



**Upper Georges River Urban Sustainability  
Program**

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**The Upper Georges River – How special?**

**Report on internet expressions of interest in the Upper  
Georges River**

**November 2008**



**Cover: Upper Georges River looking north from the Glenfield Causeway**

## 1. Background

### Methods

A Survey Monkey web link was set up on the Campbelltown City Council web site enabling people connected to the Upper Georges River Catchment (UGR) to describe their interest in the UGR. In addition to advertisements in newspapers reporting this link, the link was circulated to Georges River e lists and promoted at the Campbelltown City Council Riverfest in June 2008.

The EOI survey was open from June 6th through to October 31, 2008. The majority of responses were received during June/July.

The questions were predominantly open ended in order to provide more in depth information than is possible through closed questions. Respondents were asked to identify where they lived and work to determine their physical link with the upper catchment.

A total of 44 respondents commenced the survey whilst only 34 completed the survey, a rate of 77%. The low completion rate to some questions was expected as the 'values and feelings' nature of some of the questions mean some participants can experience discomfort with these questions, particularly the question that asks about 'a favourite memory'. But the content of the answers from those who do respond makes this type of question worthwhile.

The use of the internet for registering interest, in addition to the Community Consultation sessions conducted during August to October 2008 has ensured a wider audience than possible utilising a single communication method to improve our understanding of the meaning of the UGR to people. In particular, a number of responses were received from people who were resident or worked outside of the UGR and who nonetheless had a strong attachment and therefore interest in activities in the UGR.

Only two questions were closed questions and therefore the majority of the information is provided verbatim with the addition of a spell check. Information that may identify an individual has been removed. The questions asked are as follows and also listed in the introduction to the results.

1. What is your local government area of residence (Closed question)
2. Local government area of work (Closed question)
3. What is your interest in the Upper Georges River Catchment?
4. What locations (places) do you think should be protected in the Upper Georges River Catchment?
5. What activities (eg recreation, family, rural) do you think should be protected in the Upper Georges River Catchment?
6. What do you think is special about the Upper Georges River Catchment?
7. Do you have a favourite memory of a time that you visited the Upper Georges River Catchment?
8. What do you see are the issues to be addressed in the Upper Georges River Catchment?
9. Is there anything else you would like us to know?

The survey introduction was as follows:

Campbelltown and Liverpool City Councils in association with Wollondilly Shire Council and the Georges River Combined Councils Committee has secured funding for three years from 2007 to 2010 for the preparation and implementation of an Integrated Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the Upper Georges River Catchment. In essence, the project is about partnerships and bringing together the key stakeholders responsible for managing the river and then working cooperatively to protect and preserve the upper catchment. How this will be done will be described in the SEMP.

This is a chance to let us know about your interest in the Upper Georges River Catchment.

Further information was provided through the body of the survey as follows:

The purpose of these questions is for you to let us know what should be protected, what is special and what are the issues in the Upper Georges River Catchment?

Respondents were provided with the opportunity to leave an email contact to allow information to be forwarded to them. This contact list was utilised when the SEMP Community Consultations were conducted at Campbelltown and Liverpool City Councils and in Wollondilly Shire during August and October 2008.

Not all comments are reported here. Only a selection of comments is reported and comments that might allow identification of the respondent are not included.

## 2. Results

### 1. Local government area of residence

41% of respondents live in Campbelltown City Council. 2% lived in Liverpool City Council and 20% live in Wollondilly Shire Council area. 37% live in other LGA/suburbs of residence that include Bankstown, Camden, Lane Cove, Marrickville, Narrabeen, Parramatta, Randwick, Sutherland, Wollongong (See Table 1 below).

LGA	Number
Bankstown City Council	2
Camden	2
Lane Cove	1
Marrickville	1
Narrabeen	1
Parramatta	1
Randwick	1
Sutherland	5
Wollongong	2

### 2. Local government area of work

55% of respondents work in the Upper Georges River Catchment (Campbelltown and Liverpool City and Wollondilly Shire LGA. 45% work in other suburbs.

**Table 2 - LGA work in 'Other'**

LGA	Number
All/Am involved in several Suth. Shire Council sub-committees	3
Blacktown	1
Camden	1
Fairfield city	1
Honorary and voluntary work in Sutherland and Hurstville LGAs	1
Parramatta	3
Pittwater	1
RailCorp	1
Rockdale City Council	1
Strathfield	1
Sutherland	1
Sydney	1
Wingecarribee	1

### 3. What is your interest in the Upper Georges River Catchment?

Interest in the Upper Georges River Catchment was based on length of time in the UGR, appreciation of the natural elements and tasks and activities that people undertook in the UGR. Membership of groups and family relationships also featured along with important and meaningful experiences at particular locations. For some people it was their interest was employment related, for others it was the impact of the UGR on their location downstream.

