



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**19 November 2020**

**Paddlers want to see 50% litter reduction in Cooks River catchment by 2025**

In a first for the Cooks River, a coordinated approach to litter prevention actions across local councils, authorities and community groups is driving a goal to halve litter in the catchment by 2025.

The River Canoe Club is leading the charge, having secured a \$90,000 NSW EPA Community Litter Grant to work closely with other organisations to develop a Cooks River catchment litter prevention strategy. This project is a NSW Environmental Protection Authority Waste Less Recycle More initiative funded from the waste levy.

After removing more than 16 tonnes of litter from the Cooks in the last two years the club, which sits on the river's edge in Marrickville, is keen to do more to help the river by focusing on litter prevention.

River Canoe Club President Simon Wilkes says in a catchment of more than 540,000 people, we can all do something to help bring about a cleaner and healthier waterway.

"All kinds of litter disturb the river and prevent us from enjoying its full potential. More paddling opportunities is just one example," said Mr Wilkes.

NSW EPA research shows that everyone litters somewhere, sometime. Among the most common littered items are cigarette butts and takeaway food and beverage packaging.

All kinds of litter dropped anywhere in the surrounding streets and suburbs of the Cooks ultimately end up in the river via the stormwater drainage system during rain events.

"Over the next 12 months we'll be working closely with local councils, authorities and other community groups to stop the problem at the source - before it enters the river. This will involve a mix of actions including Don't Be a Tosser! education and awareness, ensuring effective bin placement and strong coordinated regulation," said Mr Wilkes.

Project partners include the Cooks River Alliance, its member councils - Bayside, Canterbury Bankstown, Inner West and Strathfield Council -, Sydney Water and community groups including the Cooks River Valley Association, Crab Walkers, Mudcrabs and the Wollie Creek Preservation Society.

Cooks River Alliance Chair, Maryanne Duggan said stopping litter in the catchment will be a major focus over the next 12 months with this project being one of four NSW EPA community grants announced in the catchment totalling more than \$223k.

"Coordinated strategies led by communities and authorities working together are an effective way of implementing impactful actions," said Cllr Duggan,

"This litter prevention project continues the Alliance's strong tradition of united action to achieve the 2030 Cooks River community vision for a loved and healthy river," said Councillor Duggan.

---

**ENDS**

Media enquiries | Zoe Power | River Canoe Club | 0435 848 363

Interviews available: River Canoe Club President Simon Wilkes & Cooks River Alliance Executive Officer Sue Burton