

# Private Creeks

## Caring for your creek

Effective creek management is crucial to reduce the risk of flash flooding during storm events, when huge volumes of water move from our escarpment to the sea. As creeks pass through both public and private land, a collaborative approach is needed for their care and management.

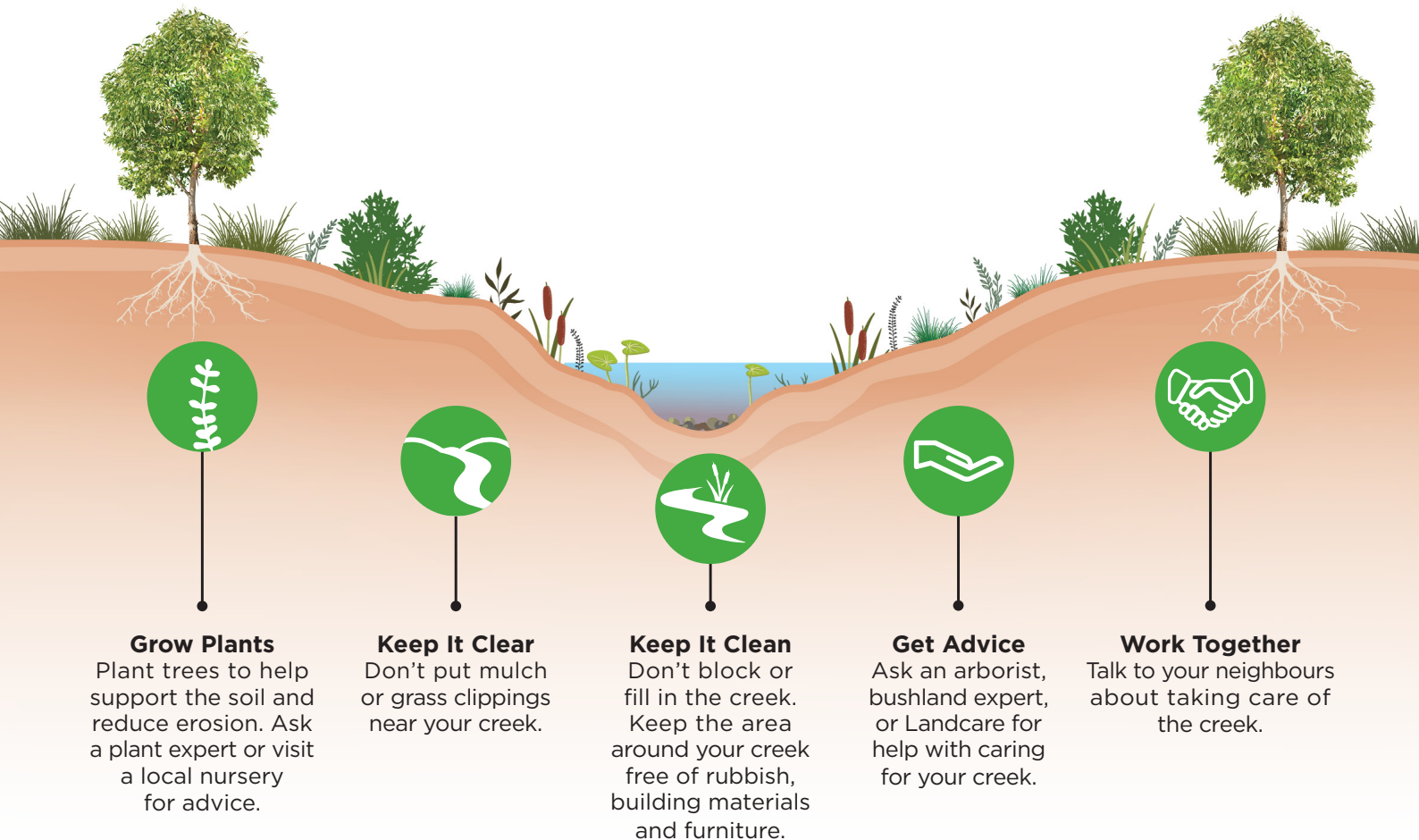
### Why maintain your creek?

A well-cared-for creek enhances the natural beauty of your property and can increase its value. Benefits of regular creek maintenance include:

- increased soil stability
- support local biodiversity
- keep the creek ecosystem healthy
- improved water quality
- provide habitats for wildlife

### How to care for your creek?

Here are some simple steps you can take:



### Things to avoid

Avoid activities that can harm the creek or cause blockages or erosion, such as dumping waste, digging near it, or adding structures.

Visit [wollongong.nsw.gov.au/creeks](http://wollongong.nsw.gov.au/creeks) for more information.

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## Who is responsible for maintaining creeks (watercourses) throughout Wollongong?

In our city, creek maintenance is a shared responsibility between private landowners and government bodies, including Wollongong City Council (Council). We manage creeks that are on public land, which account for about 40% of Wollongong's creeks. Creeks on private property are the responsibility of the landowner. Even if a creek is fenced off, it's still the landowner's duty to maintain it.

If a creek falls within a legal easement benefiting another party, such as Council, the terms of the easement will set out the maintenance and access arrangements. These terms should be reviewed before carrying out tasks such as tree removal, building structures, or bank stabilisation as you may need approval for these works from Council or other government agencies. Minor maintenance activities, like removing rubbish or weeds, may not need approval. If you're unsure of your terms, you can contact our Customer Service team for advice.

## Why is my creek shifting, changing course?

Creeks will naturally change their course over time. If you have a creek on or near your property, it's important to think about how this might affect your land. While erosion and creek bank instability are often caused by natural processes, human actions also have the potential to make erosion and bank instability worse. Taking steps to make the creek bank more stable, maintaining your creek area and getting expert advice all help to reduce the risk of erosion.

## How is creek maintenance enforced?

While it's up to private property owners to maintain their sections of a creek, Council takes instances of unauthorised works seriously. Enforcement actions may include issuing Penalty Notices, Notices, or Orders to restore the area, and potentially, the commencement of legal proceedings.

## How can I get help choosing the right plants for my creek banks and surrounding areas?

Not all plant and tree species are appropriate for creek lines. By choosing suitable local native plants you can enhance your creek's health and resilience, reduce creek erosion, and improve the environment. See the Creek Plant Guide on our website for suggested local native plants.

The [Growing Illawarra Natives website](#) and the [Grow Local Illawarra Natives Garden Guide](#) have detailed information on growing local plants and their suitability for creek areas. The [Wollongong Botanic Garden Greenplan Sales](#) are on the third Friday of the month from 7:30am to 2:30pm where you can also speak with Council's knowledgeable horticulturalist staff. Local bush regeneration companies can provide expert help for a fee.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this Fact Sheet is general information only and is not advice. Creeks exist in a wide variety of contexts. You should use your own knowledge and discretion to determine whether, and when, to obtain expert advice relevant to your particular situation

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