#### Comment Text

My house is located next to the Creek, which flows into the Upper Georges River Catchment. I am also an avid bushwalker in the area and have a strong desire to protect the natural environment around Campbelltown

Environmental sustainability - including health of river (e.g. reducing and avoiding pollution), water flow etc.; surrounding bushland.; promoting native plants and reducing weed infestation; recreational activities - safe and healthy access for public; educational - esp. Aboriginal and historical heritage.

Study and protection of biodiversity, specifically botany. Opposed to any further mining, which may cause damage to the Georges River and/or O'Hares Creek. Opposed to any further approval/extension of dumping of coal waste in this area. Management of trailbikes. Both registered and unregistered, in our bushland areas. Protection of drinking water catchments, currently abused by illegal entry of 4WD vehicles and trail bikes. Protection of koala habitat bushland at St Helens Park.

I spend a lot of my spare time during the fishing season in a canoe or kayak on the Georges River in the upper reaches.

I have been studying and recording native birds in the Georges River catchment (Liverpool to Appin) since 1975.

I grew up in the area, have bushwalked the area nearly all my life, and now take my grandchildren with me. Of particular interest to me is the flora (orchids in particular) geology and aboriginal heritage in the axe sharpening grooves, and cave paintings. Pollution is also of interest as is indicated by the rubbish to be found on nearly all parts of the river system. Coal mining is also of interest to me, as is water quality and flow, noting the water extracted in Darke's Forest.

I have been visiting various places along the river for a number of years with my children, and am very passionate about preserving the beautiful natural environment that is so close to home. I believe that we need to improve the state of some of these areas. One of the most effective ways, I think, is to make people aware of how precious it is, and hopefully encourage more people to want to take care of it. I teach and am planning a unit for this term based around some of the issues concerning the local natural environment, such as feral animals, noxious weeds and rubbish dumping. I think that encouraging a responsible and positive attitude towards the environment from an early age can, hopefully, help make a difference in the state that its in at the moment.

My work relates to this catchment. It is also a spectacular area so close to Sydney.

I have been an Ingleburn resident for 28 years and live within a short walking distance of the Georges River.

Given I work in the Rockdale area and live in the Sutherland area, I have a vested interest in seeing an improvement in catchment management of the upper reaches to improve outcomes for the lower sections of the catchment.

I was born in Campbelltown, and lived all my childhood on a property at Wedderburn, backing on to the Georges River, so know the area well.

Catchment management. Weed management. Biodiversity surveying. Community education. Member National Parks Association. Promoter of "Riverfest" (Celebrates Georges and Nepean Rivers) Very importantly - protection of upland swamps in and adjacent to Dharawal SCA. Prevention of further damage to Georges River as a result of long wall mining.

Wollondilly and Camden Shire area from a previous job.

I walked along the Georges River just north of Appin, and witnessed the first cracks from current long wall mining. But I am also interested in all other aspects of river health.

Previous technical officer for Sutherland.

Member National Parks Association and Georges River Environmental Action Team, Appin Area Community Working Group.

Keeping the existing natural areas in a relatively natural condition, ensuring runoff from developed areas is as clean as possible, identifying possible sources of water pollution or estuary stress from any part of the catchment and promoting feasible measures to rectify such problems.

I deeply care about this waterway and the environment that surrounds it.

We are interested in what is happening up stream and around the Chipping Norton lake.

My interest lies in the preservation of the river systems and the environment surrounding them. Is there anything I can do to help take care of the environment over there? Is there any voluntary work I can do to preserve this beautiful place? Do you have a van or some other transport to get to the area and work crews weed or do other work in the area? If so I would like to be involved if I can. I have no transport myself but I can go with someone else in the Minto area if possible. Thank you for contacting me and hope to hear from you soon.

To see a healthy river maintained in a sustainable way. Of particular concern is the impact of long wall mining as well as of development in the area more generally.

I manage a program working on fish habitat, on ground works projects and associated education through awareness.

I have implemented a project at Kennedy Creek to help improve the Upper Georges River water quality and reduce weeds.

Long personal and professional interest in the environment of the GR and Cooks River catchments.

I was interested in volunteering, in projects around the river to help conserve it, including weed removal, bank revegetation, and removal of rubbish.

Sustainable management that recognises the need for ongoing development in balance environmental protection/conservation/recreation.

#### **4. What locations (places) do you think should be protected in the Upper Georges River Catchment?**

There is a combination of specific places mentioned and the 'specialness' attributed according to the type of activity that takes place or special natural attribute. For example one respondent indicated 'All locations that have threatened ecological communities (in particular all shale based native vegetation) and areas that are known habitat for threatened bird species' and another said 'Places for family activities'.

