

A Brief History of the Cooks River

1780	Cooks River Catchment Aboriginal population ~1500
1830s	Settlement spreads along the river as European population grows
1848	Noxious trades banned from Sydney, polluting industries move to the Cooks River
1850s to early 1900s	Industries, especially tanneries, dump waste into the river
1850 to 1900	Cooks River is a popular swimming and boating destination
1896	Outbreak of typhoid fever among children swimming in the river attributed to sewage from streets entering the river
1897	The Cooks River Improvement Bill becomes law
1925	Cooks River Improvement League founded
1928	Government begins concreting upper reaches of the river
1948	River entrance is relocated 1.6 km further west due to airport construction
1950s	Cooks River Valley Association formed
1983	Wolli Creek Preservation Society formed and succeeds at protecting bushland from destruction when M5 is built as a tunnel
early 1990s	1 st Cooks River Valley Festival
1991	Minister for Land and Water Conservation establishes the Cooks River Catchment Management Committee
1993	Sydney Water, with the local community, begins restoration of the Eve Street Wetlands
1997	Cooks River Foreshores Strategic Plan developed
1998	Chullora Freshwater Wetlands constructed -- 1 st large scale water quality improvement project
1998	Formation of the Cooks River Foreshores Working Group (CRFWG - initially 4 councils with a part-time coordinator)
1999	Preparation of the Cooks River Stormwater Management Plan
2000	State government disbands Catchment Management Committees; forms Catchment Management Boards instead, which cover larger areas
2004	State government launches \$4M Cooks River Foreshores Improvement Program, which led to 36 regional, council and community projects
2005	State government disbands Catchment Management Boards; forms Catchment Management Authorities instead, which cover even larger areas
2007	CRFWG applies for and is granted State government funds of \$2M for the OurRiver project to build 7 on-ground works and capacity of the community and 8 councils
2007	Sydney Water investigates replacing sections of failing concrete with more natural river banks
2008	State government begins replacing failing steel sheet piling with more natural river banks
2008	Federal government funds \$2M Cooks River Urban Water Initiative of 15 on-ground works (run by the SMCMA)
2010	Cooks River Catchment population ~500,000
May 2011	Ashfield, Bankstown, Canterbury, City of Sydney, Hurstville, Marrickville, Rockdale and Strathfield councils sign a historic Memorandum of Understanding creating the new Cooks River Alliance
June 2011	Cooks River Foreshores Working Group and the OurRiver Project are wound up
Sept 2011	The Cooks River Alliance is launched, creating an organisation which can effectively address the complex problems of the Cooks River in the long term, whilst maximizing the efficient use of member councils' limited resources