



CLEAN AND HEALTHY WATERWAYS

The ACT is the largest urban centre within the Murray–Darling Basin. The Ngunnawal (Ngunawal), Ngambri, Ngarigo Peoples and acknowledging all other First Nations people with connections to this region, have ongoing deep cultural roots to the water courses and byways of the ACT. Canberra is a river city, with both the Molonglo and Murrumbidgee flowing through the Territory providing the lifeblood to our local biodiversity.

The ACT's rivers, lakes, ponds, wetlands and riparian zones support biodiversity and provide crucial food, refuge and habitat to local wildlife¹. They also enhance health and wellbeing by providing space for residents to socialise and recreate. However, water and riparian assets both regionally and nationally face significant challenges as a result of climate change, altered flow regimes, loss of riparian vegetation, pollution and invasive species². In the ACT region this has resulted in increased blue green algae blooms, loss of riparian habitat from development and degradation, invasive species choking our river corridors and pollution of our waterways. Better management of water through our urban landscape, in particular a improving landscape connectivity, slowing and utilising stormwater, and investment in the management of riparian zones, will improve water quality and habitat in our waterways and the catchment.

¹ Office of Sustainability and the Environment, 2022. State of the Lakes and Waterways in the ACT.

² Australian Government, 2021. Australia State of the Environment Report 2021



1. Bring remaining unprotected sections of the Molonglo and Murrumbidgee river corridors into the nature reserve system.
2. Further incorporate First Nations practices into management of urban lakes and waterways³.
3. Expand and increase resourcing for the Murumbung Ranger program.
4. Invest in a new robust monitoring system to frequently collect long-term data on the ecological health of the ACT's waterways and wetlands, and establish new water assessment sites for data collection by the ACT Government. Publish the data for public access.

3 Office of Sustainability and the Environment, 2022. State of the Lakes and Waterways in the ACT. pp 67-74.

5. Provide secure, ongoing funding to community groups working on catchment management, water quality testing, ecological surveys and public education and engagement. This includes the three catchment groups and Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch.
6. Enforce the Water-sensitive urban design guidelines as compulsory for all urban developments.
7. Resource the Environmental Protection Authority to improve regulation and compliance with sediment and runoff controls on building sites and commercial properties to mitigate stormwater contamination.
8. Commit further funding to continue to progressively upgrade and renaturalise existing major creeks and stormwater channels including Tuggeranong Creek, Weston Creek, Yarralumla Creek, Jerrabomberra Creek, Sullivan's Creek and Ginninderra Creek.



9. Invest in continuing the H20K Program to directly engage with householders and businesses to reduce pollutants entering stormwater drains.
10. Require and enforce developers and business owners to install permeable surfaces on future and existing commercial sites.
11. Set a permeable surfaces target for public space that aligns with achieving the city-wide 30% permeable surfaces target.
12. Ensure gross pollutant traps are frequently maintained to avoid build up of pollutants and the resulting reduced efficiency of the traps.
13. Improve water quality in the Molonglo and Murrumbidgee rivers downstream of Lake Burley Griffin by monitoring the impacts of greenfield development on water quality and report on these impacts and management actions publicly.
14. Continue and expand the Office of Water