

Hawksbury Lagoon update September 2018

The lagoon is very low at present, due to the outlet remaining open for some time and our inability to currently control water levels. Progress has been made on obtaining new vandal proof culvert gates, which hopefully will be installed over the next few weeks, after which we will need a decent rainfall to refresh water levels prior to summer.

Talking of rainfall reminds me of the importance to remember that anything flowing into roadside gutters will eventually make its way into the lagoon. When it rains chemicals from transport, residential and business activities are washed into the lagoon. Contamination particularly from vehicles can include such things as antifreeze, oil from engine leaks and rubber particles from tyre wear. The washing of stock trucks and cars etc adds detergents and surfactants into waterways. There are two main types of detergents; those which contain phosphates and are highly caustic and surfactant detergents used to enhance wetting and foaming and which are very toxic. In terms of effects on aquatic life, detergents destroy the external mucus layer that protects fish from parasites and bacteria and phosphate based detergents can lead to algal blooms which deplete oxygen levels in the water.

Metals like zinc and copper wash off house roofs and industrial chemicals washed from workplace floors, along with detergents and other pollutants, eventually accumulate in the lagoon sediment.

Solutions to the problem are not simple, but the use of only organic/eco based detergents will help, as will the containment of any chemical spills, with correct disposal either off site or into the sewage system where waste water is treated. In general, we can all be mindful about activities which may add to the chemical load in our stormwater system and consider how to best reduce these effects. The lagoon ecology will thank you.

The lagoon committee will be doing a walk around the lagoon on September 1st to consider future planning and goals. If anyone in the community has any ideas to contribute we'd be pleased to hear from you. Just contact me.

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Chair

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