



## Estuary Health & Water Quality Report Card 2020-21

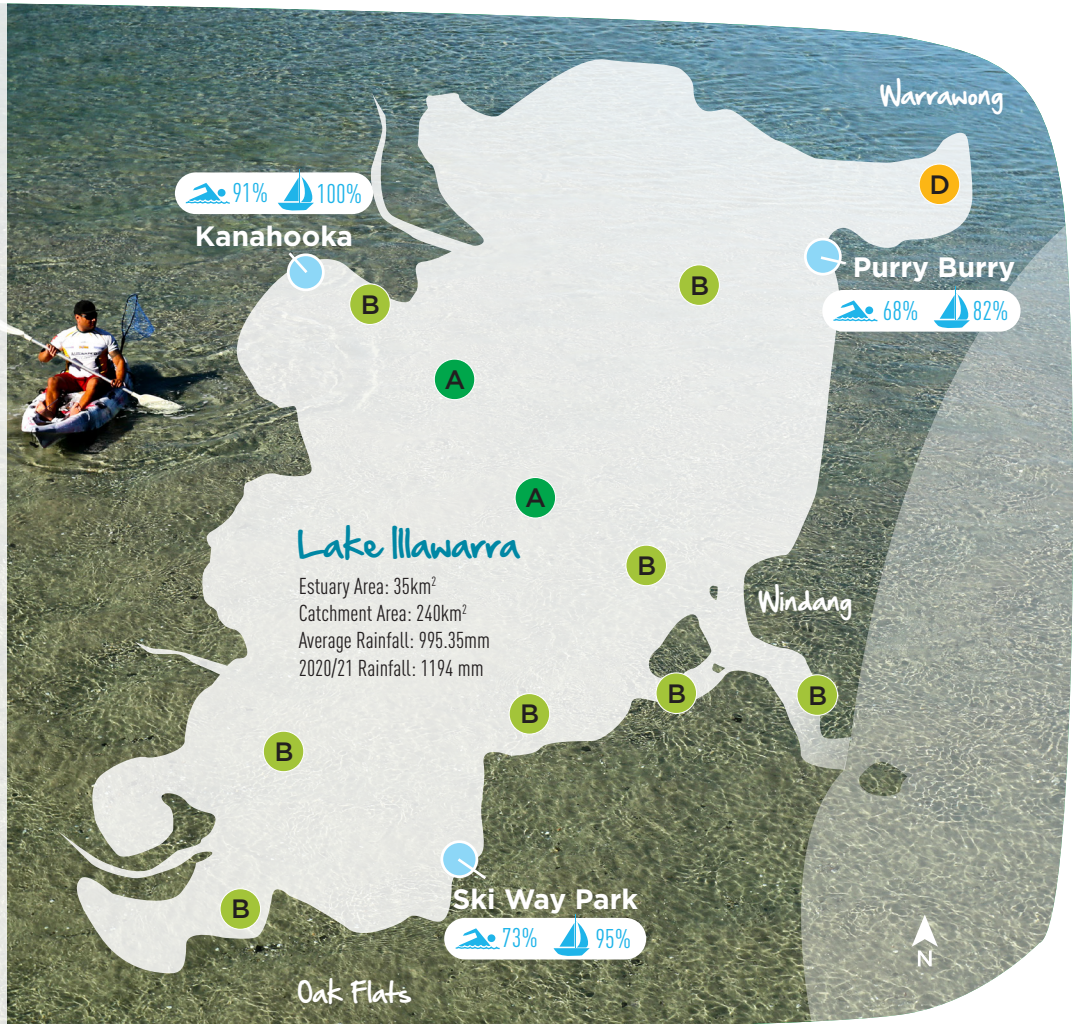
### Estuary Health Condition Ratings

- A** Very Good
- B** Good
- C** Fair
- D** Poor
- E** Very Poor

### Recreational Water Quality

● % of occasions meeting primary and secondary contact recreational water quality guidelines

