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Appendix B

Community Comments

Community Comments received in response to the Questionnaire

Comments regarding the use of the waterways.

- Sections of the river could be lined and (partially) covered as a pedestrian walkway.
- Attempts have been made since 1929 to clean up the Cooks River. Nothing has succeeded yet. It is long overdue for urgent attention now.
- The Cooks River looks like a drain, even if the water quality is improved to allow safe swimming, fishing etc, it is not a 'river' due to the lack of natural features. Stormwater management and river naturalisation needed to change the image of the river.
- Cooks River is very dangerous. The public is warned not to swim in it nor eat the fish. Doesn't get worse than that.
- There must be stricter penalties and fines for culprit companies dumping illegal toxics into stormwater. Whether its throwing a chip packet on the ground or washing your car on the road. Every single aspect must be looked at carefully and policed.
- Clean up around the airport - rubbish.
- If the river is made safe for recreational usage, then the Cooks River will again become an asset and not a commercial sewer.
- Healthy societies need a good balance of work and recreation. Water related recreation areas offer the largest variety of activities that can be conducted simultaneously and to the widest range of areas.
- I doubt we could get oyster farming back, look at what happened in the Georges River. Besides the Cooks River is very small. From our point of view, the cycleway is very important.
- Restoration of functioning, terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems is a high priority.
- Commercial operations would only add to the pollution.
- Foreshore protection zones need to be retained ie. the les development along river shores.
- Anything commercial gives the impression of getting away with some pollution.
- Power boats (ski's) etc can contribute to erosion and disturb animals and habitat.
- The Cooks River bike and walking track is one of the prettiest and most popular paths in the district. It is crowded on weekends. Cleaning up the river might make it viable to have successful teahouses/restaurants as stopping places along the route.

Comments regarding the condition of the waterways.

- The residential and mixed industrial character of the catchment combined with pollution of the water and air could lead to health hazards.
- No. 1 couldn't be any further from the truth
- A special levy should be set up to fund this large project. Perhaps levy each house living in the catchment and double or triple levy to all factories discharging to the river.

- The river is treated like a drain but still retains natural wildlife and value. More concern and funding needed for its improvement.
- Having state the river is a drain, we (River Canoe Club), have noticed an improvement in water quality (at times) with more fish and shellfish (and birds) in the river, but there are still days of smelly (chemical like) water.
- One of Australia's most polluted estuaries.
- Failure of government to take action ie. toxic fish, sewage overflows etc. Governments don't want the community to know.
- I regularly walk along the river from Wardell Road through Tempe Station and sometimes through the airport. I think the walkways and plant and birdlife have improved considerably. But there is still a lot of rubbish- bottles, plastic ending up in the river.
- The Cooks River is also a dumping ground for many. I stress this point once more, more stringent penalties and inspectors (full time) monitoring water quality once a standard water quality has been achieved.
- Remediate some of the smaller tributaries using community groups (bushcare), urban streams movement. Information available from DLWC
- I would like to have been able to tick number 4, but with the rivers present condition and continued developments along its banks and in its catchment I'm afraid I can't honestly do so.
- Rather than an asset to Sydney, surely the River is a liability it is a degraded stormwater channel basically with no mangroves along its banks to provide filtration.
- Downside the river is lost, upside is we can rebuild the river. We would all like to enjoy the river in our lifetime and leave something for the next generation.
- Captain Cook referred to the Cooks River in his journal as a "fine and clean system" from which he took fresh water. A lot has changed.
- My view is while the environmental qualities of the river are seriously degraded, this is no reason to ignore the potential that exists for significantly improving the quality of the river.
- The re-establishment of mangroves is a sign of environmental fightback on the Cooks River as is the presence of saltmarsh plant species along some stretches eg. east of Illawarra Road, Marrickville. Wollie Creek still retains significant native vegetation along its length (from Bexley north eastwards), ditto Bardwell creek.
- I would have ticked no.2 however the river just needs some value adding by not being used as a no.1.
- Larger industries get away with spillage and no fines. We have to strike everyone who causes pollution to the waterways with very large fines and make it well known. The general public should also be fined for leaving the surrounding parks littered. No one organisation will implement guidelines / fines.
- The river is degraded but is still of high recreational value for walking and cycling beside etc.
- This is a subjective choice only. To make an informed comment flora and fauna data would need to be viewed.

