KEEP OUR WATERWAYS CLEAN
(at home and work)

LOVE IT OR LOSE IT

Our gutters and drains are all part of a large stormwater system. When it rains, stormwater runoff from our streets and homes can wash dirt, litter and other pollutants into our waterways.

Roads, roofs, driveways and footpaths prevent water from infiltrating into the soil. This results in less natural on-site detention of stormwater, less evaporation and reduced uptake by plants. These impervious areas also carry stormwater more frequently and in greater volumes to receiving waterways.

Stormwater runoff has direct and indirect impacts on the aquatic environment. It can significantly affect water quality by transporting and discharging contaminants such as nutrients, suspended sediments, pathogens, oxygen-demanding substances, hydrocarbons (oils and surfactants), pesticides, herbicides and heavy metals, litter and vegetative debris. This can lead to fish kills, algal blooms, sedimentation of waterways and public health risks from primary contact or consumption of seafood.

Unlike sewage, stormwater is generally not treated. In some cases it's filtered through stormwater treatment devices, but it still flows directly from streets and gutters into waterways inhabited by fish, frogs and other aquatic animals and plants.

Garden waste

Letting lawn clippings and other garden waste enter roadside gutters can clog drains, introduce pollutants and excess nutrients that can harm our waterways.

Use a catcher when mowing your lawn, sweep up and remove any clippings from the gutter and dispose of garden waste via your organics bin, composting or take it to council's waste management centre.

> "If we can stop pollutants entering our gutters and drains in the first place we can help keep our waterways clean and healthy. "





Car washing

When cars, boats, trailers and other vehicles are washed on hard surfaces, the detergents and nutrients can contaminate stormwater then our waterways. Instead wash your vehicles and other items on a grassed area to allow the water to soak into the grass or take it to a car wash.

Pick up the poo

Dog poo contains nutrients and can be washed through the stormwater system into our waterways if not picked up and disposed of correctly.

Diseases can also be spread by direct or indirect contact with dog poo. Swimmers and other recreational water users may inadvertently come into direct contact with the disease agents when the poo is washed into our waterways.

To protect our waterways, each other and avoid a fine, remember to pick up poo and place it in a bin.

Littering

Litter is anything unwanted that has been thrown, blown or left in the wrong place. Litter can damage our natural environment, harm wildlife and sea creatures. Litter makes places look unsightly, uncared for and can attract more litter. Things like broken glass can injure people and wildlife.

Did you know takeaway containers and plastic bottles take from 10 years to 450 years to break down?

Take your litter home or put it in the bin.

Chemical storage

It is important to store and handle chemicals such as oils, fuels, paints, cleaning agents and other chemicals to prevent them entering our stormwater drains and waterways.

- Handle and store them away from roads and drains in a bunded area
- Use absorbents to mop up spills
- Don't park vehicles with leaking oil on roads

Pressure cleaning

Waste water from pressure cleaning footpaths, driveways, roofs and other areas enters our stormwater drains if not managed appropriately. This water may contain chemicals, nutrients and other harmful pollutants.

To prevent waste water entering our waterways:

- Disconnect downpipes so water will not run directly into the stormwater system
- Collect run-off in drums/buckets for appropriate disposal
- Block stormwater drains with sandbags or absorbent material
- Contain the site with a silt fence or portable bunding
- Divert run-off to a well vegetated area, ensuring the area does not become water logged and overflow
- Dig an infiltration trench close by and divert run-off to this trench
- Place filter socks in the downpipe, ensuring the gutters do not overflow
- Avoid the use of chemical cleaning agents wherever possible and investigate biodegradable alternatives.





Erosion & sediment control

Soil erosion from construction sites causes major environmental problems for waterways and aquatic life. Sediments washed into waterways impact heavily on aquatic flora and fauna and their habitat.

A single building site may seem insignificant, but if you consider all building sites the cumulative impacts can be enormous. Studies by the NSW Environment Protection Authority show one building site can lose up to four truckloads of soil in a single storm.



Reduce erosion by installing and maintaining erosion and sediment controls:

- **(A)** Minimise areas to be cleared and leave as much vegetation as possible
- Install sediment fence(s) along the low side of the site before work begins
- Divert water around the work site and stabilise channels
- **(B)** Establish a single stabilised entry/ exit point
- Leave or lay a kerb-side turf strip
- Check the erosion and sediment controls every day and keep them in good working condition
- Always be aware of the weather forecast
- **(C)** Sweep the road and footpath every day and put soil behind sediment controls
- Do not hose down roads and footpaths
- Connect downpipes from the guttering to the stormwater drain as soon as the roof is installed.



More information

For more information please contact your local council.

The Love it or Lose it campaign is a collaboration between Ballina Shire Council, Lismore City Council, Kyogle Council, Rous County Council, Richmond Valley Council and North Coast Local Land Services.

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