

Loss of water quality tops the list of concerns in Botany Bay Catchment

The results of surveys held recently among stakeholders in the Botany Bay catchment have revealed that loss of water quality is the biggest overall concern for both local councils and the community.

The surveys were conducted as part of a series of 18 workshops to capture input into environmental values and levels of protection considered desirable for maintaining the health of the estuaries and freshwater waterways of Botany Bay and its catchment.

The workshops, held by Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority, attracted more than 140 key stakeholders in the catchment. As part of these workshops attendees completed a questionnaire (six questions relating to waterways) that has just been analysed.

The responses highlight people's concerns about waterways and also their ideas on how to protect or improve Botany Bay's iconic waterways.

For example, in question 2 "What aspect or activities are you concerned about losing from our waterways?" according to 87% of the respondents water quality degradation is the greatest concern. This is followed by the loss of native vegetation (78%), the loss of local biodiversity (76%), the reduction of native wildlife (75%), and the impact on scenic beauty and amenity (71%). The frequencies of responses show that the ecological aspects of the Bay and its catchment are of greatest concern to the survey participants.

Question 4 asked "What do you see as the key threats to water quality in our waterways?" and the top 4 responses were: inadequate sewage systems/sewer overflows; litter/rubbish dumping; industry run-off/pollution; and urban development runoff.

Interestingly, the responses from local government and the community were very similar (the raw data for each of the questions is also contained in an appendix to the report).

A full copy of the report on the questionnaire can be downloaded from <http://www.sydney.cma.nsw.gov.au/bbcci/Publications.html>

These workshops were conducted as part of the Botany Bay Coastal Catchments Initiative (BBCCI), which is seeking to achieve long-term protection of the surface waters of Botany Bay, its estuaries and its catchment. It is majority funded by the Commonwealth Government and part funded and project managed by the Sydney Metropolitan CMA. More information about the BBCCI can be found at: www.sydney.cma.nsw.gov.au/bbcci

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