






**GR** Georges  
Riverkeeper  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2018/19**





# GEORGES RIVERKEEPER EXECUTIVE GROUP'S REPORT

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**Councillor  
Geoffrey Shelton**  
Georges Riverkeeper  
Chairperson
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**Councillor  
Peter Scaysbrook**  
Georges Riverkeeper  
Vice Chairperson
- 

**Councillor  
Adrian Wong**  
Georges Riverkeeper  
Treasurer
- 

**Beth Salt**  
Georges 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 Officer 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 the 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.

This year has been the first year that we have implemented the Georges Riverkeeper Strategic Plan 2018-2022, which was developed and adopted in 2017/18.

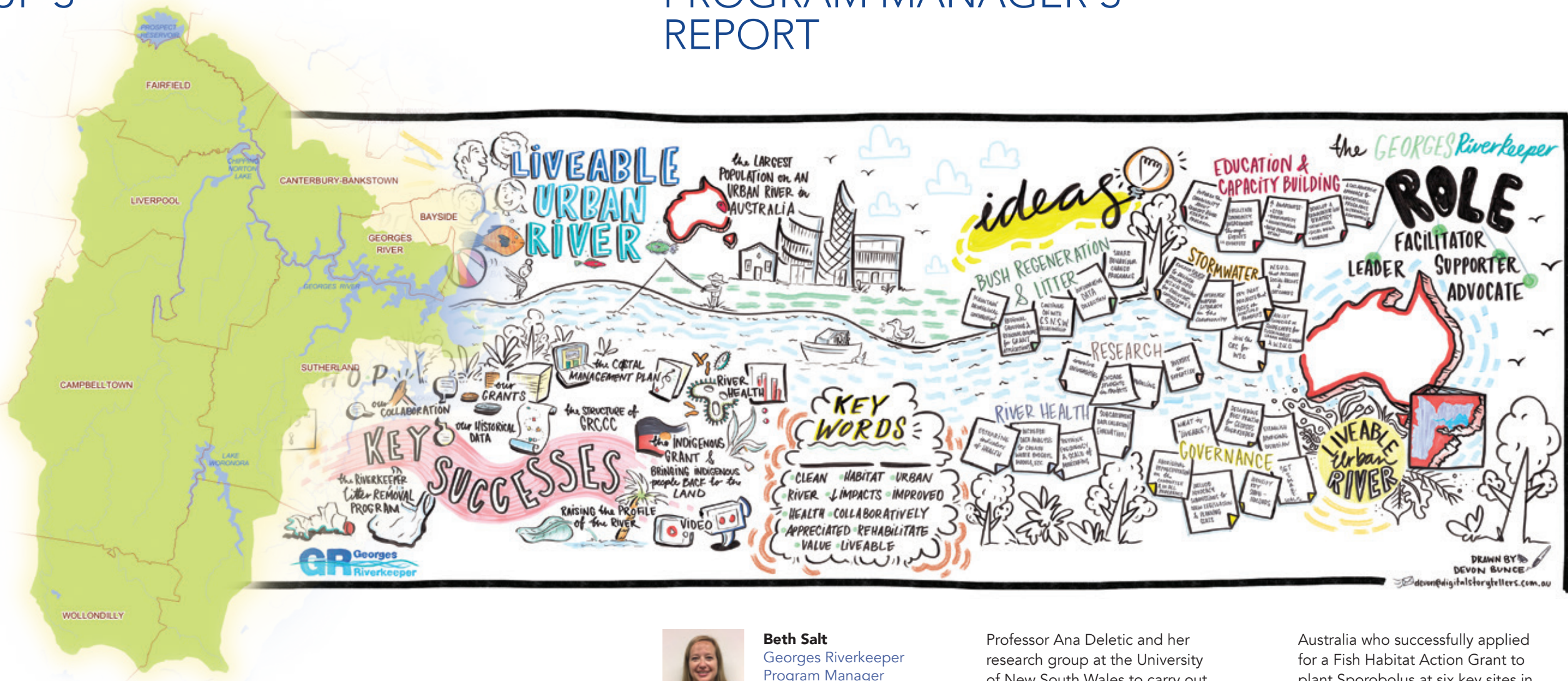
The Executive drove changes to the Georges Riverkeeper Constitution to better reflect our governance structure, which was adopted in November 2018. In addition to the Constitution, the Georges Riverkeeper also adopted a Code of Conduct and a Code of Meeting Practices.


