

» washing your car at home

Prevent pollution entering our waterways

» The truth about wash water

Runoff from washing vehicles and equipment contains pollutants such as detergents, dirt, oil, concrete, fuel residue, metals, paints and more.

When you wash your vehicle and other equipment on the road or in your driveway, the wash water ends up in a stormwater drain. **These drains are designed for rain water only** – they empty stormwater directly into our rivers, lakes and creeks.

Although the pollutants in wash water are often present in small amounts, their cumulative effect causes serious environmental damage including;

- Increasing sediment and nutrients entering our waterways
- Reducing the oxygen and sunlight needed for the good health and wellbeing of aquatic animals and plants
- Poisoning of aquatic plants and animals
- The build up of toxins in fish and other aquatic animals, which has the potential to cause harm to people who eat them

» Wash it right

When washing your vehicle and equipment there are ways to prevent pollutants from going into the stormwater drains and impacting our waterways. By following these simple steps you can help contribute to Ballina Shire's healthy waterways.

» Wash your car on unsealed ground

Wash your car on a grass verge, lawn or gravel area where the wash water can soak in and be filtered by the plants and soil.



» Avoid using chemicals, including detergents

All detergents, even biodegradable and other 'eco-friendly' products are pollutants and toxic to aquatic life. If washing on a sealed surface is your only option, use a bucket and two cloths – one to wash and one to dry – to prevent any wash water falling onto the ground.

» Dispose of wash water correctly

Empty the dirty water into a garden bed or lawn area as long as none runs off into the stormwater system.

» Go to a commercial carwash

Water from a commercial carwash is recycled and then treated prior to discharging into the sewage system.

» Did you know?

Dirt and oil from your car are contaminants as are the detergents you use to wash it. They pollute our waterways if they are washed down a stormwater drain.

It is an offence under the *Protection of the Environment Operations (POEO) Act* to pollute waters. You can be fined more than \$4,000.

» Summary

Outside drains are for rain water only and lead directly to our rivers, lakes and creeks.

Wash your vehicle on unsealed ground to prevent wash water from getting into stormwater drains.

Adapted from: *Washing Your Car Top Tips* Environment Southland, Invercargill 2013.

» For more information please refer to:

Council's Public and Environmental Health Section 1300 864 444
or visit ballina.nsw.gov.au