



Shane Rattenbury MLA

Attorney-General

Minister for Consumer Affairs

Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

Minister for Gaming

Member for Kurrajong

ARRANGEMENTS BRIEF

FUNCTION:	Launch of the 2023 Catchment Health Indicators Program (CHIP) report
VENUE:	Croke Place Wetlands Croke Pl, Evatt, ACT, 2617 
HOST:	Name: Daniel Harris-Pascal Waterwatch Coordinator Mobile: Personal Information
DAY:	Friday
DATE:	22 March 2024
TIME:	10:30am- 11:15am
TIME COMMITMENT:	45 minutes
CATERING:	Morning Tea provided

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DRESS CODE:	Casual
YOUR ROLE:	5 – 10-minute speech celebrating the Waterwatch program and volunteers and their commitment to our local catchment health <i>Microphone can be made available if required</i>
WHERE TO PARK:	There is parking at the wetlands on Croke Pl
WHO WILL MEET YOU:	Daniel Harris-Pascal will meet you on site
ADVISOR ATTENDING:	Anna McGuire
AUDIENCE:	~40-50 people including Waterwatch volunteers, Waterwatch Coordinators, Catchment group staff, ACT Government, interested public
VIPs:	• Dr Sophie Lewis - Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment • Bradley Bell – Ngunnawal Water Policy Officer, EPSDD
PAST INVOLVEMENT:	The Minister for Water addressed the CHIP launch in 2019
SENSITIVITIES:	No known sensitivities. Water quality in the catchment has been found to be good
ORDER OF CEREMONIES	Name of Master of Ceremonies – Bren Burkevics 10:30am: Arrive and be greeted by Bren Burkevics and chat with volunteers. 10:40am: MC commences event and invites Bradley BELL to perform Welcome to Country and Ngunnawal perspectives about water. 10:50am: MC invites Minister Rattenbury to speak. 10:55am: Minister Rattenbury speaks, officially launching the 2023 CHIP report. 11:10am: MC introduces Ana Londono, the former Waterwatch volunteer at Croke Place Wetland.

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	11:15am: Ana Londono speaks about her Waterwatch volunteer experience. 11:25am: MC closes event and invites guest to morning team and visit the wetlands. 11:30am: Media interviews/photos – viewing water bugs with volunteers. 11.45am: Event concludes
MEDIA:	Media Release at <u>Attachment B</u>
SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS	Does the individual or organisation have any appropriate Twitter or Facebook accounts that the Minister could use in social media posts? Ginninderra Catchment Group: https://www.facebook.com/GinninderraCatchmentGroup Molonglo Conservation Group: https://www.facebook.com/MolongloConservation Southern ACT Catchment Group: https://www.facebook.com/SACTCG
OUTSTANDING REGULATORY ISSUES	Nil

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SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE

Launch of the 2023 CHIP report

10:30am, Friday, 22 March 2024

Croke PI Wetlands, Croke PI, Evatt

- Acknowledge Bradley Bell for the Welcome to Country
- Acknowledgement of Dr Sophie Lewis, Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment
- It is my great pleasure to be with you all to launch the Upper Murrumbidgee 2023 Catchment Health Indicators Program Report, although known as the CHIP report.
- The report, produced by Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch supports the community in the monitoring and caring of our local waterways. The program has been running for almost 30 years and this is the 10th CHIP report.
- Waterwatch is the most recognized regional water quality program. Waterwatch has 220 active sites across 11,400km² and operates with the involvement of over 200 volunteers.

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- The program has sites located throughout the Upper Murrumbidgee catchment from the top of the Murrumbidgee River in Kosciusko National Park all the way down to Taemas Bridge where the Murrumbidgee enters Burrinjuck Dam near Yass.
- Monitoring water quality helps us to understand the health and vitality of our landscapes as the two are connected. When catchment health is good, the landscape is able to hold water, build soil carbon and support biodiversity in the environment.
- Long-term monitoring of our waterways helps us to detect and address pollution, and most importantly, measure the impact of government and community led restoration efforts in helping our waterways.
- The purpose of the CHIP report is to give the community a better understanding of water quality and waterway health issues in the catchment as well as providing a baseline assessment of catchment health to assist natural resource managers and policymakers.
- The 2023 CHIP report contains 96 report cards on different sections of Waterwatch within the 5 sub-catchments of the Upper Murrumbidgee. Each report card has a grading of the waterway regarding its Riparian condition, Water Quality status and Waterbug score. How these cards change each year tells us if the waterways are improving or degrading.
- This year the CHIP is based on 1946 water quality surveys, 189 Waterbug surveys and 132 riparian condition surveys at 224 sites collected by over 200 volunteers.
- I sincerely thank the over 200 volunteers whose time and energy is vital in collecting the citizen science data that the CHIP is based on. Your dedication to our waterways is invaluable, the data you collect helps the community understand what is going on in their catchment. It is also used to help inform decisions regarding what the community and the ACT Government can do to

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continue to improve our waterways in the city and in the region.