In 2019, Georges Riverkeeper celebrates its 40th anniversary, acknowledging the commitment and dedication from all those who have contributed to the establishment of our organisation and those who are working with us towards our aspirational goal of best practice environmental management for a liveable urban river.

The Executive would like to thank our member Councils, Council staff, our stakeholders and community representatives for their support and contribution throughout the year.

Georges Riverkeeper Executive Group

# GEORGES RIVERKEEPER PROGRAM MANAGER'S REPORT



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**Beth Salt**  
Georges Riverkeeper  
Program Manager
- Georges Riverkeeper successfully implemented the Georges Riverkeeper Strategic Plan this year, the first year of a four year plan. There were a number of achievements this year, which are detailed throughout this report including the following highlights:
- The team has grown with the employment of a Communications Officer, which has had many benefits including improved media relations and social media presence, and enhanced credibility and online presence via the development of our new website.
  - Georges Riverkeeper's Research Program commenced and partnered with noted academic

- Professor Ana Deletic and her research group at the University of New South Wales to carry out research that is applicable to our member Councils.
- Georges River Council successfully applied for a grant on behalf of Georges Riverkeeper and its member Councils to complete a Scoping Study (stage 1) to transition the Georges River Estuary Coastal Zone Management Plan to a Coastal Management Program.
  - Georges Riverkeeper successfully applied for two NSW Environmental Trust Rehabilitation Grants with Campbelltown City Council and Sutherland Shire Council to rehabilitate bush sites in Simmos Beach and Oyster Creek, respectively.
  - Georges Riverkeeper partnered with Conservation Volunteers
- Australia who successfully applied for a Fish Habitat Action Grant to plant *Sporobolus* at six key sites in the Georges River Catchment.
- Georges Riverkeeper was part of leading the most successful 'Get the Site Right' Campaign to date, conducted in May 2019.
  - The introduction of the Container Deposit Scheme has resulted in an estimated 30% reduction in the amount of rubbish collected in the catchment, which is attributed to the wide-spread uptake of the Scheme reducing the amount of plastic bottles and containers in the catchment.
- I look forward to continuing to implement our Programs with our members and stakeholders to strive to achieve best practice management for a liveable urban river.





