



GR Georges
Riverkeeper
ANNUAL REPORT
2017 - 2018

GEORGES RIVERKEEPER EXECUTIVE GROUP SUMMARY



Councillor Peter Scaysbrook
Georges Riverkeeper Chairperson



Councillor Geoffrey Shelton
Georges Riverkeeper Vice-Chairperson



Councillor Ben Moroney
Georges Riverkeeper Treasurer



Beth Salt
George Riverkeeper Program Manager



Fiona Stock
Georges Riverkeeper Host Manager



The Georges Riverkeeper Executive Group comprises of our Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Treasurer, supported by the Program Manager and our Host Manager from Georges River Council. The Executive Group Office Bearers are members of our Committee elected by our member Council Councillors. Meeting on a monthly basis, the Executive is responsible for the management and functioning of Georges Riverkeeper, reviewing its financial management, operations and programs and keeping our member Councils informed so that key decisions can be decided at our bi-monthly General Committee Meetings.

The last year has been productive and exciting. A major change was adopting a new business name, whilst retaining our entity status as the GRCCC Inc. In conjunction with changing our business name to Georges Riverkeeper, a review of what we had achieved in the past, what the

emerging priorities were for managing the Georges River in the present day, and what we can do now to conserve and improve the Georges River in the future was undertaken. Reviewing our direction involved member Council staff working together to undertake a review of the Georges River Management and Implementation Plan, resulting in the development of the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan for Georges Riverkeeper. From the Strategy, an Annual Work Plan for 2018-2019 has been developed and we look forward to its implementation. The Executive Group would like to thank our Member Councils, Council staff, our stakeholders and community representatives for their support and contribution throughout the year.

Georges River Executive Group



Beth Salt
George Riverkeeper Program Manager

Georges Riverkeeper is one of Australia's longest running catchment management organisations, which has progressed from humble beginnings as a group of passionate and committed volunteers working together to protect the Georges River with local council support since 1979. Although the organisation has changed significantly, the underlying focus has remained to provide information and implement actions to conserve and improve the waterways and existing natural environment within the Georges River catchment. This past year has seen the most recent evolution of the Georges Riverkeeper, with a thorough Program Review and the development of the Strategic Plan.

I look forward to implementing our Programs with our stakeholders to strive to achieve best practice management for a liveable urban river.

RIVER HEALTH MONITORING PROGRAM



River Health applies scientifically rigorous methods to the assessment of freshwater tributaries and estuarine sections of the Georges River. River Health is funded by Georges Riverkeeper Member Councils and receives ongoing support from the community, government, university and industry stakeholders.

River Health communicates waterway management issues to a broad audience across the Georges River catchment. Annual River Health Report Cards are used to communicate the relative condition of waterways across the catchment to the general public. In 2017 - 18, River Health also developed rapid visual assessments to allow monitoring at a higher spatial resolution to inform targeted management aimed at improving waterway condition in urban areas. Those assessments will inform the development of Sub-catchment Management Plans, which will be useful for

guiding proactive and effective management of waterways across the Georges River catchment.

River Health began in 2009 and is now entering its tenth year. In 2018 - 19, some activities previously done within River Health will move to Research or Education & Capacity Building Programs. River Health will continue collecting data to inform evidence-based waterway management across the Georges River catchment. Georges Riverkeeper will work with Western Sydney University to offer internships to students whom will assist with River Health monitoring.