##### **Comment Text**

Places for family activities - inc. picnics, swimming etc. Aboriginal heritage - incl. rock art.

River Bank Lands.

All vacant green space along the Georges between Glenfield and Appin.

All places from Appin to Casula it is a great system.

Don't know at this stage - will after the workshops.

All locations that have threatened ecological communities (in particular all shale based native vegetation) and areas that are known habitat for threatened bird species.

Darke's Forest area through Wedderburn, then on through Airds, Kentlyn and through to Ingleburn and Glenfield.

All locations, but in particular those with special significance, i.e. cultural heritage, endangered flora and fauna, etc.

The upper areas that are currently un (or under) developed. Particularly those areas that may be impacted on by current or future mining and urban development (including certain recreational activities).

Well, pretty much all-public land with the catchment area. If possible, acquisition of private land to create a contiguous green belt along the Georges River foreshore.

Place of high biodiversity/conservation value should be protected.

Wedderburn Gorge is in serious need of attention. Water flow is sometimes exceedingly limited. Is this because of periods of drought, destruction of upland swamps, long wall mining? The impact of housing development at St Helen's Park has resulted in poor water quality as Spring Creek enters the river at the Gorge. It also brings with it a lot of rubbish, which gets trapped, in the unsatisfactory river crossing. Campbelltown Council is working on an improved crossing, which should help in this regard. Silt builds up and reed growth has choked the former swimming hole.



Georges River near Appin needs to be protected from trail bikes and four wheel drive vehicles and people who dump rubbish - work is underway as is soil conservation but more fences are needed to exclude these recreational users who damage firetrails and flora and fauna. Georges River becomes polluted from coal dust etc because of coal trucks on the roads. BHP Billiton apparently regularly tests the river water but these results need to be available to the public. As Appin is 5km from headwaters of Georges the health of the River at Appin cannot be ignored.

The creation of the Dharawal SCA affords some protection to the O'Hare's Ck system but does not protect it from mining impacts. The upland swamps of this area are critical to the health of the whole Georges R. I'd like to see no mining at all but certainly none which could impact on swamps. The upper Georges R. (between Appin and the Woolwash) is currently in very poor state due to impacts from the discharge from Brennan's Ck dam. This section of river desperately needs cleaning up.

I believe that the hanging swamps are vital to the very existence of the river. I also am concerned at the coal mining under the riverbed, which is causing the diversion of the river flow underground, and the loss of water source to the surrounding vegetation, and fauna. I am aware of the taking of sand from the riverbed for building purposes by locals as well as the dumping of garbage and other waste in its catchment. Hazard reduction by firing the bushland may be a recommended practice for fire management, but this eliminates the fallen timber and decomposing vegetation on the floor of the understorey, which is vital for erosion control and conservation of the soil.

All riparian and vegetated areas in the catchment.

Sydney water catchment.

I think mining operations should not be allowed to go too close to riverbeds in order to avoid cracking and pollution.

Prioritise the various areas under threat. Identify threats, and devise appropriate strategies/objectives/actions/etc eg mining subsidence impact and loss of river flows resulting from cracking of sandstone strata.

Dharawal SCA and Crown Land adjacent to SCA, land along the Georges River between St. Helens Park and Appin, as the latter is the last remaining wildlife corridor between the Georges and Nepean Rivers, the whole of the Wedderburn Plateau. H Range within the Holsworthy Military Reserve including the whole of the reserve. No further development, clubs etc., be located in the upper Georges O'Hare's or its tributaries

All existing undeveloped areas. Most members of our Society believe that the urban development and population of the Sydney basin (including the Georges River catchment) have exceeded the optimum for the quality of life the present residents have known and expect to maintain. We therefore consider that proposals to extend more residential or industrial activity into existing undeveloped areas should be opposed.

All of it!!!!!!

Any areas that are having an impact on water quality and weed problems.

All of the areas, as every place is sacred and should be protected.

Crown land surrounding Upper Georges River on the eastern side on Appin. Currently this location is being used in an uncontrolled manner by 4WD and dirt bikes, causing erosion and weed invasion.

Areas where mining and urbanisation can affect the Georges river, especially sewerage, industrial and mine waste pollutants.

All riverbeds. All riparian zones (50m setbacks).

Areas of environmental significance containing a lot of biodiversity, and areas which water falls into drinking water supply catchments, such catchment areas near the military reserve in Holsworthy, and Maddens creek, O'Hare's creek and Stokes creek and Four Miles creek. Living particularly close to Smiths creek, and Bow Bowing creek. I'm concerned about the impact of rubbish in the area on aquatic life and water quality.

Locations should be promoted/not promoted depending on their individual features to ensure people appreciate them and use them in a manner that will assist in their preservation. Basin (bush walking) Ingleburn (Families) Simmos Beach (Families). Needs to recognise longer term vision of DoP and Kiamia Way Walking track as well as the draft walking track concept plans exhibited by council in ~2003. Ultimately should be done in some form controlled tourism type approach.

