

# Gardeners have power over pollution

15 December 2000

«Name»

«Contact»

«Addr1»

«City» «State» «Postcode»

Dear «Contact»,

As part of a study into stormwater pollution, we recently surveyed residents in the Waverley Local Government Area, asking them about their local environmental concerns and practices around the home.

## Your clients are very concerned about the environment

- 85% agreed that *"individuals should be responsible for the environment"*
- 91% agreed that a *"clean environment contributes to the quality of my life and wellbeing"*
- 90% agreed *"I am prepared to change the way I do things if it involves the environment"*

As caretakers for your clients' gardens you have a big impact on what goes into the stormwater drains. Stormwater transports anything (water, leaves, garden waste, soil, litter, fertilisers and pesticides, etc) that is on the ground and in the gutters. When it rains, stormwater sweeps this into drains and eventually it ends up in our oceans and on our beaches.

## 90% of stormwater pollution is garden waste

As part of our study the pollution control traps in Dover Heights and North Bronte were examined at six weekly intervals. **Only 10% of the materials collected were litter, while the remaining 90% were soil, leaves and garden waste.**

## Why is garden waste a problem?

- Grass clippings and leaves carry lead and other pollutants with them to the ocean, which do not readily break down. This can increase algal growth and can poison plants and animals.
- Too much algae harms water quality and makes the ocean unpleasant. As algae decay, it reduces the oxygen in the ocean, which can kill sea life.
- Soluble or chemical pollutants from gardening (fertilisers, pesticides and sediment) are harmful to our oceans. When we analysed the chemicals in local street gutters we found an above average level of these chemical pollutants.
- Stormwater pollution control traps can only stop large solids, not chemicals. These traps are expensive to maintain and empty.



Survey results quoted in this letter were obtained as part of a larger study conducted by the University of NSW Schools of Social Science & Policy and Civil & Environmental Engineering, in partnership with Waverley Council. This project has been assisted by the New South Wales Government through its Stormwater Trust.

## What can you do to help?

There are simple ways you can reduce stormwater pollution and make our oceans and waterways cleaner and safer for all.

Gardeners with clients in the Waverley Local Government Area can help by:

- Sweeping gutters and driveways instead of hosing
- Vacuuming leaves instead of blowing them into gutters
- Composting leaves
- Raking up grass clippings and mulching or composting them
- Covering piles of soil, sand or mulch to prevent them washing into the drain
- Planting grass where soil is exposed
- Using fertilisers and pesticides sparingly

## Want to know more?

The enclosed brochures illustrate ways you can help to make stormwater safer and cleaner, but for more information please contact:

- Waverley Council Environmental Services 9369 8000
- EPA  
Pollution Line 131555,  
info@epa.nsw.gov.au, or  
[www.epa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au)

For information on this project please contact:

- Roberta Ryan at UNSW  
9385 3541

Thank you for your time and for caring about the environment.



Councillor Paul Pearce  
Mayor of Waverley



Roberta Ryan  
School of Social  
Science and Policy  
University of NSW



Assoc. Prof. James Ball  
School of Civil and  
Environmental Engineering  
University of NSW