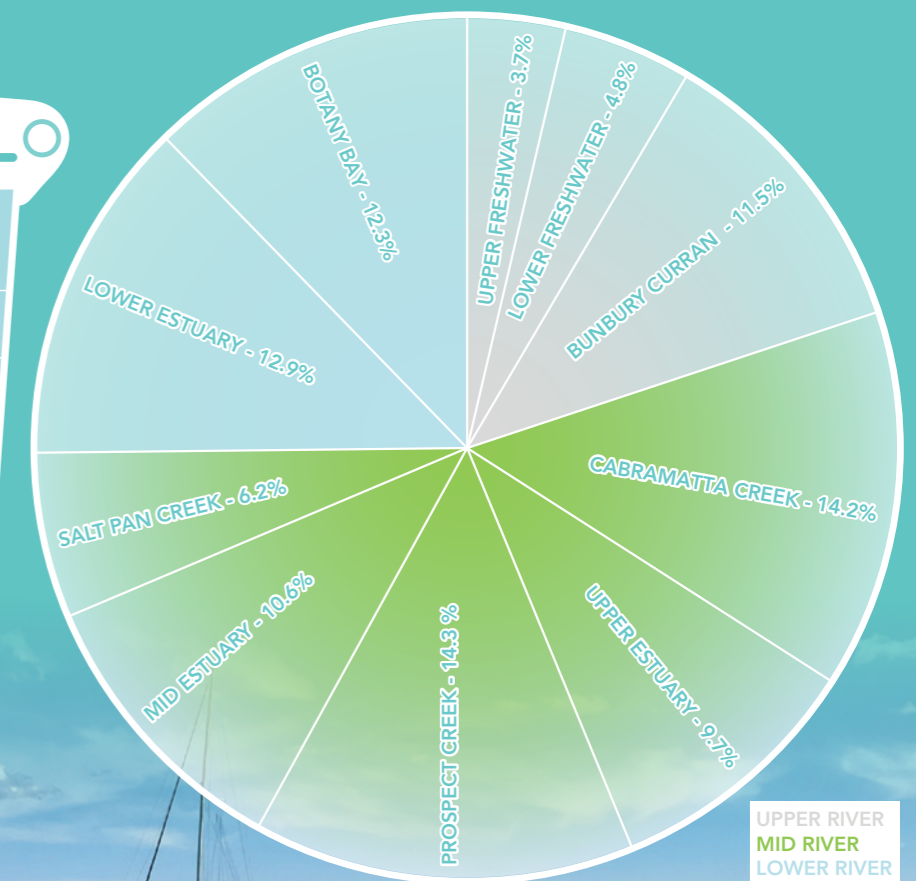
LITTER REMOVAL CATCHMENT ACTIONS PROGRAM

The Catchment Actions Program (previously the Riverkeeper Program) is a cornerstone program of the Georges Riverkeeper that removes rubbish from land surrounding the river and its tributaries, preventing the rubbish from being transported to downstream waterways. The Catchment Actions Program prevented 132.4 tonnes of rubbish entering the river in 2017-2018 alone, and approximately 735 tonnes of rubbish from July 2011 to June 2018.