The more pristine locations such as The Woolwash, Freres Crossing, Simmos Beach and Long Point. Notwithstanding this, attention needs to be given to those areas, which are heavily effected by urbanisation (e.g. The Causeway).

Freres Crossing.

## **5. What activities (eg recreation, family, rural) do you think should be protected in the Upper Georges River Catchment?**

Respondents nominated that diverse types of recreation activities such as 'bushwalking, bird watching etc.' should be protected. Other activities that should be preserved in the upper catchment include swimming, 'swimming holes are significant recreation spots for families and young people. We need to ensure the water is safe for swimming'.

A number of activities were also listed that the area should be protected from. Specifically, trail bike riding, 4WD driving, development and mining.

### **Comment Text**

All of these - plus aboriginal heritage.

Activities to be assessed on an individual basis. Overall principle to be zero damage to natural environment.

By protected, I assume you mean fostered, rather than the Catchment area "protected from". I would like to see the fire trails opened up to the public more, and cycleway created so people can get to see the beauty of the area more easily. Bushwalking is a feature of my recreation in this area, however as I get older, I will probably see more on a bike. Probably a car park at Airds near Woolwash Rd, so we can have access to the beautiful bushland around the Woolwash would be an ideal first step.

I think that everyone should be able to continue using the area, but in a positive and sustainable way.

I am gravely concerned about environmental degradation, pollution, vandalism and lack of recreational opportunities. This whole area has the potential for restoration to near pristine condition and ongoing formal protection as a national park, including opportunities for development of bushwalking tracks and other passive recreation.

Swimming holes are significant recreation spots for families and young people. We need to ensure the water is safe for swimming.

Passive recreation (eg. swimming, bushwalking, canoeing).

Koalas were prevalent until the late 1890's, then were not seen in the area again until the 1950's, when it was believed by locals that they were released from another area, and now are in evidence again. These should be protected. I saw a quoll in 1945, and a platypus in 1983 but have never seen either since. We have lost many of our native fauna and flora. We have been fortunate that the Army was allocated such a large tract of land in the area, because although initially it was badly treated, with munitions explosions, deforestation and timber getting, roads carved into the area which eroded, etc. it has now enabled the conserving of this bushland which has regenerated and also its creeks. It is unfortunate that the population density in the area has exploded with exponential growth, causing degradation with over-use of the riverside picnic areas, and broken glass being strewn around. With any use of these public areas there is always the risk of "loving it to death" due to irresponsible activities, yet what is the point of restricting all use, if no one is allowed to enter to enjoy it or monitor the wildlife? Much of the land is already privately owned, so re-zoning is not really an option. Recreation areas, e.g., the Dharawal shooting range still abound. Responsible management by river-keeper programmes, community education, and access only to credentialed groups might be the answer to protecting these sensitive catchment areas.

Limited passive repeat passive recreation.

irrigation for farms; habitat for aquatic species and environmental flows

All of the above except for trail bike riding and fast powerboats, which erode the banks.

Protect quiet enjoyment of riverine environments by families, group's individuals.  
Protect biodiversity.

All natural biodiversity, water quality especially run off and taking of water at Westcliff Colliery no more extension to the emplacement area at Westcliff Colliery and mains sewerage for Appin.

Biodiversity conservation, peri-urban agriculture, existing recreation, existing low-density family living, existing employment opportunities, existing health, education and other social services.

All.

All activities should be protected as long as each is conducted in a manner that protects basic environmental quality.

I don't really know much about the area as I don't have a car and don't get around to many places like these. But I really believe any existing structure must be protected for future generations to enjoy!

Recreational boating.

Environmental and controlled recreation.

Conservation, bushland, recreation.

Rural activities causing significant runoff of pollutants should be better managed, rather than protected. Recreation activities such as fishing should be protected, but also managed to prevent over fishing of the catchment area. Activities such as swimming and camping should also be protected.

Linked to Q1 -Activities that are consistent with specific locations. Bushwalking, swimming, on water recreation, camp, track net along river. No rock climbing, No 4 4WD, motorbikes, mountain bikes - designated paths.

Recreational.

Swimming.

## **6. What do you think is special about the Upper Georges River Catchment?**

What is special about the Upper Georges River Catchment included visual descriptions of the area, a range of activities and wildlife.

### **Comment Text**

It is such a diverse eco system - flora and fauna that has struggle to survive the ongoing encroachment of suburbia.

Provides range of activities for local residents - access to beautiful bushland, for walks, relaxation etc.

