



## **H2OK: Keeping our Waterways Healthy (ACT and Region Stormwater Education and Behaviour Change Program)**

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The stormwater education program *H2OK: Keeping our waterways healthy* for the Capital Region was developed in response to a clear need for stormwater pollution solutions.

A 2015 catchment-wide survey of the ACT and region revealed low catchment literacy in the community as well as limited knowledge about the types of actions that lead to poor water quality. Monitoring further shows that many creeks and waterways in urban areas are not healthy, due mainly to contaminated stormwater run-off. With the population increasing, pressure on the ACT and region's lakes and rivers will continue to grow and have a negative impact on water quality downstream in the Murrumbidgee River system and the wider Murray-Darling Basin.

Launched in February and running until June 2019, *H2OK: Keeping our waterways healthy* operates across the ACT and the surrounding NSW regions of Cooma, Queanbeyan and Yass. Guided by interstate and overseas best practice community engagement, the program is part of the ACT Healthy Waterways project which is jointly funded by the Australian and ACT Governments which also includes the construction of water quality infrastructure across the ACT and region.

*H2OK: Keeping our waterways healthy* targets four primary audiences - urban residents, rural residents on small blocks, the building and construction industry, and the maintenance and cleaning industry - with key messages around what causes stormwater pollution and the various ways to avoid it using traditional media, incentives, training, events, DrainArt, drain stencils and advocacy.

While the messaging and communication tools can't be described as 'new', the program is distinctive because of its multi-jurisdictional and collaborative approach, involving three levels of government and the community. This is the first concerted effort in this region to engage a regionally diverse audience in a comprehensive way through a campaign based on solid attitudinal survey results.

The presentation will provide an overview of *H2OK: Keeping our waterways healthy* and report on early results under the heading 'Only rain down the stormwater drain'.