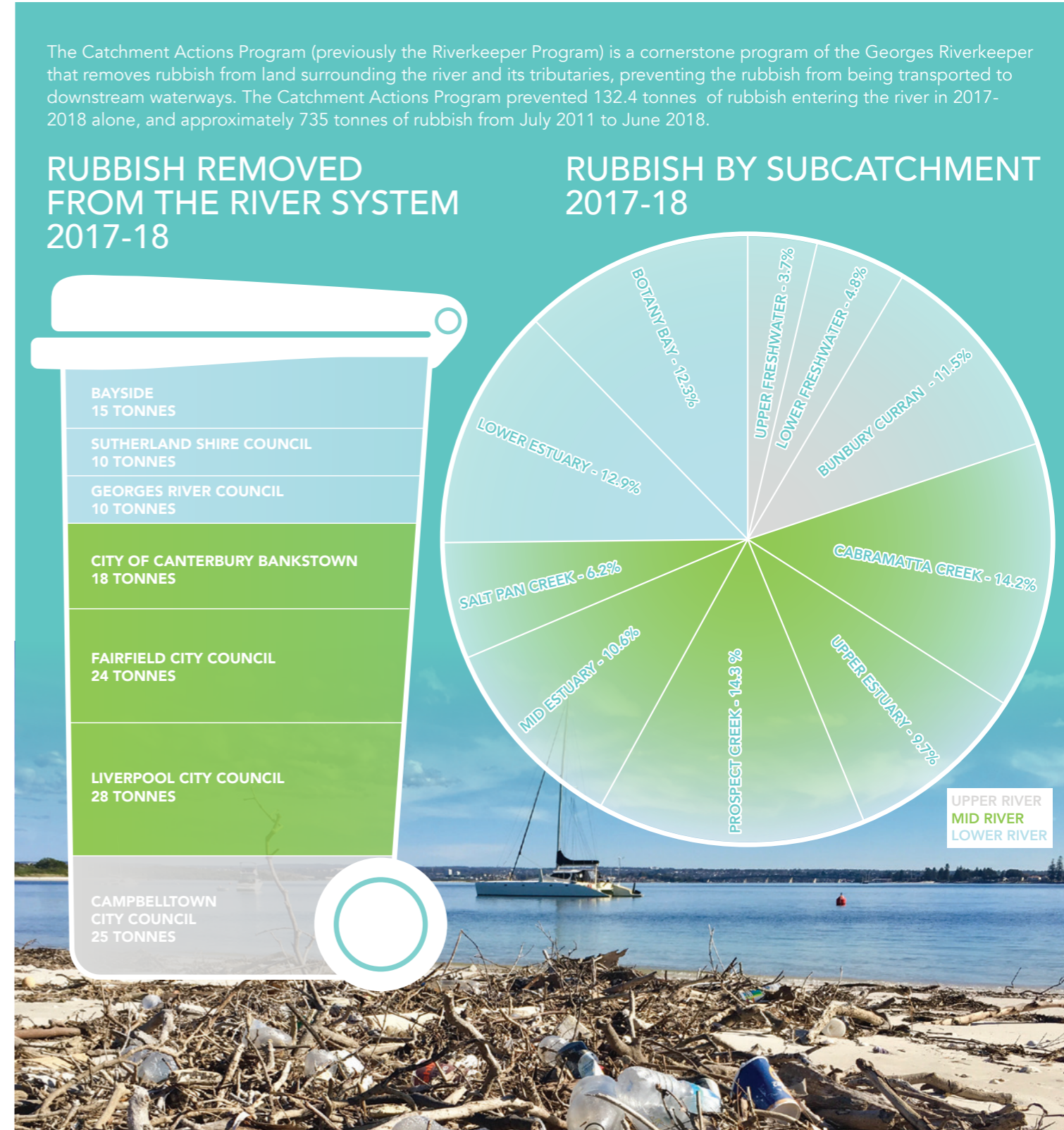
RUBBISH REMOVED FROM THE RIVER SYSTEM 2017-18

BAYSIDE	15 TONNES
SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL	10 TONNES
GEORGES RIVER COUNCIL	10 TONNES
CITY OF CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN	18 TONNES
FAIRFIELD CITY COUNCIL	24 TONNES
LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL	28 TONNES
CAMPBELLTOWN CITY COUNCIL	25 TONNES

RUBBISH BY SUBCATCHMENT 2017-18



UPPER RIVER
MID RIVER
LOWER RIVER



GET THE SITE RIGHT CAMPAIGN



During the months of November 2017 and May 2018, Georges Riverkeeper joined forces with Parramatta River Catchment Group, Cooks River Alliance, Sydney Coastal Councils Group, NSW EPA and the NSW Department of Planning and Environment to conduct two 'Get the Site Right' Campaigns. With more than 20 Councils involved, the educational and compliance campaigns targeted building sites to ensure they were compliant with erosion and sediment control.

Each campaign involved training Council staff to undertake inspections that specifically targeted sediment and erosion control on building sites, with the campaign ending with a one-day inspection Blitz around Sydney's waterways.