I know from experience that the value of the Upper Georges River Catchment to biodiversity is extraordinarily high. For example, the catchment still supports bird species that have experienced population declines elsewhere in Australia. These include species legislated as 'threatened' such as the Glossy Black Cockatoo, Powerful Owl and Black-chinned Honeyeater. For the Black chinned Honeyeater - it is considered that the Upper Georges River population is the only remaining population to be found in western Sydney.

I have identified that the following factors make the upper Georges River catchment a high conservation priority for bird biodiversity in western Sydney: 1. High levels of bird biodiversity 2. Large numbers of bird species of high conservation significance 3. Core areas of endangered habitat for declining bird species 4. It represents the eastern geographic range limit of declining woodland birds. 5. It is vital for habitat connectivity 6. It is an important stopover habitat for migratory birds.

It was pretty much unspoiled until the 1970s, however much beauty still remains. The water upstream of the Woolwash is still clean and drinkable. Further towards the coast, native orchids still grow and flower as they have since they first appeared. I would like this to remain so. The fact that koalas have returned is also pretty special to me. The aboriginal sites are also something to be proud of.

The fact that the community have a beautiful natural environment with a variety of flora and fauna, and an important heritage so close to home.

It has some unique plants and animals that are threatened and need to be protected. The hanging swamps in the area are also very rare and offer habitat for endangered species as well as retention and cleansing of the water in the catchment. It is also a great place to see "nature" very close to a major population centre.

It's potential for development as a national park.

The upper Georges River catchment in some places appears untouched despite development and urbanisation has occurred in this area.

Areas of the river are close to people's backyards, enabling excellent opportunities for contemplation and exercise. Both the Aboriginal people of our district and the post-colonial settlers have used the river and its bushland. A sense of continuity of involvement with the river prevails. The fact that the river is surrounded by bushland is very special in an urban area.

The current lack of urbanisation and residential development i.e. for the first 5 kms or so.

It's a wonderful natural backdrop to the metropolis of Campbelltown. Habitat for koalas and other fauna and flora. Fantastic scope for bushwalking and swimming in pristine natural environment. Critically important for the health of the whole Georges R. system.

Having travelled extensively throughout Australia and made several trips overseas, gives one a special appreciation for the area in which one's childhood has been spent. The bushland is not unique--the same type of vegetation abounds in many areas, including some far removed, such as Fraser Island, but the co-location of clean-water creeks (albeit dark with leaf-litter), sandstone caves and boulders, flora (ground orchids, ferns, heaths, waratahs, wedding bush, Christmas bush and bells etc.) fauna (sugar gliders, birds, possums, even snakes [black, brown, tiger, carpet] etc.) and general topography, make it a nostalgic, secure and comforting environment. Even the insects: bull ants, meat-ants, cicadas, praying mantis, stick insects, Emperor Gum moths, hawk moths, march flies, mud hornets and gall wasps are all evocative to me of this "special" area.

Proximity to the Sydney urban area - it is one of Sydney's lungs.

Areas of natural beauty and biodiversity.

Marhnyes Hole was a beautiful and much-loved spot near Appin until mining wrecked it. Repairs are unsightly and impermanent. Other stretches of this river are very beautiful and need far more protection and care to preserve this beauty.

What was special about this place from an Aboriginal perspective? For me it is a very special landscape character.

At the moment O'Hare's and its tributaries are all but pristine, we are so lucky to have this so near and yet it is under such threat from development.

The activities in the catchment and its environmental condition strongly influence the quality of water in the downstream reaches and estuary of the river. The high rainfall of the Darkes Forest-O'Hare's Creek area contributes a large proportion of the freshwater input to the estuary. The Koala colony near Wedderburn and the relatively undisturbed habitats of the O'Hare's Creek and Punchbowl Creek valleys are special aspects of the catchment's biodiversity.

Its beauty, the water quality, the environment surrounding it. Its fauna and flora.

It is part of Campbelltown's treasured landscape, which I love, and I'd like to see it be preserved. I love the Aussie bush very much.

Sandstone gorges and bushland.

The amount of bushland still present, European and indigenous history.

It's a dynamic river, sustaining a diverse range of life forms and it supplies drinking water to catchment areas.

Unique natural environment that contradicts Campbelltown stereotype.

Its beauty and biodiversity.

I think that what is special is the natural state that the river is in and the quality of the vegetation.

## 7. Do you have a favourite memory of a time that you visited the Upper Georges River Catchment?

Many people had favourite memories of a time that they visited the UGR. These memories were often associated with particular locations and specific activities. They also were associated with family or friends. Sometimes it was an unusual experience,

'I recall a few years ago standing in the bushland at Peter Meadows Creek Kentlyn and seeing virtually in the same tree a Koala, two Black chinned Honeyeaters, and two Powerful Owls - all three species are listed as threatened species under NSW legislation'.

Sometimes it was the ordinary experience in a different location.