- There should be punitive additional Council rates for owners/developers who build and pave over (more than) 50% of their land area. Overdevelopment and concreted yards cost the community dearly in terms of pollution and loss of amenity - those who cause the problem should pay to fix it.

Comments regarding which problems the plan should focus on.

- Pollution should be controlled at the source before discharged to the river.
- No mention was made of urban weeds, dumped in the bush and river. These add nutrients to the river directly or indirectly.
- Education of all residents in the catchment regarding minimising pollution from the home via printed material in all languages, and heavy fines imposed on all illegal connection of plumbing leading to pollution.
- A holistic approach improving all sources of pollution is needed.
- If all problems can be addressed at the same time and locals can see something happening on a large scale, they may feel their own efforts are worthwhile and support the river.
- All equally important, is the accumulation effect, combination of all and long term.
- Sydney Water would be the biggest water polluter followed by stormwater.
- I think that mesh fencing around certain areas would also greatly help preventing rubbish entering the system.
- Recently there has been contamination of Cox's Creek which resulted in the death of native fish living in this small comparatively clean tributary. Further up on what was railway land at Chullora massive land and track works are occurring.
- Strategy for improvement will vary depending on which part of the River you are dealing with
- Continued monitoring of trade waste should be a priority. There needs to be a reduction in trade waste targets so that when sewer overflows occur, trade waste does not flow into the river.
- More labels/diagrams painted on stormwater drains " Do not Pollute" " Protect the Environment". Stricter controls on sediment runoff from construction activities.
- Too many government agencies still "clean up" community messes by washing down instead of wet vacuuming cleanups or sweeping / shovelling up into containers. eg. motor vehicle accidents, broken car parts swept aside and left, oils hosed down drains and not into booms and sucked up.
- Dumped cars in Cooks Rover near the airport.
- All these activities create chemical contaminants. Data on the extent of each land use activity would need to be viewed to assess priorities.
- There needs to be a multi-lingual education campaign about individual responsibilities in improving the catchment areas. And it needs to be sustained. The Government needs to re-think its Urban Consolidation Policy. In looking after the health of the Hawkesbury it is ensuring the destruction of the rest of Sydney's Rivers.

Comments Regarding any pollution problems or other general comments.

- I am the project engineer for the East Hills railway maintenance, and as such, it would prove beneficial for me to gain a greater understanding of the rail corridor impact on the Wollli Creek / Cooks River.
- Domestic and industrial pollution.
- I live in a developing residential areas at Menai. The major pollution problem is from construction activities.
- A significant length of riverbank is not generally on view to the public with the result that people do not have any/much knowledge of the problems (if Botany Bay looked like most of the river bank people would be irate) - perhaps encouraging better access would be in the rivers interest.
- Illegal rubbish dumping and contaminants seem to be the most frequent problem for waterway pollution in all ares in and around Sydney.
- There are sewage leaks in Girraween Park, especially after rainfall when manholes overflow.
- The residential dumping of oil, paint, household chemicals down the stormwater system and into the river must be stopped. A door knock campaign by all environmental groups throughout the urban catchment needs to be done to raise awareness.
- After rain the river is clogged with litter such as plastic bags and drink bottles, while mainly visual, this influences peoples perceptions of the river. While canoeing/training have been chemical smells and oily patches on the water around Tempe.
- We have a stormwater pipe running through our site (Australian golf club, Rosebury), which carries large volumes of rubbish etc, that desperately needs council attention.
- Canal grates are ineffective and rarely cleared. River bottom sludge is too thick killing aquatic vegetation and therefore no food chain.
- I live at Kurnell (previously in Kingsgrove) and whilst regularly walking along the beaches in Botany Bay I encountered piles of litter brought onto the beach. I can only conclude it is washing into the bay from the Georges and Cooks River Systems.
- We would expect environmental consultants to know the issues and inform the community. Sydney Water, Fisheries and EPA should be able to deliver the answers.
- The water entering Strathfield Golf Club from the west is fairly regularly contaminated with a very foaming solution. A new and large drain is being built in concrete from near the cemetery entrance to the river.
- I used to work in the excavation industry and nearly every time dewatering was required, water would be pumped directly into drains using no filtration or hay bails. This also occurs within the Burwood Municipal Area.
- Dog droppings are a big problem.
- A group of people who visited out reserve via the drain system which the creek enters wrote on the notice board that " the creek stinks and is full of sewer runoff". This is no always so , but has been particularly so since it has started raining heavily.
- Most significant problems in the upper catchment seem to be litter and weed infestation (councils and local residents could manage these). In lower catchment these problems are

