Dear

Living by the beach, you enjoy a great lifestyle, beautiful views and the sea air — but you also have a big impact on what ends up in stormwater.

Stormwater transports anything (water, leaves, garden waste, soil, litter, fertilisers and pesticides, etc) that is sitting on the ground and in the gutters. Stormwater sweeps this into drains when it rains, and eventually it all ends up in our oceans and on our beaches.

As part of a study into stormwater pollution, we recently surveyed people in your area. We asked you questions about local environmental concerns and practices around the home.

You might like to know...

Beach pollution was the environmental issue of greatest local concern to residents in Bronte. More generally, 85% of people were very concerned about the pollution of oceans and waterways. Litter and dumped rubbish were ranked second in importance (after sewerage/outfalls) as a cause of water pollution.

We also looked inside the pollution control trap at the end of Hewlett Street at six weekly intervals. We found only 10% of the material collected was litter. However, 20% was sand and soil, and 70% was leaves and garden waste. These are all pollutants.

What pollutes stormwater?

Leaves, garden waste, soil (organics), detergents, herbicides, pesticides (solubles) and litter which enter street gutters and drains are carried out to sea when it rains.

- Organic pollutants, like leaves and soil, are harmful as they do not easily break down. They cause algal growth and reduce oxygen levels in the ocean, which can kill sea life. Organic matter can carry lead and other pollutants, unfiltered, to our oceans.
- Soluble pollutants are just as harmful to our oceans as litter and garbage.
- Stormwater pollution control traps, like the one at the end of Hewlett Street, only trap large solids, not soluble pollutants. 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.
You care about your local environment...
And you are not alone. In our survey, 91% of people agreed that 'a clean environment contributes to the quality of my life and wellbeing.' Similarly, most people (90%) agreed with the statement 'I am prepared to change the way I do things if it improves the environment' and 85% of people agreed that 'Individuals should be responsible for the environment.'

What can you do to clean up your local stormwater right now?
Here are some simple steps you can take around your home to make Bronte Beach cleaner and safer. Make sure you tell your gardener or builder too:
- Sweep your gutters and driveways instead of hosing them
- Put leaves in the compost
- Rake up grass clippings then mulch or compost them
- Cover piles of soil, sand or mulch to stop them washing into drains
- Plant grass where soil is exposed
- Use pesticides and fertilizers in the garden sparingly
- Try to wash your car on a grassy area or over gravel
- Use detergent sparingly to wash your car

What happens next?
We will continue to measure the pollution caught in the control trap and then compare it with pre-study levels to determine if there has been a reduction in pollution going through the stormwater drains.

We will be reporting our results in the local media, so you can see how your action today will help make Bronte Beach a cleaner and safer environment for you and your family to enjoy.

Remember: Stopping pollution going down the drain in the first place reduces the cost of cleaning up local waterways. If we all take action today to prevent stormwater pollution, we'll see the results straight away.

Want to know more?
If you would like further information about what you can do to help make Bronte's oceans and beaches safer and cleaner, please contact:
- Waverley Council Environmental Services on 9369 8000
- EPA Pollution Line 131555, email info@epa.nsw.gov.au or visit www.epa.nsw.gov.au
- Roberta Ryan at UNSW on 9385 3541 for information about this project

Thank you for your participation and caring about your environment!

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