'Having a sandwich on the banks of Stokes Creek and seeing the snake and lizard prints on the sandy banks'.

### Comment Text

Bushwalking between old Ford road and Frere crossing as well as exploring the fire trails behind St Helens Park

Spending my childhood at various parts of it .

This is the same wishy-washy rubbish served up at the Campbelltown community forum. Instead: Please make use of the brains, experience, knowledge of those who were/are prepared to give time to serious questions re protection of this special, large area close to suburban development, but still retaining large areas of pristine habitat.

Every trip is special

There are many. I recall a few years ago standing in the bushland at Peter Meadows Creek Kentlyn and seeing virtually in the same tree a Koala, two Black chinned Honeyeaters, and two Powerful Owls - all three species are listed as threatened species under NSW legislation. What is amazing to me was that the location is less than 10 minutes drive from Campbelltown's CBD. I also remember the bird species that I used to see along the Georges River in the 1970's that are now locally extinct - birds like the Regent Honeyeater, Jacky Winter,

Many, too many to write here about. (1950's through July 2008)

I have several as I have been there many times.

Having a sandwich on the banks of Stokes Creek and seeing the snake and lizard prints on the sandy banks.

I remember when I first moved here (Campbelltown) 20 years ago, I was excited to find a swimming hole not 10 minutes from my door. I had small children at the time. It was quite an adventure to swim in the bush, even though we lived in the outer suburbs of Sydney. I used to boast about it to my friends living in Eastwood who couldn't understand why we would feel happy moving to Campbelltown, surely the end of the earth.

Marhney's Hole at Appin a popular swimming place until BHP Billiton mined under the Georges River and cracked all the sandstone. Legislation needs to be in place to prevent mining within a kilometre of rivers. The locals and SOS Rivers are fighting this battle on their own because only the locals see what is really happening.

Earliest contact was in 1970's when I was introduced to the delights of The Basin at Kentlyn. Most recently it was in April this year when NPA Macarthur ran a platypus survey in the Dharawal over two weekends and I got spend 20 hours just sitting in glorious surroundings soaking up the environment at dawn and dusk.

I didn't just visit the Upper Georges River; I lived there. When we moved back to Wedderburn after the war (1945) we had little water, (only a well which seeped just enough for daily household use) so would take the washing down in the horse and cart to the Georges River, at the back of our property (almost opposite the Hume and Hovell monument at Appin) and whilst the sheets, towels and clothes were hanging over bushes to dry, we had a swim and then a picnic under the trees on the river bank. Lunch consisted of several days-old bread, butter and home-made plum or peach jam, some peaches and apples from the farm and tea boiled in a billy over a makeshift fire surrounded by sandstone rocks. The tea was sweetened with sugar, but had no milk, and was drunk from battered enamel mugs.

The smell of the burning gum leaves and twigs, the gentle zephyr breeze in the treetops, the dappled sunlight caressing and warming our bodies, and the river water sparkling and gurgling in the sunshine as it meandered down the deep valley, and lying on a rock sated from lunch, are all fond memories of my childhood. Then we would pack up, collect all the dried washing, folding it carefully to save ironing and the poor old horse would trudge up the hill to the clanking of the traces and harness, pulling us along in the cart through the bush to our house. At night we would snuggle down in our beds of freshly washed linen, perfumed by the bushes upon which they had been hung: wattle, eggs and bacon, lambertia, wedding bush etc. Apart from our own waterhole on the Georges we frequently visited O'Dwyer's crossing on the Georges, which had been constructed by the military to go through to Appin, I gather. I remember it as not being very deep, but a bridge across a broad expanse of sand with a small creek in the middle. We also visited O'Hare's Creek, as a group of children (no adults) riding our bicycles there and having a picnic and a swim in the deep hole at the foot of the waterfall. We would call in at Mrs. Bo stock's on the way home for a drink of water, who lived at the top of the hill. She would go down to the creek each day, including public holidays like Christmas Day to read the water metre on behalf of the Water Board. Sometimes we would drive through Lysaghts Road to go to Cataract Dam for a picnic, although it was a terrible deep-rutted road, which really tested out the springs on our old car. We would occasionally go to the Woolwash, but it was always too well attended by scores of residents and we felt inhibited and could not enjoy it as much as our own waterholes. Minerva was another one we loved but a bit more difficult of access. I did not visit Frere's Crossing until about 10 years ago, and was a little disappointed as I had heard so much over the years about it, but obviously I did not see it at its unspoilt best. I visited Marhney's Hole with the GRCCC a few years ago and was shocked at the disappearance of the river, and reappearance further down. It is obvious that recent memories are not as pleasant as the childhood ones.

Doing several platypus surveys and visited unique upland swamps.



Seeing a kingfisher.

