

Thank you for your participation



Monash University has completed social research that helps to explore what the Victorian Government and the houseboat community can do to better manage wastewater from houseboats on Lake Eildon. Carried out in 2021, this research aimed to:

1. Better understand how privately owned houseboats on Lake Eildon are used, and what this means for the wastewater that is generated.
2. Explore potential actions people can take to reduce pollution levels in waste water and protect what the community values about houseboating on the lake.

“Everywhere you look, doesn’t matter where you are positioned, it’s a beautiful setting ... whether you’re flat out, taking kids around water skiing, or you’re just relaxing, it’s a nice place to be.”

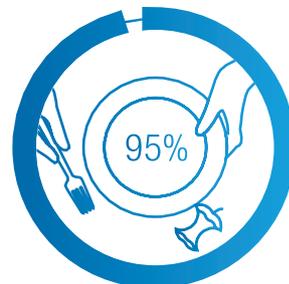
WHAT WE DID AND WHAT WE FOUND

We surveyed 273 anonymous houseboat owners and conducted in-depth interviews with 21 randomly selected houseboat owners who completed the survey.

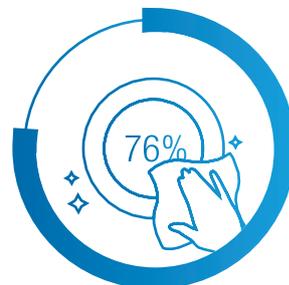
The survey was open to all houseboat owners, and owners from all boat categories responded.

We found that people are taking active steps to reduce pollution in waste water.

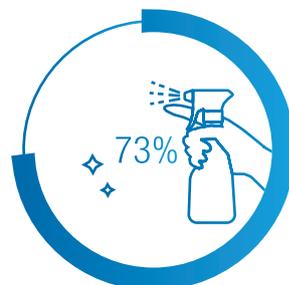
In a typical year, across the fleet, houseboaters:



Scrape food scraps into bin = 47,088 times per year
Food scraps go into wastewater = 2,252 times per year



Wipe oily dishes with paper towel = 29,458 times per year
Wash oily dishes into wastewater = 9,176 times per year

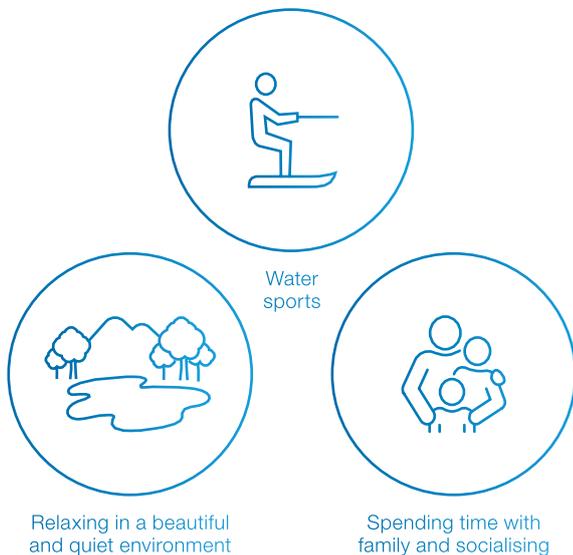


Use 'green' cleaning products = 61,069 times per year
Use non 'green' cleaning products = 22,941 times per year



We also found that people value the lifestyle provided by houseboating.

This includes water sports, spending time with family, socialising with other houseboaters, and relaxing in a beautiful and quiet environment.



43 days per year is the average usage of houseboats.

Though there's a lot of variation in when and how often people use their boats.

82% “mostly” or “only” use their boats during warmer months.

“All visitors to the lake need to be aware that it’s a privilege that we’re allowed to use it as a recreational facility, but with that comes responsibilities for the irrigation water and for people in the town that drink the water.”

OPPORTUNITIES

Houseboat owners suggested these opportunities:



Reducing pollutants from food waste — especially oils and grease. Challenges include managing additional paper waste and the effort involved.



Reducing nutrients and harmful ingredients from cleaning products via greywater. Challenges include difficulties identifying and locally accessing suitable products.



Devices and technology have their place in greywater management. If used, costs should be proportionate to impacts, and supporting infrastructure provided.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Find out more about the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning’s current review of the houseboat regulations at water.vic.gov.au/recreational-values/houseboating-regulations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all of the houseboat owners who participated. Thanks also to boat clubs, marinas and the Lake Eildon Houseboat Industry Association for their support and to Murrindindi Shire Council for providing the images used in this document.