

Comments on Cooks River Sewage Flows

The Cooks River Valley Association (CRVA) congratulates the Honourable Linda Burney, Member for Canterbury, for recently raising a motion in the New South Wales Parliament noting the poor quality of water in the Cooks River, in particular the raw sewage responsible for high concentrations of E.Coli that are harmful to the river, and calling upon the Minister for the Environment immediately to limit sewage flows into the river.

The CRVA, and its eco-volunteers, the Mudcrabs, are of course pleased that major spending is being undertaken to naturalise the banks and improve the river surroundings. However members are dismayed that the government did not endorse the Member for Canterbury's motion. While we are very happy that the river is being improved visually, the quality of its water urgently needs to be cleaned up as well, to make it suitable for swimming, boating and other recreational pursuits, as it was during the childhood of many local residents.

CRVA President John Butcher notes that there is a strong and ongoing community commitment to improving water quality in the Cooks River. Not only did some 2,500 residents sign the Association's petition which the Member for Canterbury presented to Parliament, but since the closing of that petition several hundred community members have signed postcards to Premier Barry O'Farrell, demanding a swimmable river. Kendrick Park has already been nominated by Marrickville Council as a potential swimming spot on the river and this site is being monitored by Beachwatch.

As well as calling on the New South Wales Government to invest in fixing dilapidated sewage infrastructure, the CRVA is asking the government to implement a container deposit scheme. Local Hurlstone Park resident and Mudcrab, Kate McLean, said "In one hour on a Sunday morning, we removed a staggering quantity of recyclable containers, plastic bottles, cans and poppers from a section of the river bank near Tennant Parade".

Ann Leahy is a member of the CRVA Executive and co-ordinates the association's water quality team. She states, "A ten cent refund on containers would drastically reduce the amount of containers entering the river, and prevent the impacts on local wildlife that plastic particularly presents. But a container deposit scheme must be complemented by infrastructure investment to fix old sewer pipes that overflow with raw sewage in times of high rainfall. Like all Cooks River Valley residents, I'd love to have a clean river to enjoy with family and friends."

Ann Leahy Publicity Co-Ordinator Cooks River Valley Association
annleahy@optusnet.com.au mb 0415657608 ph 95915846
info@crva.org.au