even more significant and substantial development and industry place additional stress such as sediment, leachate from old landfills sites etc.

- Near Mackay Park Tempe (Unwins Bridge) the levels of sludge are very bad, especially if you upset them ie step in them. The surprising thing is that there are some nice dandy sections in the river near the airport. How magnificent would the river be if the sludge was removed and the sand returned?
- Noise pollution in Surrey Hills areas and litter in the streets.
- Stop it getting in then clean it out.
- The end of pipe with engineer solution - man made wetlands, traps and sediment pits. Allow the public to treat stormwater runoff within their own property - rubble drains, sediment pits, storage tanks. Once sediment and contaminants have stopped entering the river remove or cap existing sediment beds and stabilise banks with random sized rock water courses and selective plant stabilisation. Create ongoing program to remove sediment from man made wetlands.
- Litter, sediment from building sites, industry from premises located on the canal discharging illegally and polluting the river.
- I can't know which is are the most damaging. You should conduct experiments and design a plan to meet the goals of question B. Without having tested the things above, how can I know which are the worst?
- People wash their cars and trucks on the road, therefore more ads needed in local papers tells/shows dirt/suds/oil etc entering stormwater system. Provide incentives such as coupons for people to wash their vehicles at wash stations. Current commercial excellent showing the drain is just for rain, we need more ads like this.
- Stormwater runoff and siltation.
- Building reconstruction sites including smaller works by owner/occupiers. Carwashing on the street or driveways. Too many trades-people still think its OK to make a mess (concreters and plumbers) and clean-up afterwards by washing matter down the drain.
- Litter/rubbish pollution is the most visible problem, however stormwater volumes and associated water quality are more worrying although less obvious to the "everyday eye". Increase nutrients are also supporting aquatic weed infestations eg. water hyacinth and bankside weeds.
- Can't understand why we don't have tertiary treatment of everything.
- Report was made to Strathfield Council Monday 5/10/98. Mr Sam Coppelli who said he would report back to me, 29/10 no response. Soapy water coming from Cox's Creek seen Saturday 3/10/98 - sited just west of Water St Belfield Bridge.
- Contamination of underground water. Southlands and other areas of Orica Chemical Company run off into Botany Bay.
- Litter from picnic areas. Dumping of cans and rubbish.
- Parramatta, Pacific Hwy and Princess Hwy need to be rethought on how to take the environmental damage aspect into consideration. Backyard and community/council need to work together to make a change. I think if waste management was well established the problem would halve.

- These comments are purely subjective and come from the point of view of a neighbouring council outside the catchment. Biodiversity is seen by the Bushland Co-ordination of Randwick City Council to be of utmost importance. All the questions mentioned above affect biodiversity.
- Keep community involved as much as possible through information programs in local press, including ethnic and other languages.
- Improved street cleaning services and catchment facilities needed. Ban junk mail which ends up in the gutter. Incentive schemes for residents to keep drains rubble free. Better public and community education.
- You should be allowed to have a rainwater tank. Loss of environmental flow, retention basins, gully traps.
- The river has traps and nets which are apparently not regularly cleaned out. What is the purpose of collecting rubbish, if it is only to stay in or beside the river? These need to be cleaned out at every turn of the tide.
- Litter from picnic areas. Dumping of cars and rubbish.