

# Enhanced Stormwater Management in Bronte Catchment Through Local Community Participation

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Waverley Council has been funded by the New South Wales Government through its Stormwater Trust to explore approaches to enhanced stormwater management in Bronte Catchment through local community participation. The Bronte Catchment Project was developed by Roberta Ryan at the School of Social Science and Policy at University of New South Wales, in consultation with Waverley Council and community groups (including Keep Bronte Beautiful Committee; Bronte, Bronte Beach and Charing Cross Precinct Committees; Bronte Gully and Calga Reserve Bushcare groups; and the Bronte Surf Life Saving Club). The project is auspiced by Brian Elton and Associates, and managed by Roberta Ryan.

**What?** The Bronte Catchment Project aims to support, develop and evaluate inclusive community and organisational processes to improve water quality at Bronte Beach.

**Where?** The project covers an area of approximately 135 hectares that stretches from the coast almost all the way back to Carrington Road, and from MacPherson Street across to Birrell Street. This is a stormwater catchment, and channels stormwater directly onto Bronte Beach.

**Why is the Bronte Catchment significant?** Bronte Beach is highly valued and well used by local residents and visitors. Pollution in stormwater reduces the water quality at the beach. Bronte residents are concerned about the beach, they are committed to improving the water quality and there are already a number of active community groups in the area.

A stormwater project in this area has the potential to apply knowledge about stormwater management gained in other areas, such as the importance of community participation. At the moment water quality is managed through physical structures, like gross pollutant traps, and community education programs. The Bronte community has previously had no opportunity to participate in managing stormwater pollution.

**Why this project?** Approaches to stormwater pollution have traditionally relied on end-of-pipe monitoring and 'top-down' community education initiatives. This project is different, by focussing on reducing pollution at the source. It aims to develop inclusive, integrated and sustainable solutions to stormwater quality, by the community for the community.

**Who is the community?** The Bronte community includes residents, local businesses, Waverley Council, community groups, visitors and others who may use the area. The primary aim is to include all sectors of the community, particularly those who may not normally be involved in stormwater management.

## **How?**

The project will address community expectations and behaviours that contribute to stormwater pollution. Members of the Bronte community, as part of a community network, will participate in managing and identifying appropriate action to prevent stormwater pollution. This will involve:

- improving community access to information and knowledge about stormwater problems;
- providing a forum for learning and challenging existing knowledge and expertise;
- improving community motivation and reducing activities that cause stormwater pollution;
- establishing self-governing community processes;
- facilitating organisational responses.

## **Outcomes**

Project outcomes will include:

- increased levels of community participation and involvement;
- positive improvements in knowledge, attitudes and motivations;
- establishment of self-governing sustainable participatory processes;
- changes in behaviour, policy and practice;
- ongoing integrated activities to improve water quality and monitoring of those processes
- evaluation of the effectiveness of these participatory processes in developing sustainable, integrated approaches to stormwater management.

This project recognises the traditional ownership and stewardship of Bronte Gully by indigenous peoples. Consultation is underway to ensure their right to be consulted in this project and the preferred wording on public documents.

The Bronte Catchment Project has been assisted by the New South Wales Government through its Stormwater Trust.

**For more information** about this project, please contact:

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