# CATCHMENT ACTIONS PROGRAM LITTER REMOVAL

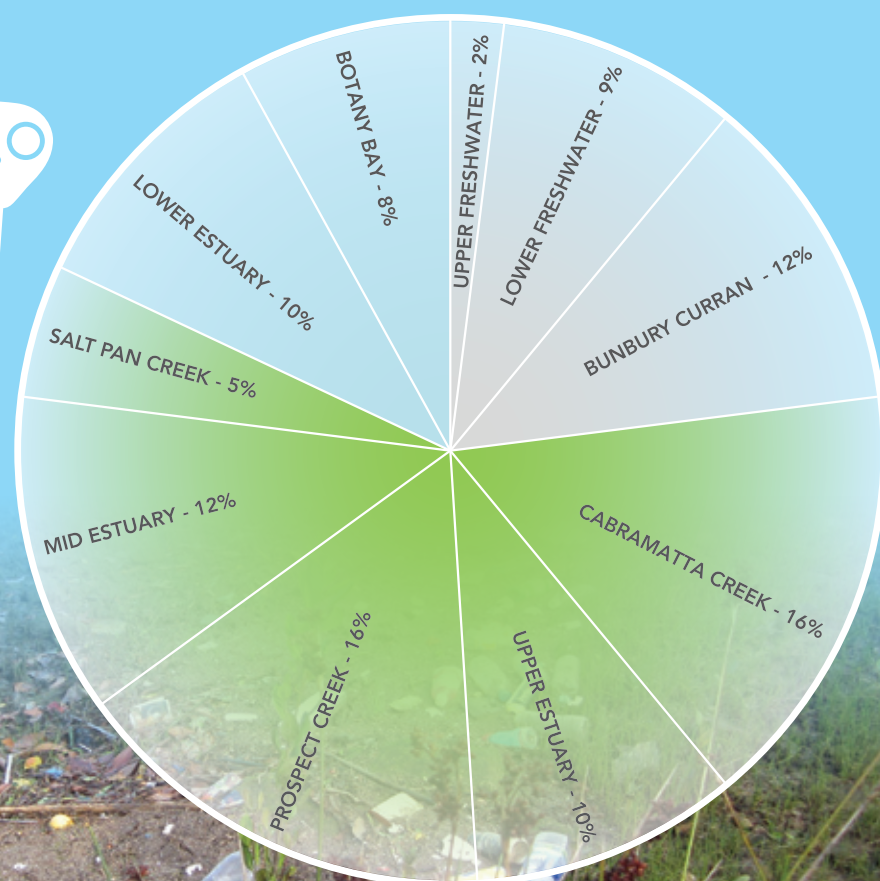
## LITTER REMOVAL

The Catchment Actions Program removes rubbish from the land surrounding the river and its tributaries, preventing the rubbish from being transported to downstream waterways. The Catchment Actions Program prevented approximately 110 tonnes of rubbish from entering the river in 2018/19, and approximately 845 tonnes of rubbish from July 2011 to June 2019.

## RUBBISH REMOVED FROM THE RIVER SYSTEM 2018/19



## RUBBISH BY SUBCATCHMENT 2018/19



UPPER RIVER  
MID RIVER  
LOWER RIVER

\*Lower River, O'Hares Creek had 0% rubbish removal



# CATCHMENT ACTIONS PROGRAM BUSH REGENERATION

Georges Riverkeeper was successful in obtaining two Environmental Trust 2018 Restoration & Rehabilitation Program Grants. These grants are for a three year period commencing in 2018/19.

## SIMMOS BEACH RESTORATION – CAMPBELLTOWN CITY COUNCIL

This project will improve ecosystem and environmental assets within the Simmos Beach catchment, Macquarie Fields. This area is home to two Endangered Ecological Communities, four threatened plant species, and four threatened animals. Engineering works to remove sediment build up from the stream, paired with removal of dense weed infestations and rehabilitation of the stream and surrounding area will seek to, with natural regeneration and plantings, restore the natural stream flow and rehabilitate the natural habitat.



### Endangered Ecological Communities:

- Cumberland Shale-Sandstone Ironbark Forest – critically endangered
- Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest – endangered

### Threatened Plant Species:

- Sydney Plains Greenhood Orchid
- Nodding Geebung
- Small-flower Grevillea
- Hibbertia puberula

### Threatened animals

- Koala
- Cumberland Plain Land Snail
- Little Lorikeet
- Grey-headed Flying-fox



This project has been assisted by the New South Wales Government through its Environmental Trust.

## REHABILITATION OF THE OYSTER CREEK GULLY HABITAT CORRIDOR – SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

The project will improve ecosystem and environmental assets of the in-stream and riparian habitat of Oyster Creek Gully, Jannali and Kirrawee. Oyster Creek is 7.35 hectares of remnant bushland located within urban development. The site's ecological condition has been degraded through unregulated stormwater flows, increased nutrients, contaminants and weed populations and decreased native biodiversity. On-ground works will include control of invasive weeds, revegetation and natural regeneration to improve native biodiversity and rehabilitate a significant ecological and habitat corridor. Works will be conducted by contractors and four local Bushcare volunteer groups.

### Outcomes:

- Improved biodiversity and condition of in-stream, riparian and terrestrial zones.
- Increased overall amenity of the area.
- Improved ecological and habitat corridor for in-stream riparian flora and fauna.
- Better informed local community around environmental issues such as local bushland and water quality in local waterways.



This project has been assisted by the New South Wales Government through its Environmental Trust.





