Background: Citizens Jury

The Citizens Jury is a model for involving local residents in making decisions about important issues that affect their community. The Bronte Catchment Project will use the jury model to find creative solutions to environmental problems.

The Bronte Citizens Jury will formally meet on September 14, 15 and 16 at Waverley Council Chambers. The Jury will be made up of between 12 and 16 members. Before their official gathering, the members will have a chance to meet each other, set the ground rules and receive information about the matters to be discussed. The Bronte Catchment Project will pay for meals and childcare for the weekend.

The jury process will be assisted by two moderators and will be recorded. As with juries in the court system, the Bronte Citizens Jury will hear evidence from expert witnesses and will have the added benefit of being able to question the experts. The expert evidence will include the results from a ‘tele-poll’ (a sort of referendum) of 500 people who live in Bronte or who visit the area. The poll, which is being carried out by independent researchers, is designed to tap into people’s ideas about solutions to pollution.

On the final day, the Jury’s recommendations will be developed into a report that will help shape local action on stormwater pollution.

Why stormwater?

Stormwater pollution is one of the single biggest threats to the health of our waterways. Pollution traps have made a difference to water quality by catching pollution and rubbish before it has a chance to get onto the beach. However, the Bronte Catchment Project is about stopping pollution – including detergents and fertilisers – from getting into stormwater in the first place.

Research shows that Bronte residents are particularly concerned about beach pollution. The vast majority (88%) of residents who were surveyed said they agreed that individuals should be responsible for the environment. A similar number said they were willing to change the way they do things to make a difference to water quality and the environment.

The Citizens Jury will build on this concern and willingness to make a difference by thinking hard about environmental problems and coming up with ideas for workable solutions.

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