

Council Query	PRCG Response	Council Officer Comments
<i>Please advise on best practice park maintenance work to limit the about of grass clippings and other organic matter available to wash into the stormwater network,</i>	• The management of grass clippings and other organic matter varies from council to council in the Parramatta River catchment and across different forms of open space. The retention of grass clippings on the surface of parks and other public open space during mowing is common practice. This is due to the benefits of returning nutrients to the soil to ensure healthy growing conditions, reducing the need for fertilisers or other interventions; preventing moisture loss during dry conditions, and managing the cost of collecting and disposing of/ treating large volumes of green waste. • Council could consider reviewing these practices however a decision would need to be made about whether the costs outweigh the benefits of retaining this organic matter in the landscape. • In particular, council could consider collecting grass clippings during periods of extended wet weather when mowing is occurring frequently (e.g. summer periods when grass is growing rapidly) • Simple measures could be taken to protect waterways from this organic matter at all times, including by: ○ Ensuring any hard surfaces are swept of grass clippings and other organic matter ○ Ensuring dirt, mulch, leaves and other organic materials are stored away from stormwater drains and/ or covered where necessary. ○ Ensuring grass clippings are collected where there is a high risk of them entering a stormwater drain (e.g. road verges) • It is noted that most councils already have good practices in place to deal with management of organic materials resulting from their parks and open space management.	Impact of any change requiring the collection and disposal of grass clippings from Council mowing operations does have the potential to be significant, depending on what is proposed. Further detailed review would be required to determine cost v benefit.

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<i>Please advise on Best practice street-cleaning operations to reduce the amount of organic matter building up on our streets</i>	- Organic matter collecting in street kerbs and gutters and other hard surfaces directly linked to the stormwater system arguably have the greatest impact on waterways. This organic matter would naturally decompose on soil, in garden beds and other green spaces if left under natural circumstances, returning nutrients to the soil. - Council could review the frequency of street cleaning operations, however this has a cost implication that Council would need to consider against likely overall benefits. Note that the timing and frequency of wet weather events have a direct relationship with what matter ends up in our waterways and managing a street sweeping regime centred around these weather events could be considered but would likely prove difficult to manage.	Mechanical street sweeping occurs on the following schedule: - Parramatta CBD is swept daily - Regional town centres is swept on the week days - Residential streets (non RMS) is swept within a 8 – 10 week cycle (Our residential streets are currently done within a 4 - 6 week cycle with the leafier suburbs as close to a 2 week cycle) Leaf blowers are deployed in streets that are typically parked out (difficult access) to work ahead of the sweeper. Sweepers are also assigned to leafy suburb hot spot areas after a declared storm event including the use of leaf blowers as required. It should be noted this standard schedule significant more than our neighbouring Councils and important to mention as we are only part of the whole system of water flow into the catchment. To increase the frequency will require additional plant and operators at an anticipated cost of \$530 for the first year, and \$230 for each year thereafter. From observation increased frequency would not result in any significant improvement. A challenge in relying on street

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		sweeping is that often, the organic material that gets into the waterways does not get onto the roadway and gutters until during a storm event – it is blown from trees onto the roadway during the storm, then washed into the stormwater system shortly thereafter by rain associated with the storm. Suggestions: - Focus on enforcement of private activities that contribute to organic material on roadways, eg. Private property maintenance companies that blow grass clippings onto the roadway. - Natural Resources and Waste teams to review identification of “leafy streets” where risk of organic material being washed into the river is at its highest, to enable these areas to be prioritised before and after storms.
<i>Please advise on Best practice management practices for gross pollutant traps (GPT’s), such as increased cleaning of traps before forecasted major weather events</i>	• The PRCG is aware that City of Parramatta is currently rolling out cameras across 25 of its above ground Gross Pollutant Traps (GPTs) to aid in assessing condition and maintenance requirements. The system is designed to take a daily photo so that a visual assessment can be rapidly made without relying on frequent site visits and is linked to the SCADA system. • The PRCG, Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG) and Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA) have partnered with CSIRO on a joint application to the Department of Planning & Environment’s (DPE) Smart	An audit of Council’s gross pollutant traps is currently underway. An outcome of this audit will be recommendations for improvements to the system. Concurrently, camera monitoring is being rolled out across Council’s GPT’s to allow regular and rapid monitoring of traps without the need for site visits. This rapid monitoring will ensure

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	Places Acceleration Program. The project will focus on installing smart technology sensors on GPTs, to determine if they require cleaning and camera traps to record floating litter along waterways. The two technologies together will allow the catchment to shift from reactive to proactive catchment management. The project known as 'Smarter Cleaner Sydney Harbour' has just been notified of grant success. City of Parramatta is also a partner on this grant project.	maintenance needs are swiftly identified and actioned.
<i>Please advise on Best practice Education campaign to inform residents and local businesses on the impact of organic (and non-organic) matter washing into drains and our waterways, such as stencilling on City of Parramatta (COP) drains to remind residents that only rain should go down the drain and all drains lead to our river.</i>	• Love Your Waterways is a community campaign developed by the Parramatta River Catchment Group that encourages people to take up five simple actions to reduce litter, pet waste, gardening materials, chemicals and other pollutants from entering our waterways: 1. Reduce your rubbish – Dispose of your litter correctly and swap single-use plastics for reusable products. 2. Leave only paw prints – Pick up pet waste to stop bacteria and other bugs from entering our waterways. Wash it wisely – Wash your car and household equipment the right way to prevent cleaning products from affecting water quality and marine life. 3. Cover it up – Keep dirt, leaves and other garden waste away from stormwater drains and cover them up so they don't wash away when it rains. 4. Keep it clear – Rain water is the only thing that should go down a stormwater drain. • The program has been so successful that it is now delivered across multiple catchment groups in Greater Sydney. Council could consider further specific measures such as drain stencilling and reaching out to its own networks with more targeted messaging using this program as a basis.	A targeted catchment and stakeholder program using the existing PRCG and EPA collateral could be rolled out subject to the availability of the following resources: 1. 1 FTE Temp F/T at least 1 year Grade 6 (\$70k + 20% overheads) \$85,000 2. Print budget and distribution costs \$12,000 3. Drain stencils and spray paint \$3,000 Total \$100,000 pa. This could be potentially sourced from the Stormwater Levy reserve – further investigation required.

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	The PRCG are currently expanding the Reduce your Rubbish component of the Love Your Waterways education materials to provide more detailed information on litter reduction.	