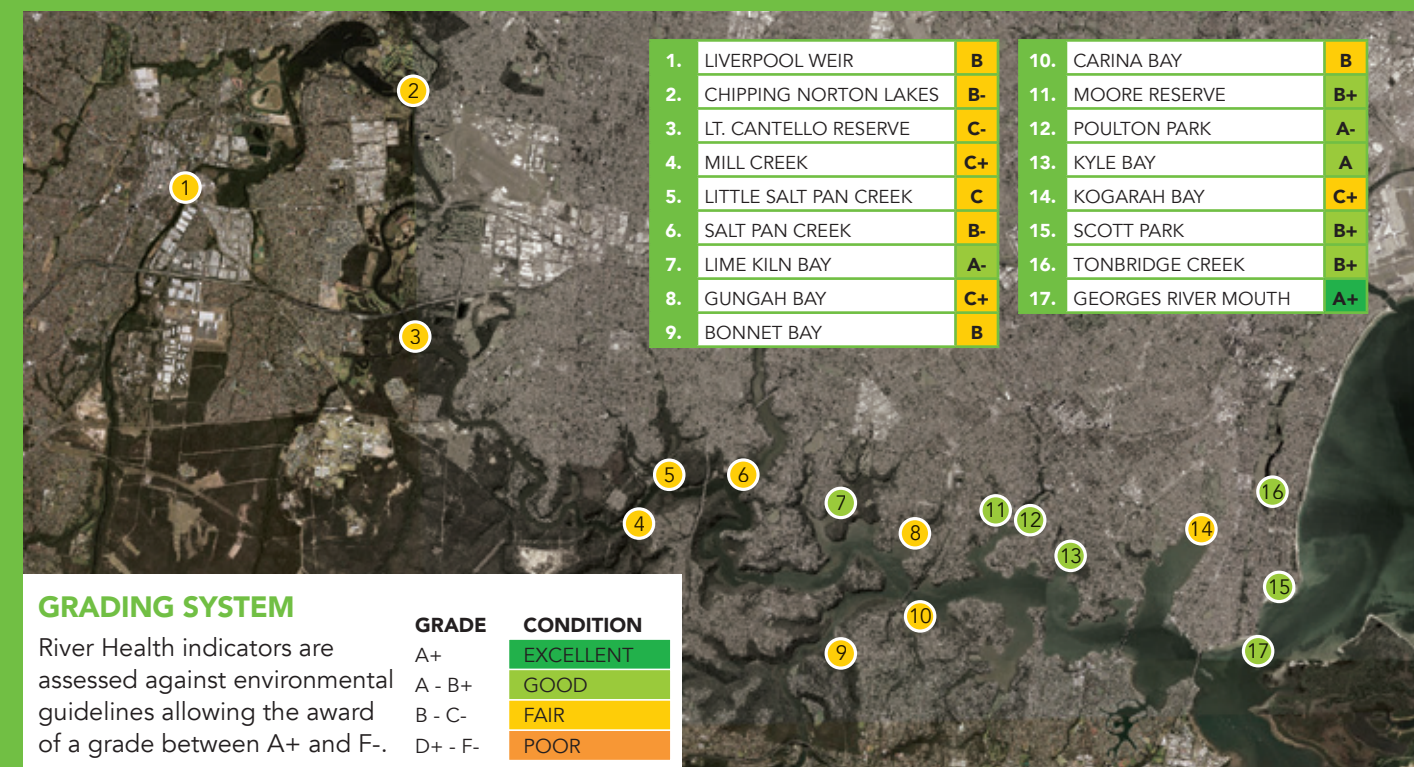
# RIVER HEALTH MONITORING PROGRAM

River Health Monitoring is an ongoing Program of Georges Riverkeeper, established in 2009. The Program aids adaptive management by using scientifically rigorous methods for ongoing monitoring of freshwater tributaries and estuarine sections of the Georges River. Communication of this evidence base to member Councils facilitates efficient and effective use of management resources directed towards waterway improvement. River Health data is also used to communicate the relative condition of waterways to the general public, via grades in Report Cards.

## 2018/19 RIVER HEALTH

River Health data in the Georges River Report Card 2017-18 reported that low rainfall was associated with water quality being better than usual in the upper estuary. Estuarine surveys over 2018/19 showed that the improvement in water quality was only temporary: water quality declined in the upper estuary in association with higher rainfalls over the year. See map below. An additional metric to be included on future Report Cards, that was trialled in 2018/19, was amounts of microplastic on shorelines, determined using the methods of AUSMAP (Australian Microplastics Assessment Project), being applied across Australia.

## MAP SHOWING RIVER HEALTH GRADES AT SELECTED ESTUARY SITES



## NEW VISUAL MONITORING

Monitoring at a higher spatial resolution through visual assessments was done at over 300 sites across the catchment, with interns from Western Sydney University being trained and assisting with some of the assessments.



# STORMWATER PROGRAM

## GEORGES RIVERKEEPER FLOODPLAIN SUB-COMMITTEE

The Georges Riverkeeper Floodplain Sub-Committee has continued to meet quarterly, coordinated by NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, to provide support on regional flood issues within the catchment.

