

# AUSTRALIAN CAR WASH ASSOCIATION ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STATEMENT



## BACKGROUND

The Australian Car Wash Association (ACWA) is the peak national representative body for the car wash industry with a vision for an economically and environmentally sustainable future.

This includes vehicle washing both inside and outside of the commercial car washing industry.

- Responsible vehicle washing which minimises water usage consistent with the best quality result and water availability; and
- Responsible vehicle washing which includes proper waste water management and prevents pollution of our waterways.

Vehicle washing is a voluntary but consistent activity servicing Australia's 13 million vehicles. It is estimated that home and street washing accounts for 127 million washes per year, which is a significant number with consequences which need to be understood and controlled.

## STORMWATER POLLUTION

The use of a trade waste system, with all waste water directed through interceptor pits and then to sewer, is an integral part of a commercial car wash licencing process to prevent stormwater and waterways pollution.

Waste water from washing vehicles on driveways, in the streets or on any open paved area runs into the urban stormwater system. This polluted water flows directly into the waterways and seriously affects the health of our rivers, creeks, lakes and coastline.

A recent national scientific research project undertaken by Ecowise Environmental (now GHD) identified and quantified the ingredients in the waste water runoff from vehicle washing. Critical pollutants include not only grease, oil, hydrocarbons, surfactants and suspended solids but also heavy metals such as copper, lead and zinc with concentrations up to 30 times higher than the ANZECC guidelines for marine water.

Uncontrolled vehicle washing creates a significant pollution loading when extrapolated over an urban area. It is estimated that over thirteen billion litres of contaminated waste water are being directed into stormwater systems across Australia each year as a result of this activity.

## WATER EFFICIENCY

The car wash industry is a responsible user of water and recycles water wherever possible, taking into consideration health and safety standards for staff and customers

In response to recent drought pressures, and funded by the Smart Water Fund in Victoria, ACWA developed a Car Wash Water Saver Rating Scheme to measure water efficiency. This Water Saver Rating was accredited nationally in 2008 under the auspices of the federal Smart Approved Water Mark, with a 5 star rating for car washes using less than 100 litres per wash.

To ensure that the most environmentally responsible business practices are supported, car owners should be encouraged to look for a commercial car wash which displays the 5 star Car Wash Water Saver Rating sign.



## PRO-ACTIVE PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

ACWA has a policy of working closely with environmental, water and other relevant regulators on every level to inform and co-ordinate policies which meet government and industry environmental objectives and protect both the life in the waterways and the viable future of the car wash industry.

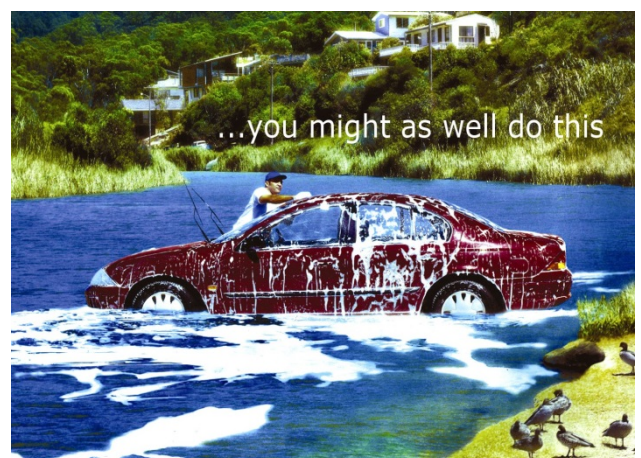
It is vital that regulators and the public are well-informed about the pollution of the waterways which can result from washing vehicles on non-porous surfaces where the waste water run-off is not controlled.



Part of the education campaign should focus on the fact that the waste water run-off at licensed commercial car washes is controlled, being plumbed directly into the mains sewers.

These businesses are providers of a quality sustainable service with water saving and stormwater protection benefits that greatly reduce the environmental impact of an everyday regular activity.

Go to [www.acwa.net.au](http://www.acwa.net.au) for the pollution story and to <http://www.acwa.net.au/environment.htm> for more information on the environmental contamination facts about home car washing.



### Caring for your Car and the Environment

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