My numerous visits to Mahrnyes Hole and Jutts Crossing have only saddened and depressed me. My most recent visit to the stretch now under threat from mining showed me once again how vulnerable and precious our local rivers are.

Yes the field trip to assess the mining impact on sandstone formations on a day when it was 100 F on the old scale. It was a pity you could not drink the water from the river!!

Sitting with friends, just looking at the scenery swimming in the lovely clean creeks and just knowing it is there

Two favourite memories: (1) with other boy scouts in the 1950s we hiked for three days through the southern part of the military reserve (then not fenced or controlled to keep people out) from Waterfall to Liverpool via Punchbowl and Harris Creeks, (2) as a research scientist in the 1970s I spent many days in the O'Hare's Creek catchment mapping the vegetation, soils and geomorphology as part of the Australian Representative Basins Program (administered then by the Commonwealth Department of Natural Resources).

Lots, too many that time will allow me to list here. It has been my stomping ground for over 40 years now.

I have never ever visited the area before, but after attending Riverfest. I learnt so much about the area that I feel I would like to visit there some time and want the river system to be there for me and my family to enjoy and build memories about the place. So you see why I'd like to get involved in the preservation of the area.

Riding my bike through Dharawal land off the Appin Rd.

Fishing trips around O'Hare's creek.

First trip top Basin Reserve and Woolwash.

## **8. What do you see are the issues to be addressed in the Upper Georges River Catchment?**

There are a number of issues identified by respondents. These include water quality, sustainable management of the local environment, mining impacts and the impacts of large-scale activities such as global warming.

### **Comment Text**

The degradation of water quality - rubbish that runs through stormwater into Spring creek then onto Georges River, the ongoing housing development around the catchment area placing huge levels of stress on the system.

Rezone land adjoining the river from Industrial to other uses.

Pollution, river flow - especially damage from mining. Reducing weed infestation. Maintaining healthy environmental condition, natural beauty. Protection from inroads made by commercial development. Local wildlife - native animals, birds (protection from introduced species - foxes, cats etc). Reducing trail bike riding through paths in surrounding bush.

Damage to, cracking of riverbeds, rock falls, subsidence, gas emissions from rivers, loss of water from rivers, and esp. the threat of further mining. See BHP 30 year plan. Weeds, urban runoff, uncontrolled access, both vehicular and pedestrian. Inappropriate development e.g. development of bushland at St Helens Park

1/ Global warming may mean a smaller flow and drier microclimate for the plants and animals. Impact to be assessed and strategies put in place 2/ Water extractions at Darkes Forest. (link with 1/ above) 3/ Coal Mining (not to be excluded, just monitored and impact managed) 4/ Pollution - future strategies to take this into consideration 5/ (not necessarily the lowest priority)  
Community access should be encouraged so we can all see the true beauty of what is there. Facilitate community access whilst minimising pollution and more people will appreciate Campbelltown's secret beauty spots.

Rubbish dumping, weeds and feral animals, but more indirectly, the way every household needs to live in order to save areas like these - sustainable living. I also think that the area needs to be brought into more focus and one of the ways could be to work with the local schools more in the form of excursions, education centres/visits, combined projects, etc.

Making everyone aware of how special a place it is and how important it is to protect it. Ensuring past and future human activities have minimal or no impact on these fragile ecosystems. Getting coordinated commitment from local, state, commonwealth governments and the private sector that have some control over parts of the area.

Some years ago I registered my interest in the restoration and improvement of the Ingleburn Reserve area of the Upper Georges River area. Regrettably, I don't believe that this has ever progressed any further than some sort of planning document being produced. It continues to deteriorate through pollution, vandalism, rubbish dumping, car hoons and other anti-social behaviour. I sometimes visit The Basin area at Kentlyn and these problems are clearly evident there also. I suspect it is safe to assume that these problems would be extrapolated across the entire catchment area.

Improvements in riparian corridors - revegetation, weeding, bank stabilisation, all of which can improve water quality in the long term Protection of biodiversity  
Long wall mining and its impact on water levels etc

Long wall mining is an extremely damaging activity. The fact that damage occurs legally with minimal concern of government is a serious worry. The other issue is inappropriate development activity with drainage impacts on the river. Specifically Campbelltown will need to watch how the next stage of development at St Helen's Park proceeds.

Prevent mining, damage from recreational users and weeds.

Threats from coal mining, clay and sandstone quarries, Maddens Plains Golf Course resort proposal, illegal access into Dharawal and other bushland by trail bike riders and horse riders, rubbish dumping, illegal clearing by orchardists at Darkes Forest. Need for much greater education and awareness of the locals re the value of what we have in this area and how they can help preserve it.