- This year, our catchment saw an improvement with more reaches in “Excellent” condition than in the previous 10 years. Indeed, almost 6 out of 10 reaches were in excellent or good condition this year.
- Most of the reaches that scored fair or poor are in urban wetlands and lowland rural creeks. This year’s CHIP report highlights what can be done in these areas to help improve their condition.
- Here today at the Croke Place Wetlands, we are at a site where a constructed wetlands was installed as a part of the ACT Government’s Stage 1 Healthy Waterways program. Waterwatch data was one aspect of the decision to construct this wetland here.
- After being identified as a site where a constructed wetland would help improve water quality downstream, this 5Ha wetland was completed in 2019. It is now home to frogs, waterbirds and of course, lots of waterbugs.
- With Waterwatch volunteers monitoring the water upstream, here at the wetlands and downstream, we can understand how these assets are improving our waterways. This wetland traps sediments, the reeds that grow here absorb nitrates and phosphates and help protect the Ginninderra Creek. It also provides a great asset for all Canberrans, providing beauty and amenity and helping to keep our city cooler during hotter times of the year.
- While this living infrastructure is funded by the ACT Government, it is the concerted effort of community groups and Landcare groups that also volunteer their time to help revegetate and enhance these urban areas through environmental volunteering opportunities. I encourage anyone who wants to help care for these kinds of living infrastructure to get in touch with their local catchment group and see what opportunities are available.

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- Thank you again to all the volunteers that helped to make this year's 2023 CHIP report. It is now my pleasure to officially release the Waterwatch 2023 Catchment Health Indicator Program report and I encourage you to use it and promote it to others who have an interest in our region's waterways.

ENDS



Media release

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22 March 2024

ACT Region's waterway health improving

The latest Catchment Health Indicator Program (CHIP) report has delivered promising results with the water quality of our local catchments showing the highest number of excellent ratings recorded in ten years. Catchment health has been supported by higher-than-average rainfall in recent years.

Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, Shane Rattenbury said the 2023 CHIP Report, released today by Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch, showed improvements due to community restoration initiatives, continued good rainfall and the ACT government's installation of healthy waterways infrastructure.

"The 2023 CHIP Report contains some promising findings which show that the ACT Government's Healthy Waterways infrastructure projects are making an important contribution to enhancing biodiversity and waterway health as well as community restoration efforts by volunteers such as tree plantings and weed control," Minister Rattenbury said.

"2023 returned to more average rainfall, with some drier periods throughout the year after the La Niña conditions in 2022. Steadier water levels supported the riparian vegetation that provides important habitat for waterbugs and other wildlife."

"Unfortunately, we know these conditions can change as our climate gets hotter from the effects of climate change but with more living infrastructure projects rolling out in 2024 and the continued support of community volunteers, I am hoping our catchments will continue to improve and we can protect both our biodiversity and our water.

"The 2023 CHIP report also included Aboriginal Water Assessments that Ngannawal Traditional Custodians are undertaking in the Upper Murrumbidgee Catchment. The Aboriginal Water Assessment tool enables Traditional Custodians to use a cultural lens to assess the health of Country and set priorities for water and natural resource management.

"The CHIP Report uses data collected by citizen scientists to provide an understanding of waterway and riparian health issues. The report is based on 1,946 water quality surveys, 189 waterbug surveys and 132 riparian condition surveys conducted by over 200 volunteers.

ACT Legislative Assembly London Circuit, GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601



+61 2 6205 0005



rattenbury@act.gov.au



@ShaneRattenbury



shanerattenburymla



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“I am incredibly grateful for the support of volunteers to collect data for the CHIP report and to help maintain our waterways,” said Minister Rattenbury. I would also like to acknowledge Icon Water for their continued support for the program.

More information about the Catchment Health Indicator Report is available on the [Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch website](#).

Statement ends

Media contact/s:

Kylie Blakemore

Personal information

M Kylie.Blakemore@act.gov.au