

FACT SHEET



– Do you suspect water pollution?

(02) 4677 1100
wollondilly.nsw.gov.au



Do you suspect pollution? What might look like “pollution” in our creeks is sometimes the result of natural processes.

Brown or reddish water - Dissolved organic material from the breakdown of plants and animals can leach into slow moving water staining it brown or reddish brown.



Green algae – Algae is a microscopic plant that occurs naturally in water with high nutrients. It may not indicate the water is polluted, though it can be an indication of wastewater or fertiliser is entering the water.

Orange crust or rusty colour – Iron rich soils are common in the Wollondilly Shire. As water seeps towards the ground surface it brings iron with it and as it becomes exposed to air it turns a rusty looking colour.

Foam - As leaves decay, dissolved organic carbon is released into the water which floats to the surface as tiny clumps of white foam. Natural foam may smell fishy or earthy, and may be white, off-white, or brownish. It also breaks apart easily when disturbed. If the foam smells of effluent or fragrance, it may be from a nearby spill or waste discharge pipe and you should contact Council.



Oily Film - Bacteria that live in waterlogged places get their energy from iron and manganese. As the bacteria grows and decomposes it may appear oily or form red or orange films.

Sometimes oily sheens can come from spilled petrol, oils or other pollutants. A minor spill is usually enough to form a film across the surface of a large waterway.

How to tell the difference between pollution spills and natural oil sheens? Poke the sheen with a stick. If the sheen swirls back together immediately, it's probably pollution. If the sheen breaks apart and does not flow back together quickly, it is most likely from bacteria or another natural source.



If you suspect pollution in the Shire's drains or waterways, please contact Council at any time on (02) 4677 1100.

If it is a serious water pollution incident, please request administration staff to contact the investigating officer immediately