Dedicated commitment by local government, and supplying of funding, as well as services-in kind. More realization by the public that it is the councils in a partnership with State Govt instrumentalities such as Corrective Services and Waterways providing the services of the Riverkeeper, as every press release only mentions Waterways, and sometimes Corrective Services but neglects the councils. If the councils were given more publicity then those councils, which are loath to commit funds, would receive the kudos, which would encourage them to do so. Less sewerage outlets, as there are currently over 400, which contributes greatly to pollution, and there are 9 licences, which should be curtailed. The river is not a dumping ground--it is the life-blood of Sydney's south! Developers should be policed more to stop cement slurry run-off, siltation etc. polluting the river. Boat careening preparations should be inspected more carefully to stop chemicals entering the river, and industrial wastes from factories policed more.

Clean it up at all levels and provide for its rehabilitation.

Urban and small hobby farm sprawl; water overuse and extraction; pollution; environmental flows and aquatic habitat preservation and conservation; weeds.

Mine plans along the Nepean, as well as those along the Georges, are undermining and damaging dozens of tributaries of the Upper Georges River as well as the Nepean, as the long wall panels are so long. Mining both cracks the riverbeds in thousands of places and contaminates the water with ecotoxic chemicals leaching out from the fractured Hawkesbury sandstone.

Do we know what sort of a river we will have when mining is completed? What further impacts are likely from on-going urban consolidation in this catchment?

Public , council and government education, stop clay sandstone mining, curb long wall mining near creeks, keep out motorbikes and four-wheel drives. Crown land along Appin/Bulli Road to be incorporated into the Dharawal SCA, withdraw Illawarra Shooters Club lease and not allow the Illawarra Golf proposed development to go ahead

Conservation and threats to this by land development and mining interests.

MINING underneath it. The damage being inflicted upon it by recreational users . Agricultural uses of the water from it. Chemical run offs into it.

Protection of the upper reaches and any activity that impacts on water quality and weed problems

The contamination of the rivers by litter, shopping trolleys, chemicals and eels in the rivers and streams. Also signage in the area for people not to litter and preserve the area for our flora and fauna or penalties will occur.

As discussed uncontrolled access to crown land, septic systems in Appin and need for a sewerage system to be brought on line.

Expanding urbanisation, rezoning of areas to become industrial and residential. Expansion of coal mining under rivers and in once natural areas

-Protecting habitats around creeks near urban and rural areas. -Pollution from industrial and rural runoff -Pollution from urban areas, such as rubbish - Sediment and erosion, due to runoff from urban areas and industrial activities

Continued development environmental conservation conflict Established city based on outdated environmental flooding design -focus on flood mitigation get the water out of town and to the river ASAP General resourcing beyond good intentions Greater community appreciation and changed mindset on value and potential of the river and catchment and how it can serve the community

Urbanisation, water quality, pollutants (litter), poor management practices

Water quality and improved access

## 9. Is there anything else you would like us to know?

### Comment Text

We have an obligation to our generation not just future, and the way we as a society continue to ignore our immediate environment is not just going to have a long term impact but we will see the immediate impact on reduced flora and fauna, climate and our life's blood - water

There is a wealth of knowledge and expertise re. land management issues in our community. Please be assured of our ongoing support and assistance

Looking forward to the workshops

I represent a very active (Macarthur based) Australasian Native Orchid society, which has taken an interest in the area for many years. We can offer our knowledge and experience for future planning.

It is great that you're doing this project as this area is in some ways part of the "lungs and kidneys" of Sydney and people need to be aware of this. They also need to be aware of its unique beauty and the rare ecosystems it supports.

I would like to see something beyond a planning document produced. Little, and usually nothing, results from these studies. Which means that they are a complete waste of public funds. It would be better spent simply sending in clean up crews to remove rubbish, graffiti and weeds. At least that would be a tangible improvement.

How many of your team have explored the Georges around Appin?

I would like to be kept informed of the progress of the EMP at every stage and I'd like to think that NPA Macarthur would be considered a key stakeholder in the process. We'd be available to provide input at any point. I look forward to hearing from you further on this.

Will keep this in mind that you are interested --and CARE!

How urgent is something going to be done?

can you send me a map with the council boundaries on it so I can be sure where the UGR stops and starts - I googled it and couldn't be sure

I am a retired now growing vegetables and natives in a bush block at Douglas Park on the Cataract River, and campaigning for the rivers in my spare time.

A challenge for the future is coordinating large institutional and private land owners to ensure the most effective outcomes for the river's future

We would be interested in any future actions of your committee.

Anything that I can do to help preserve this our most important resource.

Wollondilly is a changing area which was once rurally focused and is now more hobby farms and becoming residential, this has lead to an increase in weeds, land clearing and erosion as hobby farmers and residents aren't using the land sustainably to protect and conserve the remaining biodiversity?

How will you keep us informed of what is will be happening?