



**Shane Rattenbury MLA**

Attorney-General

Minister for Consumer Affairs

Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

Minister for Gaming

Member for Kurrajong

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**RESPONSE TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

**Question Time 5 September 2024**

**MS LAWDER MLA** - Asked the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction:

Reference: Hansard edited proof transcript - Question Time 5 September 2024, page 7

In relation to: Macrophyte Harvesting

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, has there been any macrophyte harvesting in any of our lakes?

**MR RATTENBURY:** I am quite sure that there has been. I will need to take that on notice to check when and where exactly that has taken place.

**MR RATTENBURY MLA:** The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

In the spring of 2023, the ACT Healthy Waterways team conducted an experimental harvest of water plants from one of the floating wetland platforms on Lake Tuggeranong. This harvest and subsequent export of the plants (either for mulching or disposal) is one of two methods by which the platforms can remove nutrients from the lake, serving as a measure of the wetland's effectiveness as a nutrient filter. The other method, denitrification, is more challenging to measure and only removes nitrogen, not phosphorus.

The primary goals of this harvest were to quantify the amount of nutrient pollution absorbed by the plants and to observe the rate of plant regrowth. We aim to perform up to three harvests from late spring to early autumn, potentially tripling the nutrient export from the lake via the wetland platforms. Another experiment is planned for the summer of 2024-25.

There is no regular program of harvesting of macrophytes from any of Canberra's lakes managed by TCCS (i.e. excluding Lake Burley Griffin, which is managed by the National Capital Authority). However, TCCS does assist with the management of organic material in our lakes via stormwater maintenance activities.

The ACT has more than 270 gross pollutant traps (GPTs) found at various entry points to creeks, channels, floodways, ponds and lakes. GPTs play an important role in keeping rubbish, litter and

organic material out of waterways. They act as the first water pollution control point in the stormwater network.

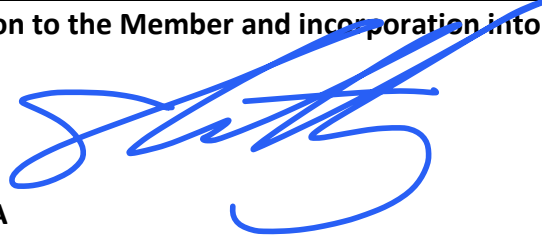
The cleaning frequency of each GPT is between two (2) to six (6) times per annum depending on catchment size, season and amount/intensity of rainfall. Occasionally, there is a requirement to extract sediment, organic material and rubbish from waterways such as creeks, channels and ponds. More recent examples of this type of work involved the extraction of sediment and organic material from channel and ponds within the suburbs of Gordon, Hume and Denman Prospect.

Currently, Roads ACT is running some trials at selected GPT sites with the aim of optimising cleaning frequency to improve water quality. These trials involve the installation of monitoring cameras to record and report on the amount of material within GPTs. If the current trials are successful, it is anticipated the trial will be expanded to additional GPTs in the future.

Another initiative that is currently underway is a program to modify and upgrade GPTs to improve their performance, maintainability and efficiency of pollution removal. As part of this program three GPTs were upgraded last financial year.

According to the National Capital Authority, which manages Lake Burley Griffin, they have no regular program for harvesting macrophytes. Instead, they monitor macrophyte growth and conduct harvesting as needed to mitigate impacts on lake assets and improve access for lake users and commercial operators. The last significant harvesting occurred during the 2019/20 drought when the growth of water plants in East Basin and Central Basin significantly affected use of the lake.

**Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.**



**Shane Rattenbury MLA**  
**Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction**

Date:.....15/10/24.....