

WILLOWS

Name of area/creek

COUNCIL LOGO



OR



The impact of Willows

Reduced Water Quantity

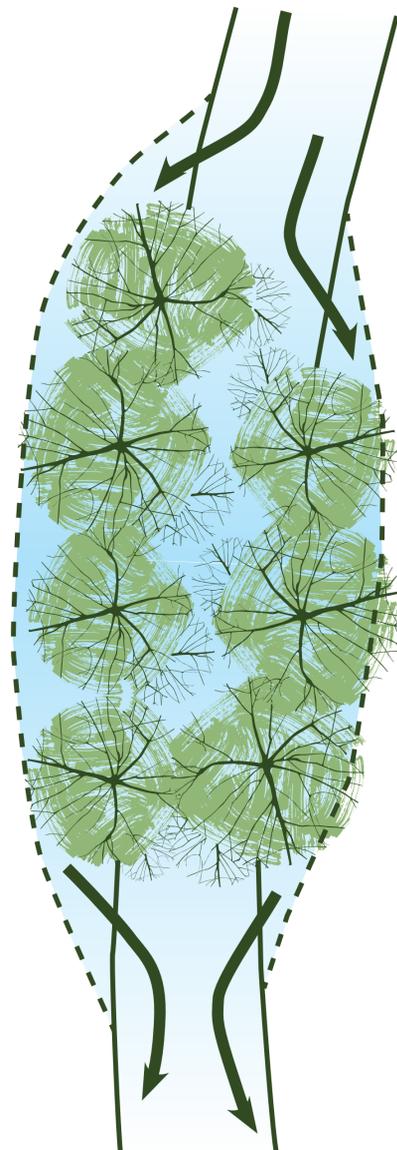
- Willows use significantly more water than native plants. They extend their roots out into the watercourse to take up more water and have the ability to dry out small streams and wetlands.
- Replacing Willows with native Eucalypt and other tree species can save over 3 million litres of water per hectare every year.

Reduced Water Quality

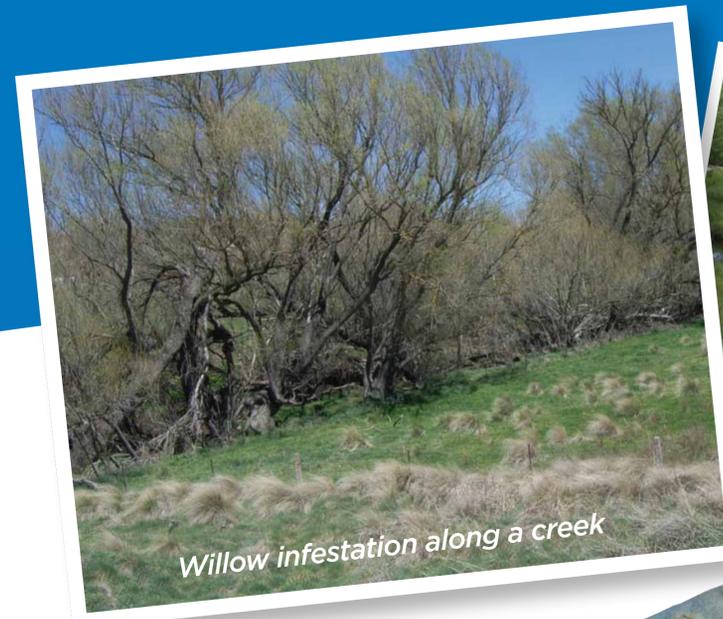
- Willows are deciduous and drop all their leaves in autumn and winter. This rapid influx of leaves, dropping and breaking down in the waterway, causes huge reductions of available oxygen in the water. This lack of oxygen threatens native plants and animals, and reduces water quality.

Erosion and Flooding

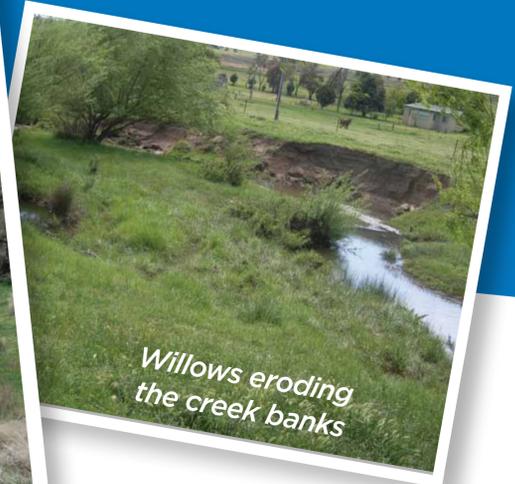
- Willows have dense, mat-forming root systems that extend into the centre of the stream, trapping vegetation and sediment which blocks water flows.
- These blockages force water to erode the banks behind the willows, which in turn can create flooding in times of high flows.



Willows choke stream flows, forcing the water to eddy and find a new path. This then causes riverbank erosion.



Willow infestation along a creek



Willows eroding the creek banks

Habitat Loss

- Willows tend to form a monoculture, shading out and suppressing native vegetation, which has a complex canopy structure. Native animals require these different canopy levels, including groundcover, for habitat, which Willows cannot provide.
- Willows cannot provide the deep hollows in trunks, complex layers of leaf and bark litter, nor the instream large woody structures that Eucalypts and other hardwoods can.
- Willows cannot provide the nectar and pollen that many insects feed on. This limits the variety of available insects in the food chain, which affects native animals from frogs to eagles.



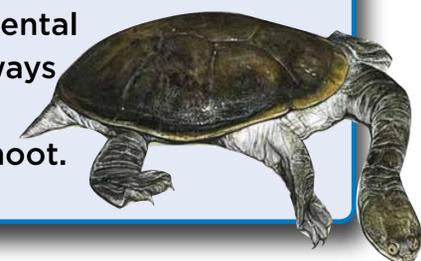
Trout Cod

Illustration by Marjorie Crosby-Fairall
Courtesy of the Murray Darling Basin Authority

Willows

Willows are listed as a Weed of National Significance, as they are one of Australia's most serious weeds. They infest waterways and have substantial economic, social and environmental impacts.

Originally planted to stabilise stream banks and as ornamental plants, they now infest thousands of kilometres of waterways in south-eastern Australia. They spread by seed and also vegetatively as broken pieces float downstream and re-shoot.



MORE INFORMATION:

cwcewa.com.au

We can all play a role in protecting waterways – they are a significant natural resource

Maintain biodiversity by controlling Willows