## TRANSITION OF THE GEORGES RIVER ESTUARY COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT PLAN TO A COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Georges Riverkeeper has embarked on the transition of the Coastal Zone Management Plan to a Coastal Management Program, keeping in line with the new State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018. Georges Riverkeeper and our member Councils, under the auspice of Georges River Council, were successful in obtaining \$50,000 in grant funds from NSW Office of Environment and Heritage to fund 50% of Stage 1 of the process - developing the Scoping Study for the transition. Georges Riverkeeper will contribute matching funds for this Stage.



Photo: Matthew Vasilescu (www.mattvas.com.au)



## GET THE SITE RIGHT CAMPAIGN

During the month of May 2019, Georges Riverkeeper joined forces with Parramatta River Catchment Group, Cooks River Alliance, Sydney Coastal Councils Group, NSW Environment Protection Authority, and the NSW Department of Planning and Environment to conduct a 'Get the Site Right' campaign. With 20 organisations involved, the education and compliance campaign targeted building sites to ensure they were compliant with erosion and sediment control.

The campaign involved member Council staff undertaking inspections that specifically targeted sediment and erosion control on building sites and a one-day inspection blitz around Sydney's waterways.



	MAY 2018	MAY 2019	COMPARISON
# OF SITES INSPECTED	746	1,181	↑
# OF SITES COMPLIANT	376 (50%)	748 (63%)	↑
# OF SITES NON-COMPLIANT	370 (50%)	433 (37%)	↓
TOTAL FINES ISSUED	\$212,412	\$290,700	↑





## RESEARCH PROGRAM

Research is a new Program of Georges Riverkeeper that will: improve our knowledge about the effects of urbanisation on complex aquatic ecosystems; determine how best to mitigate the impacts; explore the features that will define liveable urban rivers in the future; and, guide how to overcome the multifaceted barriers presently acting to hinder progress towards making liveable urban rivers.

### IN THE INAUGURAL YEAR OF RESEARCH IN 2018/19, GEORGES RIVERKEEPER:

- Authored a publication in *Water, Air and Soil Pollution* journal, which compares macroinvertebrate communities in concreted and non-concreted streams.
- Co-authored five papers within the 9th Australian Stream Management Conference proceedings, including being the primary author and presenting at the conference for three papers.
- Authored a proceedings paper and presented at the National Stormwater Conference.
- Gave two presentations at the International Riversymposium and another at the Annual Australian Mangrove and Saltmarsh Network Conference.
- Executed a comprehensive review of published literature for studies in the Botany Bay catchment, with three manuscripts prepared for publication (i.e. Rise and Fall of Georges River Oyster Cultivation, Natural Features of Waterways and Land Use Impacts on Waterways).
- Established a research partnership with University of NSW and co-supervised three students doing Honours projects over 2019, following a workshop with member councils to prioritise research questions.



## EDUCATION & CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

Education and Capacity Building is a new Program of Georges Riverkeeper that is engaging with a broad range of stakeholders to foster a shared understanding about the main issues affecting liveability of waterways across the catchment and how to effectively manage the issues.

### ACTIVITIES AND HIGHLIGHTS DURING 2018/19 INCLUDE:

- Development of an interactive online map in conjunction with Georges River Council, showing amenities along the river as well as where to walk, cycle, swim and fish, and the ecological communities in the catchment.
- Development of content for seven factsheets. Topics: mosquitoes, swimming and fishing on the Georges River, pollution, pollution mitigation, water sensitive urban design and flooding.
- Development of content for ten education modules for Stage 3 (year 5 and 6) students in consultation with an educator to align with the syllabus.
- Site visit to Lake Gillawarna hosted by City of Canterbury Bankstown, February 2019, to view the constructed wetlands that slow the flow of stormwater, funded by the stormwater levy.
- Participated in the following events: Walk for Biodiversity Month (City of Canterbury Bankstown), Clean Up Australia Day (Liverpool City Council), Catch a Carp (Campbelltown City Council), Horning Street Saltmarsh Tour (Sutherland Shire Council), Menai Wildflower Group monthly meeting (Sutherland Shire Council), Speaking for the Planet, World Environment Day (Georges River Council), microplastics presentation (Fairfield City Council) and collaborated with Georges River Environmental Education Centre for AUSMAP and water bug monitoring days.



