Suzanne Orr MLA
Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water
Minister for Disability, Carers and Community Services
Minister for Seniors and Veterans

Member for Yerrabi

RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE
Questions on Notice Paper No 5
11 April 2025
Question No. 330

MR BRADDOCK MLA - To ask the Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water:

1. What are the most common sources of microplastics from the urban environment that pose a threat to the waterways and wildlife of the ACT.
2. Does the ACT Government collect any information on the presence of microplastics in the ACT's waterways; if so, what are the insights regarding the presence of plastics in our urban environment that such information reveals.
3. Does the ACT conduct any chemical testing of our waterways, as distinct from testing of our drinking water supplies, for toxic chemicals and carcinogenic substances that may be derived from degraded plastics; if so, what are the insights regarding the presence of plastics in our urban environment that such testing reveals.

MINISTER ORR MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

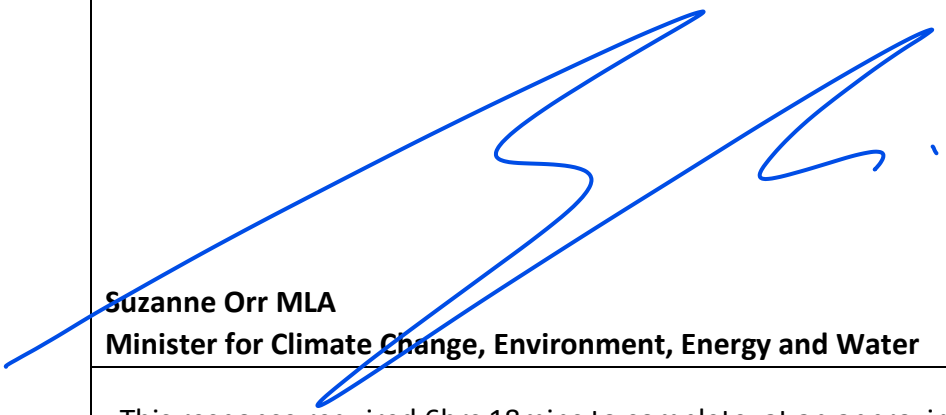
1. Urban stormwater runoff is considered a primary contributor of microplastics to waterways. The most common sources of microplastics are from breakdown of larger plastic items, such as bottles, bags, and packaging materials, and the shedding of small plastic particles from items like plastic building materials, synthetic turf and other textiles such as shade cloth and clothing and personal care products. During washing or rainfall events, these microplastics are picked up and eventually make their way into drains, ponds, lakes, rivers, and or sewer thereby contaminating waterways.

2. A one-off study was conducted by the ACT Government at Lake Tuggeranong in 2023, which confirmed the presence of microplastics at the inlets to the Lake and in the Lake itself. The concentrations were typical of Australian urban waterways. Most microplastics were in the form of fibres, which may come from shedding of fibrous materials such as synthetic clothing, household furniture, construction materials and fishing lines.

   Recreational water testing assesses microbial quality. The ACT guidelines for recreation water quality are based on the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Guidelines for Managing Risks in Recreational Waters*. Information on water quality monitoring is available at How water quality is monitored - ACT Government.

3. The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) undertakes regular testing of ACT waterways, however the parameters tested do not include microplastics or carcinogenic substances.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Suzanne Orr MLA
Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water **Date:** 02/05/25

This response required 6hrs 18mins to complete, at an approximate cost of $597.74.