498 Inspections on the blitz day alone

\$212,412

The fines issues throughout the campaign

COMMUNICATIONS



MEDIA

In December 2017, Tony Wales from Georges Riverkeeper and Vanessa Cavanagh featured in an interview with Wendy Harmer on ABC 702 about the Georges River and the first urban river Aboriginal Riverkeeper team. The interview broadcast to a Sydney audience, discussed the evolving role of our organisation, the livability of the Georges River and the importance, culturally and environmentally, of our Aboriginal Riverkeeper Team protecting and conserving the Georges River.

Download and listen to the conversation here: <http://www.abc.net.au/radio/sydney/programs/focus/eora76mix/9262174>

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In 2017–2018, the Georges River catchment community were directly engaged in learning about Georges Riverkeeper activities and the river through presentations, festivals, excursions and other events.

593 primary school and high school students were directly engaged, mainly during **excursions at local waterways**.

476 people from the broader Georges River catchment community were directly engaged, mainly through **presentations**.

Over **1500 Report Cards** produced by Georges Riverkeeper were distributed by libraries and community centres across the catchment.

Georges Riverkeeper participated in the **Campbelltown Riverfest, Oatley Lions Festival, National Tree Day** and **Speaking for the Planet**.

The **Georges Riverkeeper Facebook page** moved beyond **900 friends**, with over 95% of friends also liking the page.

CONFERENCES

Georges Riverkeeper attended and presented at:

- Australian Mangrove and Saltmarsh Network Conference, titled 'Upper Salt Pan Creek: a gross pollutant reduction case study'
- Australian Freshwater Sciences Society Conference, titled 'Impoverished urban stream macroinvertebrate communities on concrete and natural substrates'
- Stormwater NSW Forum, titled 'Through to the (River)keeper'

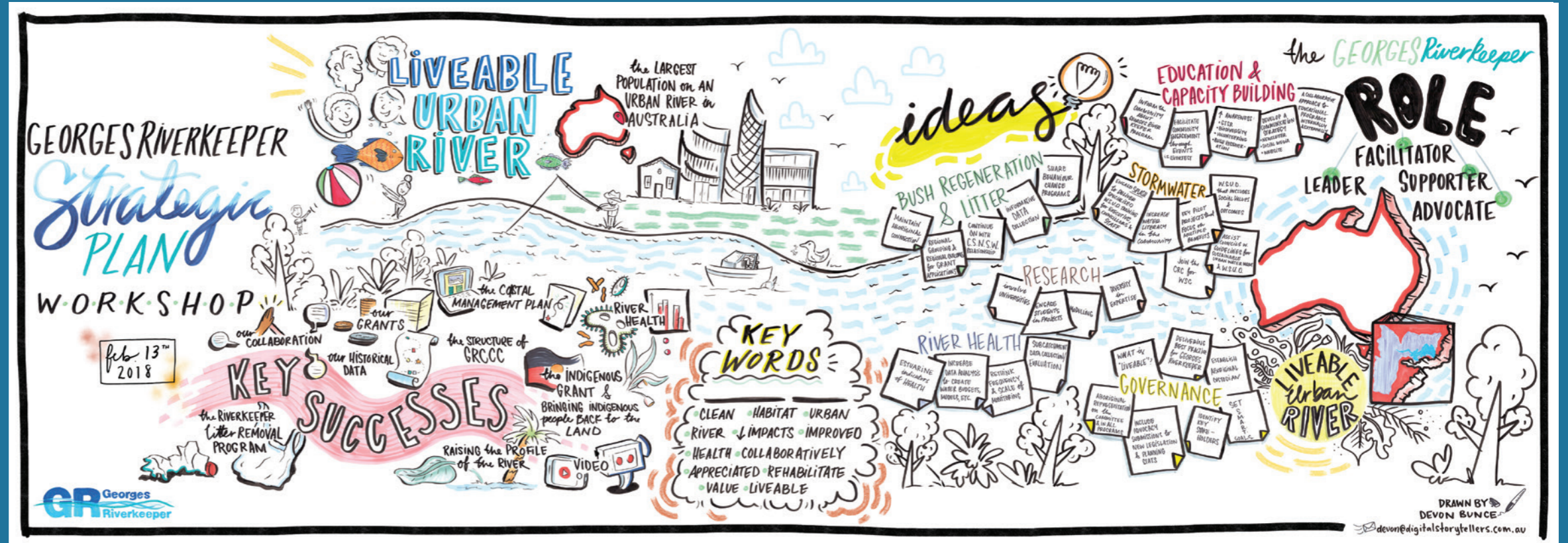


STRATEGIC PLAN

GEORGES RIVERKEEPER'S ASPIRATIONAL GOAL:

