

Response to question on notice

Questions on Notice Paper No 11

26 September 2025

Question No. 652

Mark Parton MLA: To ask the Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

1. Is the Government regularly monitoring water quality in Lake Tuggeranong and other ACT waterways; if so, at what frequency.
2. When was the last time the Government checked water quality in Lake Tuggeranong or other ACT waterways.
3. Can the Minister provide an update on the progress of the Government's 2023 commitment to naturalise water in Tuggeranong by removing 500 metres of the Tuggeranong Creek stormwater drain and replacing it with natural elements, including (a) when this is expected to be complete and (b) the effectiveness of this in improving water quality in Lake Tuggeranong.
4. Can the Minister provide an update on the progress of the Government's 2023 commitment to naturalise water in Lake Tuggeranong by modifying 54 street kerbs across east and west Kambah to direct stormwater flows across existing green spaces, including (a) when this is expected to be complete and (b) the effectiveness of this in improving water quality in Lake Tuggeranong.
5. Can the Minister provide an update on the progress of the Government's 2023 commitment to naturalise water quality in Lake Tuggeranong by installing bioretention swales at the Kambah playing fields, including (a) when this is expected to be complete and (b) the effectiveness of this in improving water quality in Lake Tuggeranong.
6. Has the Government since considered any alternative measures to improve water quality in Lake Tuggeranong and fix the long-term issues.
7. Did the Government consider committing additional funding to improving water quality in Lake Tuggeranong and other ACT waterways as part of the 2025-2026 budget process.

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

1. The Government funds several water quality monitoring programs in Lake Tuggeranong and across the ACT:
 - In accordance with the ACT Guidelines for Recreational Water Quality Lake Tuggeranong is inspected weekly by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) or as required in relation to a pollution incident. The ACT Health Protection Service also samples recreational sites weekly during the recreational season (October to April) to assess their microbial quality. This information is available on the City and Environment Directorate (CED) website. [How water quality is monitored - ACT Government](#)

act.gov.au

- Lake Tuggeranong is monitored for multiple water quality constituents—along with 18 other rivers, lakes and ponds in the ACT.
 - The Waterwatch program undertakes monitoring of
 - a. 226 waterway sites across the ACT and region for physicochemistry (1804 samples in aggregate last year)
 - b. two sites per stream or river reach:
 - i. sampled in in autumn and spring, for water bugs (187 samples last year)
 - ii. sampled every two years for riparian condition (209 samples reported last year).
 - River health monitoring using the AUSRIVAS (standard method based on water bugs) occurs in spring and autumn at 13 sites across the ACT.
2. The last EPA inspection occurred on 3 October 2025, and no water quality changes were identified to require further action under the guidelines.
 3.
 - a) Plant establishment at the site is scheduled to be complete in June 2026, however, the establishment period will be extended if the plants have not grown sufficiently.
 - b) the effectiveness of this asset cannot be determined via monitoring until the plants have fully established, but models predict that the effect is to filter around 13 tons of suspended solids, 110 kg nitrogen and 8 kg phosphorus per year, respectively.
 4.
 - a) This pilot project is already complete; 45 of the target 54 drains were able to accommodate an outlet to green space.
 - b) The effectiveness of these has not been monitored, but models predict that the combined effect is to avoid around 3.1 tons of suspended solids, 28 kg nitrogen and 2.5 kg phosphorus per year, respectively.
 5.
 - a) This pilot project is already complete.
 - b) Four swales were installed next to four sports fields. The effectiveness of these has not been monitored, but models predict that the combined effect is to avoid around 357 kg of suspended solids, 6.6 kg nitrogen and 2.9 kg phosphorus per year, respectively.
 6. Yes. These are being considered by government in fulfillment of the commitment to develop and deliver a plan to improve the health of Lake Tuggeranong. The Government will make these options public in the coming months.
 7. Yes. The Government committed \$327,000 in the 2025-26 Budget under the *Safeguarding the Territory's water resources – Improving Lake Tuggeranong* initiative to continue the Healthy Waterways project to improve waterway health and water quality and continue existing positions in the Office of Water. These positions within the community education program focus on preventing the pollution of stormwater, which serves all of Canberra, but with a particular focus on Tuggeranong.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Suzanne Orr MLA

Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water

Date: 22/10/25

This response required 1hrs 30mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$176.