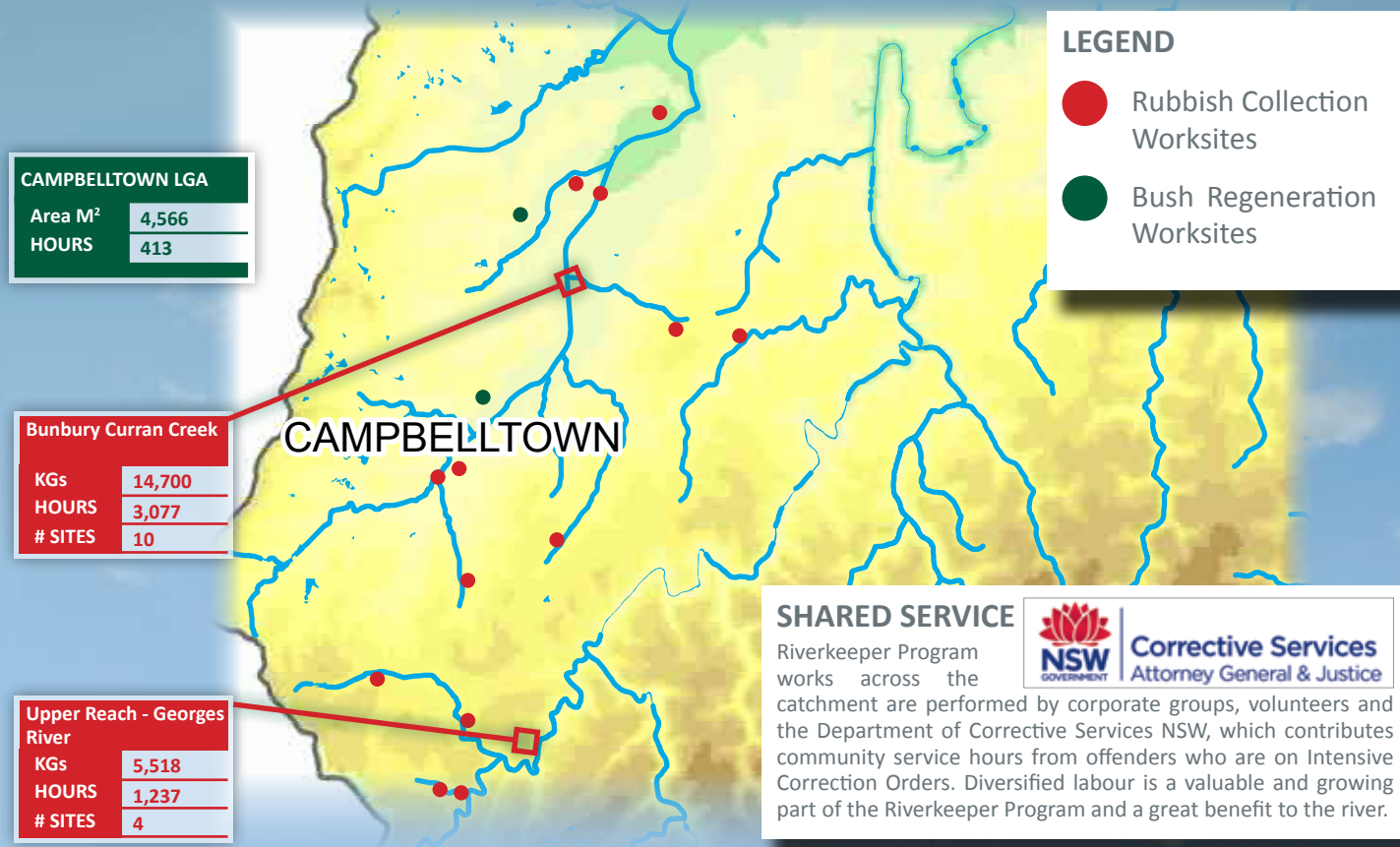
BUSH REGENERATION = 7,660 M²
COMMUNITY HOURS = 713

LOWER GEORGES RIVER, 2012-13

SUBCATCHMENT STATISTICS

RUBBISH COLLECTION = 23,290 KGs
COMMUNITY HOURS = 8,395

BUSH REGENERATION = 6,180 M²
COMMUNITY HOURS = 1,225



PREVENTATIVE COLLECTION OF RUBBISH

This graph shows the amount of rubbish progressively collected as it moves down the river system. Look to see which subcatchment you live in and then look at how much rubbish was prevented from reaching you.