BEST PRACTICE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT FOR A LIVEABLE URBAN RIVER.

In February 2017, Georges Riverkeeper coordinated a workshop with member Council staff to review the Management and Implementation Plan for the Georges River. It was possible to close off elements of the Plan that were no longer relevant, bringing forward new ideas and priorities to provide a framework from which the Strategic Plan for 2018-2022 was developed.



GEORGES RIVERKEEPER STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2022

The Strategic Plan sets out the direction that the Georges Riverkeeper will take over the four year period (2018-2022). Georges Riverkeeper facilitates proactive waterway management that is adaptive and integrated across the catchment, rather than being reactive and piecemeal. There are five focus areas in the Strategic Plan:

CATCHMENT ACTIONS PROGRAM

This program, previously the Riverkeeper Program, focuses on on-ground works, primarily litter removal and, where grant funding is available, bush regeneration.

RIVER HEALTH MONITORING PROGRAM

This program aids adaptive management by ongoing monitoring of the health of the river, which facilitates efficient and effective use of management resources directed towards waterway improvement.

STORMWATER PROGRAM

Georges Riverkeeper and its member Councils will work towards improving stormwater management to regulatory best management practices standards.

RESEARCH PROGRAM

This new program will improve our knowledge about the effects of urbanisation on complex aquatic ecosystems, how best to mitigate the impacts, the features that will define liveable urban rivers in the future and how to overcome the multifaceted barriers presently acting to hinder progress towards making liveable urban rivers.

EDUCATION & CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

Although we have always had an educational role, this new program will expand and engage with a broader range of stakeholders who presently lack a shared understanding about the main issues affecting liveability of waterways across the catchment and how to effectively manage the issues.

FINANCIAL REPORT GEORGES RIVERKEEPER 2017-18*

INCOME		\$
Membership and Program fees	469,267	
Operating Grants	0	
Interest	16,022	
Other Revenue	457	
TOTAL INCOME	485,745	
EXPENSES		
Employee benefits expense	351,635	
Depreciation and amortisation expense	15,455	
Materials & Contracts	83,989	
Other expenses	35,617	
TOTAL EXPENSES	486,696	
NET OPERATING RESULT	(951)	

* For our detailed independently audited financial statement please go to our website: www.georgesriver.org.au

MICROPLASTICS

Microplastics are small pieces of plastic that enter and pollute the environment. Microplastics are not a specific kind of plastic, rather they are any type of plastic fragment that is less than five millimetres in length.

Plastic does not biodegrade like organic materials rather it photodegrades by breaking up in to smaller and smaller pieces – but it always remains plastic. Microplastics can be plastics manufactured to that size or fragments of photodegraded plastics littered in the environment.

Manufactured microplastics can come from clothing microfibrils that are shed when we wash them, plastic microbeads used in cosmetics, or nurdles (the pre-production raw plastics material used in manufacturing). Fragmented plastics can be any plastic that is broken up such as bottles, bags, straws, or anything made of plastic.

The Georges River has a big problem with microplastics so to quantify how big a problem Georges Riverkeeper will be teaming up with AUSMAP (Australian Microplastic Assessment Project) to scientifically measure the extent of microplastics in the Georges River environment and to include the data in our River Health reporting.



MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

EXECUTIVE GROUP

- Chairperson: Clr Peter Scaysbrook, Sutherland Shire Council
- Vice-Chairperson: Clr Geoff Shelton, Liverpool City Council
- Treasurer: Clr Ben Moroney, Campbelltown City Council
- Georges Riverkeeper Program Manager: Beth Salt
- Georges Riverkeeper Host Manager: Fiona Stock, Georges River Council
- Georges Riverkeeper Administration Officer: Lisa Smith

COUNCILLORS OF MEMBER COUNCILS

- Bayside Council: Clr Andrew Tsounis
- Campbelltown City Council: Clr Darcy Lound, Clr Ben Moroney
- City of Canterbury Bankstown: Clr Khal Asfour, Clr Alex Kuskoff
- Fairfield City Council: Clr Adrian Wong
- Georges River Council: Clr Warren Tegg
- Liverpool City Council: Clr Geoff Shelton, Clr Peter Harle
- Sutherland Shire Council: Clr Peter Scaysbrook, Clr Tom Croucher
- Wollondilly Shire Council: Clr Michael Banasik

GEORGES RIVERKEEPER STAFF

- Program Manager: Beth Salt
- Program Coordinator, Environmental Officer: Tony Wales
- Program Coordinator, Aquatic Ecologist: Dr David Reid
- Administration Officer: Lisa Smith

STAFF REPRESENTATIVES OF MEMBER COUNCILS

- Bayside Council: David Dekel, Alexandra Vandine
- Campbelltown City Council: Mitchell Clark, Renee Winsor
- City of Canterbury Bankstown: Paul Angel, Nell Graham, Cherie Blackburn, Joanne McDonnell, Daniella Santucci
- Fairfield City Council: Leonie Gray, Tim Johnston, Helen Pollard, Scott Reyes
- Georges River Council: Fiona Stock, Andrew Spooner, Damien Duggan
- Liverpool City Council: Joel Daniels, Maruf Hossain, Biljana Jovanovic, Madhu Pudasaini, Sai Natarajan, Alexi Gilchrist
- Sutherland Shire Council: Nathan Varley, Beth Noel, Graham Avery, Brendan Graham
- Wollondilly Shire Council: Alex Stengl, Damion Stirling, Bruce Devonport

PARTNERSHIPS

- Cooks River Alliance
- Local Aboriginal Land Councils and Councils' Aboriginal Advisory Groups
- NSW Department of Education – Georges River Environmental Education Centre
- NSW Department of Justice - Corrective Services
- NSW Environment Protection Authority
- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Parramatta River Catchment Group
- SPLASH
- Sydney Coastal Councils Group
- Western Sydney University, Regional Centre for Expertise on Education for Sustainable Management

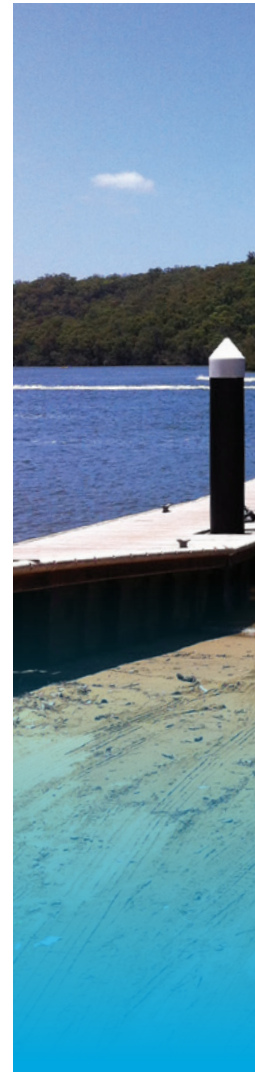
GENERAL MEETING ATTENDEES

- NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
- NSW Roads and Maritime Services
- Sydney Water

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

- Georges River Environmental Alliance
- Botany Bay & Catchment Alliance
- Lower Georges River Sustainability Initiative
- Friends of Oatley





GR Georges Riverkeeper

The Georges Riverkeeper is an alliance of Councils with collective responsibility for the Georges River and its catchment

