Lakes and canals

The numerous lakes and more than 400 kilometres of constructed canals on the Gold Coast form an environmentally significant network of waterways.

Lakes and canals are vibrant living waterways which react to changes in the environment. Natural events that affect the climate, weather and tides, as well as human impacts such as nutrients, pollutants and recreational use, can impact the health of waterways.

Environmental management

City of Gold Coast (City) conducts some cleaning and maintenance of lakes and canals to ensure that water flows are not blocked and that these aquatic environments are preserved. The objective of maintenance activities is to reduce such things as human impacts, i.e. litter, pest species such as Salvinia, and to maintain infrastructure.

Lakes and canals retain and treat stormwater. This includes run off from roads, gardens and roofs which is often untreated. For this reason, the City limits interference with the natural ecosystem and does not remove reeds or other fringing vegetation.

Keeping these waterways in good condition also assists their vitally important role as buffers against flooding, helping to reduce the impacts of major floods on surrounding and downstream areas. The volume of stormwater received is directly related to increases in water levels and any major flooding.

Safety in lakes and canals

Residents are reminded that the City only recommends swimming in patrolled beaches, dedicated swimming enclosures and public swimming pools. Other recreational activities involving significant body contact with water should also take place close to patrolled areas.

Further information regarding lakes and canals can be obtained by telephoning our Catchment Management team on 07 5581 7005.

Dangerous aquatic organisms on the Gold Coast

The Gold Coast’s beautiful lakes, rivers and canals are some of our city’s greatest assets. They enhance our lifestyle, provide great views and are a playground for fishing, paddling, sailing and boating.

They are also home to a variety of plants, animals and microorganisms so it’s important to know that some of these are potentially dangerous. These include stingrays, jellyfish, catfish, stonefish, sharks, algae and other microorganisms they can be found in marine, brackish and freshwater environments. This includes our lakes and canals.

Anyone who enjoys recreational activities in the water should act safely and responsibly, and needs to be aware of potentially dangerous species. Learn more about dangerous aquatic organisms.

Related information

- Beach & water safety
- Stormwater responsible
- Lagoon Hugh Munro
- Waterways pollution
- Wetlands

Jump to key information

Key information

Brochures, fact sheets & reports

Append fact sheet