

# AUSTRALIAN CAR WASH ASSOCIATION

## BEST PRACTICE CAR CARE



Our cars are valuable and need to be well maintained and looked after. It is easy to care for your car in a way that can both save water and reduce your environmental impact on the rivers, creeks, lakes and coastline.

### STORMWATER POLLUTION

Every car that is washed in the streets, in the driveway or on any open paved surface can cause enormous damage to the plants and animals both in our freshwater creeks and rivers and in the surrounding seawater environment of our coastline.

This is because all the dirty water that runs off into the stormwater drains flows untreated into these waterways. In the average of 110 litres of wastewater from each home washed car, approximately 750ml of slimy sludge – including grease, oil, detergents and heavy metals such as lead and zinc – flows to stormwater. With 13 million cars in Australia, imagine the billions of litres of contamination running into the waterways where you swim and fish, clouding the surface and clogging the banks.

How do you prevent stormwater pollution?

- ☺ Wash your car on the grass or other porous area where the contaminants are trapped and cannot enter the stormwater systems
- ☺ The better solution is to use an accredited car wash where all the waste water has to be directed into sedimentation pits and then discharged to sewer, after which it is treated and cleaned under high EPA standards.

### PREVENT OIL SPILLS

The last place your engine oil should end up is on the road. Car oil is highly toxic – just one litre of oil can contaminate one million litres of water.

Check your car regularly for oil leaks and if you find any, have them fixed immediately.

- ☺ Open the hood and inspect the engine compartment for evidence of an oil leak
- ☺ Check under the car with a flashlight for evidence of oil drips
- ☺ Leave a large piece of paper or card under the car overnight and check for oil stains. This will not only tell you that you have a leak but also where it is coming from.

### MINIMISE WATER USE

Australia will always be a dry continent with periods of low rainfall. This is a resource that should be used responsibly, to protect our habitat for future generations.

When washing your car, take care to minimise the amount of water used

- ☺ Use a high pressure water unit rather than the normal low pressure garden hose and trigger nozzle – this can halve your water use.
- ☺ Use a bucket and sponge to help soften and clean the worse areas, rather than continual water jets.
- ☺ The better solution is to use a commercial car wash that has special high pressure hoses with small jets – and where the automatic equipment is linked to a recycling system, with most of the water reclaimed, cleaned and re-used.