#### MEDIA

6 PRESS RELEASES  
**205,933**  
PEOPLE REACHED\*  
\*Estimated



#### WEBSITE

**15,051**  
USERS



#### SOCIAL MEDIA

1,258 FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS  
309 FACEBOOK POSTS  
124 INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS



# FINANCIAL REPORT

## GEORGES RIVERKEEPER

### 2018/19\*

	LAST YEAR (2017/18)	THIS YEAR (2018/19)
INCOME	\$	\$
Membership and Program fees	469,267	440,560
Operating Grants	0	46,800
Interest	16,022	13,275
Other Revenue	457	33,207
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>485,745</b>	<b>533,842</b>
EXPENSES		
Employee benefits expense	351,635	388,043
Depreciation and amortisation expense	15,455	15,455
Materials & Contracts	83,989	199,305
Other expenses	35,617	55,472
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>486,696</b>	<b>658,275</b>
<b>NET OPERATING RESULT</b>	<b>(951)</b>	<b>(124,433)</b>

## AWARD WINNERS

Georges Riverkeeper won a Stormwater NSW 2018 Award for Excellence in the category - Excellence in Master or Strategic Planning Multistage Development - for the Georges Riverkeeper Strategic Plan 2018-2022 – a joint project of Georges Riverkeeper and its member Councils: Bayside Council, Campbelltown City Council, City of Canterbury-Bankstown, Fairfield City Council, Georges River Council, Liverpool City Council, Sutherland Shire Council, and Wollondilly Shire Council.

Georges Riverkeeper were also highly commended in the Excellence in Policy and Education category for the ‘Get the Site Right’ Sediment and Erosion Control Campaign – a joint project by the Cooks River Alliance, Georges Riverkeeper, Parramatta River Catchment Group and Sydney Coastal Councils Group in partnership with the NSW Environment Protection Authority and the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.



# MEMBERS AND

## STAKEHOLDERS

### EXECUTIVE GROUP

- Chairperson: Clr Geoff Shelton, Liverpool City Council
- Vice-Chairperson: Clr Peter Scaysbrook, Sutherland Shire Council
- Treasurer: Clr Adrian Wong, Fairfield City Council
- Georges Riverkeeper Program Manager: Beth Salt
- Georges Riverkeeper Host Manager: Fiona Stock, Georges River Council

### 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
- Communications Officer: Kirsten Spry

### STAFF REPRESENTATIVES OF MEMBER COUNCILS

- Bayside Council: Alexandra Vandine, Enis Rudzic, Stewart Harris
- Campbelltown City Council: Mitchell Clark, Mathew Misdale
- City of Canterbury Bankstown: David Dekel, Daniela Santucci, Joanne McDonnell, Paul Angel
- Fairfield City Council: Leonie Gray, Rob Stevenson, Nona Ruddell, Helen Pollard, Scott Reyes
- Georges River Council: Andrew Spooner, Fiona Stock, Damien Duggan, Lachlan Prentice
- Liverpool City Council: Raj Autar, Madhu Pudasaini, Maruf Hossain, Joel Daniels, Sai Natarajan, Biljana Jovanovic, Alexi Gilchrist
- Sutherland Shire Council: Ian Drinnan, Nathan Varley, Kevin Seymour, Brendan Graham, Graham Avery
- Wollondilly Shire Council: Alex Stengl, Bruce Devonport, Damion Stirling

### PARTNERSHIPS

- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
- NSW Department of Justice - Corrective Services
- NSW Environment Protection Authority
- NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
- University of NSW
- NSW Department of Education – Georges River Environmental Education Centre
- Local Aboriginal Land Councils
- Member Councils' Aboriginal Advisory Groups
- SPLASH
- Cooks River Alliance
- Parramatta River Catchment Group
- Sydney Coastal Councils Group
- Greater Sydney Local Land Services

### GENERAL MEETING ATTENDEES

- NSW Roads and Maritime Services
- Sydney Water
- Georges River Environmental Alliance
- Botany Bay Catchment Alliance
- Lower Georges River Sustainability Initiative
- Friends of Oatley







Matthew Vasilescu (www.mattvas.com.au)



# GR Georges Riverkeeper

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

[www.georgesriver.org.au](http://www.georgesriver.org.au)



Georges Riverkeeper is the business name of Georges River Combined Councils' Committee Incorporated (ABN: 182 467 92704)