

# What does stormwater pollution do to our waterways?

## Prevention is better than cure

CLEAN DRAINS  RIVER GAINS

### Algal Blooms



- Kills aquatic animals and plants by starving them of oxygen
- Can be toxic
- Is unsightly and foul smelling
- Prevents the recreational use of rivers.

### Chemicals



- Detergents destroy the protective barrier on frogs skin
- Oils will clog feathers, fur and gills
- Pesticides, herbicides and other chemicals contain toxins that build up in the environment.

### Sediment and Garden Waste



- Sand and soil block light needed by aquatic plants
- Can clog waterways
- Garden wastes break down quickly, using up oxygen that animals need to breathe.

### Litter



- Scars our beautiful landscape
- Is dangerous to wildlife.

Do you know that the drains outside our homes and businesses are really an extension of our rivers and wetlands?

Whatever we allow to enter stormwater drains will find its way into the natural environment, often with serious consequences.



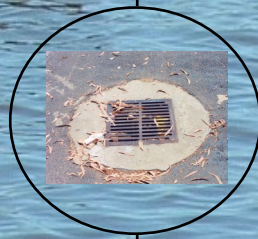
Preventing stormwater pollution is not a difficult task, simple changes to the way you do everyday tasks will make a big difference. This pamphlet will help you recognise the positive steps you can take to help keep our rivers healthy.



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Practical steps  
you can take  
to prevent  
stormwater  
pollution



Produced for the 'Clean Drains River Gains' campaign by the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare



South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare

# What is stormwater pollution?

Our drainage system was built to carry clean rainwater away from our homes. Stormwater pollution refers to a range of materials that contaminates the rainwater.

Unfortunately drains are very efficient at transporting these contaminants quickly from the street to the river and wetlands. It is often lots of small, everyday actions that add up to a big problem for our environment.



*Dead wildlife, algal blooms, oil slicks, dangerous litter and the visual scarring of beautiful landscapes are a reminder of the effects of stormwater pollution.*

# How can I reduce my impact?

Preventing stormwater pollution is not a difficult task, simple changes to the way you do everyday tasks will make a big difference.

## Around the Home or Office

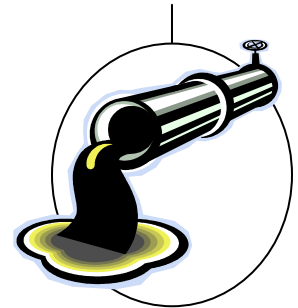
- Wash your car on the lawn, this will reduce nutrient and detergent run-off
- Dispose of paints, chemicals and oils carefully - do not wash them down the drain
- Keep your car well serviced, this will prevent oil leaks
- Use Phosphorus free detergent in the kitchen, laundry and when washing the car
- Ensure rubbish stays in the bin, especially on windy days
- Wash your dog on the lawn to reduce nutrient and detergent run-off.

## In the Garden

- Deciduous trees or shrubs should be avoided, especially near streets or waterways
- Sweep up grass clippings on the verge and road so they don't end up in the drain
- Prevent soil, leaves and mulch from being blown onto the road
- Fertilise Wise - only fertilise when symptoms of nutrient deficiency occur e.g. yellowing
- Plant native species instead of water and nutrient hungry species
- Compost garden wastes and recycle the nutrients.

## At Work

- When washing down, ensure all waste goes into an approved sewer outlet, not the stormwater drain
- Chemicals and wastes should be kept in a secure, bunded area away from stormwater drains
- Relocate work activities that include chemicals away from stormwater drains
- Have an emergency spill response plan, which employees are trained in
- Handle chemicals and fuels with care
- Mobile businesses (eg. dog washing, car detailing, mechanics and carpet cleaners) must dispose of waste water and oils properly. It must never enter the stormwater system.



## Stormwater pollution includes:

- Lawn clipping and other garden waste
- Leaves from deciduous trees
- General household rubbish
- Bread and other food fed to water birds
- Detergents and cleaning products
- Oils and petrol
- Fertilisers
- Chemicals
- Dog poo
- Building sand and soil

## Out and about

- Enjoy watching water birds, but please don't feed them bread. It is bad for their health and the water
- Please pick up your dogs poo, it is high in nutrients that adds extra stress to our rivers
- Always put rubbish in the bin or recycle it. This obvious step is still one of the most important.