

# Data Sheet 9 (DS 009)

## Urban Water Quality – Stream Ratings

### What are we monitoring?

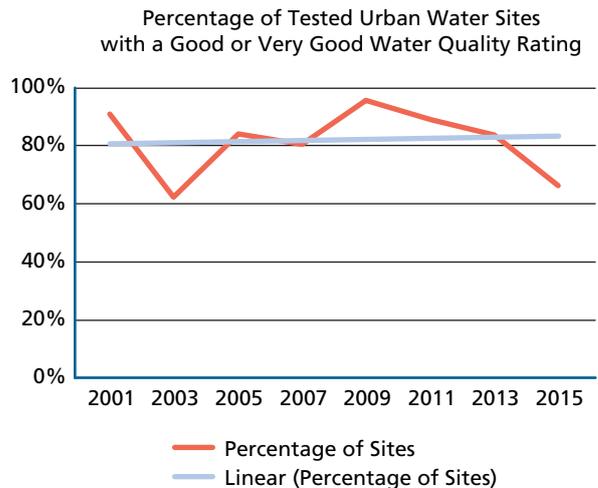
The percentage of Blue Mountains urban water monitoring sites with quality ratings of 'very good' and 'good'.

Blue Mountains City Council conducts annual audits of stream water quality using aquatic macroinvertebrates as biological indicators. The presence or absence of macroinvertebrates (such as beetles, moths, dragonflies, aquatic earthworms, crayfish, snails and mussels), reflects the quality of the stream water and the health of the aquatic ecosystem. Sites are scored by the type of macroinvertebrate families present, with scores categorised using SIGNAL SF rating system of 'very good', 'good', 'fair', 'poor' or 'very poor'.

It should be noted that different urban stream sites have been measured over time rather than a consistent set of sites. In addition, the number of sites measured has varied from 8 in 2003 to 46 in 2012.

### What is the trend?

Between 2012 and 2015 there was a reduction in the percentage of urban streams with 'good' or 'very good' ratings from 89% (when 46 sites measured) to 66% (when 32 sites measured). The overall trend when averaging results from 2001 to 2015 is slightly positive, with annual variation influenced mainly by the particular sub-set of sites sampled each year.



### Why is monitoring this trend important?

Monitoring the type and diversity of aquatic macro invertebrates present in Blue Mountains urban streams is an indicator of how well we are progressing in looking after our water resources. Changes in the macro invertebrate community can indicate declining or improving water quality and habitat availability. Ideally, the proportion of streams rated 'good' or 'very good' will increase – indicating improvements in water quality and the health of aquatic ecosystems.

Urban Water Sites with a Good or Very Good Water Quality Rating

Year	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015
Total Sites	11	8	24	36	39	45	29	32
Sites Rated Good or Very Good	10	5	20	29	37	40	24	21
% of Sites Rated Good or Very Good	91%	63%	83%	81%	95%	89%	83%	66%

*The first Blue Mountains Waterways Health Report will be released in 2016. This document describes the results of a more comprehensive system for rating waterways, with 53% of urban monitoring sites assessed as being in good or excellent health. Future State of City Reports will detail trends based on this new rating system, in place of the current SIGNAL-SF trends.*

*Source: Blue Mountains City Council Annual Report 2014–2015 and Aquatic Macroinvertebrate and Water Quality Sampling Program Report 2014*