-  Primary contact
-  Secondary contact



### Estuary Health Condition

Water quality parameters and estuary health indicators are measured every month at 11 sites in Lake Illawarra. The estuary health condition grading is based on chlorophyll *a* and turbidity levels across the year. Most sites were rated to be in good condition, with two sites in the main body of the lake rated very good. Site 6 at Griffins Bay is the only site to be rated poor, largely as a result of several high chlorophyll *a* and turbidity values over the summer. This sampling has occurred since 2013, and several sites are showing a long-term decreasing trend over time in nutrients and chlorophyll *a*. This is good news, as despite this being a wet summer compared to other years and hence more catchment run-off, the health of some sites within the estuary continues to show improvement.

### Recreational Water Quality

Three sites have been sampled over summers since 2018/19 for enterococci levels to give an indication of recreational water quality for primary and secondary contact. The sites were suitable for swimming and sailing most of the time, especially at Ski Way Park and Kanahooka. However, the water may be susceptible to pollution from potential sources of faecal contamination, especially after prolonged heavy rain. Rainfall is the major driver of pollution to recreational waters, generating stormwater runoff and triggering untreated discharges, and it is recommended not to go swimming after rain.

**For more detailed information on the monitoring program, please refer to the accompanying technical report on Council's website.**

### Estuary health indicators

Chlorophyll *a* is a measure of microscopic algae biomass in water. Excessive input of nutrients from catchment runoff can increase chlorophyll *a* levels, leading to algal blooms and detrimental effects on estuarine plants and animals. Turbidity is a measure of light scattered by suspended particles such as sediment, algae and dissolved material in the water. Having low turbidity levels in the estuary is important for seagrasses, fish and other organisms.

# What's Happening?

There's a lot of work happening around Lake Illawarra, read all the latest news here.

## Lake Illawarra Coastal Management Program (CMP)

The Lake Illawarra CMP is a strategic program that will guide Councils in taking care of the lake over the next 5 to 10 years. It has 39 actions that address the nine main threats to the lake. It has recently been reviewed and certified by the State Government. Find out more by picking up a Lake Illawarra CMP Snapshot from your local library or Council building.



## Birds of Lake Illawarra Brochure

Lake Illawarra is an important wetland for native birds including migratory birds. If you're interested in learning more about birds and their habitats you can check out the new Birds of Lake Illawarra brochure on the Council website. If you would like a hard copy you can get in touch with your Council.

## Caring for Natural Areas

Regenerating natural areas increases biodiversity, improves habitat for animals and reduces the impact of weeds. Healthy vegetation around the lake acts as a natural buffer to erosion and sedimentation.

Visit the Primbee foreshore, or Hooka Park in Wollongong and Horsley Creek or Picnic Island in Shellharbour to see all the great work that is happening.

### Accomplishments

In only two years there has been over 14ha of weed treatment, over 5000 new native plants in the ground and 200 bollards installed to protect these sensitive areas from illegal access.



## Lake Illawarra Shared Path Masterplan

The Wollongong Cycling Strategy 2030 was developed from community feedback and endorsed by Council in November 2020. The Cycling Strategy includes the development of a Lake Illawarra Shared Path Masterplan that aims to connect cycling networks and strengthen the visitor economy around the lake.

## Get Involved!

There are a few simple things you can do to care for Lake Illawarra.



**Tread lightly:** Only walk or ride on the path to help endangered plants and animals thrive.



**Native nursery:** Plant natives in your garden to prevent the spread of weeds and maximise habitat for animals. Shop at your local native nursery.



**Leave the trees:** Damage or removal of vegetation on public land around the lake is illegal, you must also contact Council before removing any native vegetation on private land.



**Litter free lake:** Have fun using the lake but take your rubbish with you when you're finished.



**Reduce runoff:** install a water tank to minimise runoff and always wash your car on the grass or at a carwash.



**Volunteer:** Get in touch with your local Council if you would like to volunteer with a Bushcare or Rise and Shine group.