
Community and Stakeholder Engagement Report

Dee Why Beach Stormwater Improvement (Stage 1 of 1)

Impact level: 4

Consultation period: 19 November – 19 December 2021

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1. Summary

This report outlines the outcomes of community and stakeholder engagement as part of a proposal to improve stormwater at Dee Why Beach with the installation of a new gross pollutant trap, exhibited between 19 November and 19 December 2021.




The feedback collected during consultation revealed a high level of support for the proposed Gross Pollutant Trap (GPT) at Dee Why Beach with comments citing the anticipated benefits for the amenity of the beach and ocean.

Feedback also suggested Council should include educational signage for the community.

Respondents who were not supportive of the proposal felt that more needed to be done to improve water quality such as better street sweeping, banning leaf blowing onto the streets as well as eliminating plastic bag use at the Dee Why Beach shops.

Some comments, though out of scope for this project, were also received regarding water quality in Dee Why Lagoon.

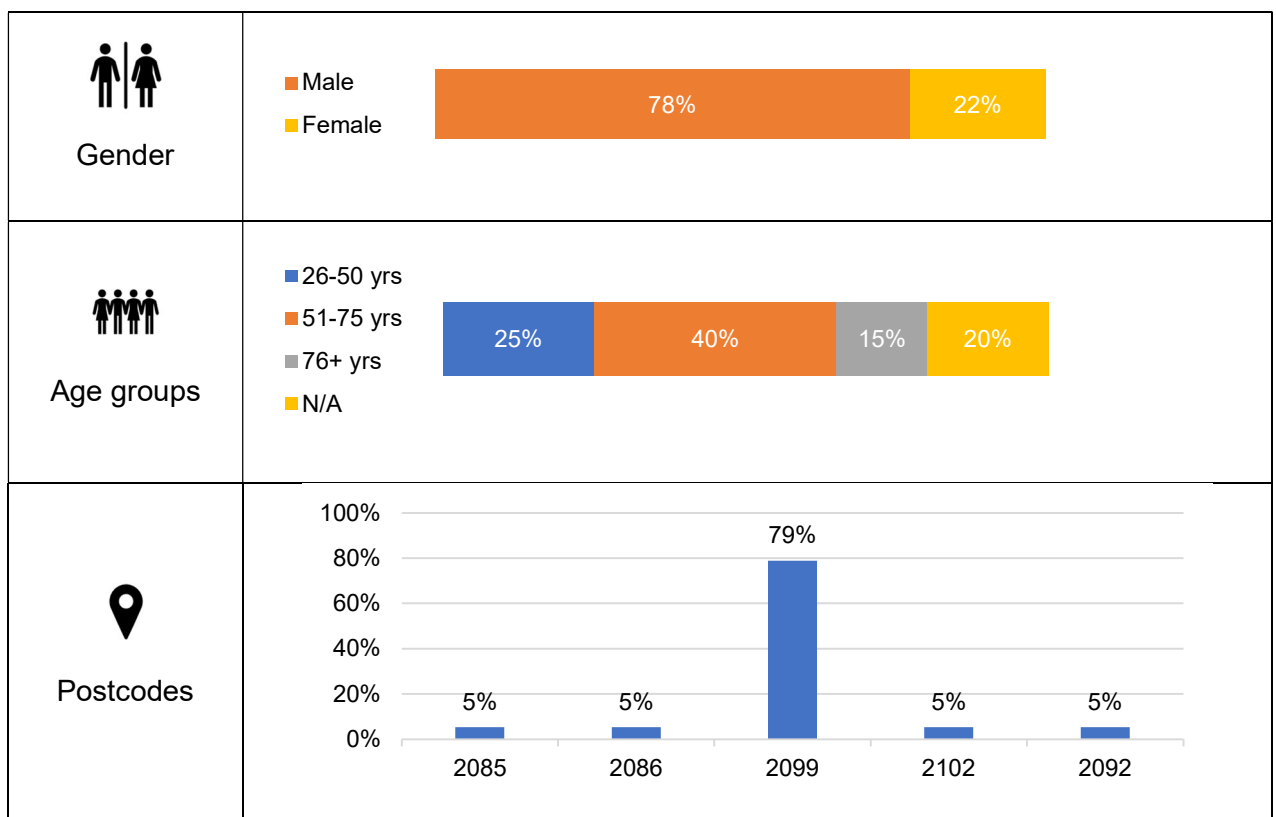
1.1. Key outcomes

 <p>Total unique responses</p>	<p>19</p>	
 <p>How responses were received</p>	<p>Comment form Written responses (email/letter)</p>	<p>Completions: 19 Number received: 0</p>
 <p>Feedback themes</p>	<p>Overall support Recreation space improvements Educational signage Landscaping Stormwater infrastructure</p>	<p>Dee Why lagoon water quality Better leaf litter management Removal of seaweed on the beach Banning the use of plastic at the Dee Why Beach shops</p>

1.2. How we engaged

 Have Your Say: visitation stats	Visitors: 435	Visits: 670	Av. Time onsite: 2m49s
 Print media and collateral	Letterbox drop: 2099 Site signs used: Yes		Distribution: 150 Number of signs: 5
 Electronic direct mail (EDM)	Community Engagement (fortnightly) newsletter: 1 edition Council (weekly) e-News: 1 edition		Distribution: 22,000 subscribers Distribution: 150,000 subscribers

1.3. Who responded¹



¹ Demographic data was gathered by request only. The data represented only includes those respondents who provided this detail.

2. Background

Dee Why Beach is a high value area that will benefit significantly from an upgrade to the existing stormwater infrastructure.

The planned upgrade will improve the stormwater quality discharging into the environment at Dee Why Beach with the installation of a Gross Pollutant Trap (GPT) near the existing ocean outfall adjacent to Oaks Avenue, Dee Why.

We exhibited the concept plan on the proposed upgrade to seek community feedback on issues or concerns they might have on the proposed design and its intended location.

3. Engagement objectives

Community and stakeholder engagement aimed to:

- build community and stakeholder awareness of participation activities.
- identify community and stakeholder concerns, local knowledge and values.
- provide accessible information so community and stakeholders can participate in a meaningful way.

4. Engagement approach

Community and stakeholder engagement for the Dee Why Beach Stormwater Improvement was conducted over a four-week period, from 19 November to 19 December 2021, provided opportunities for community and stakeholders to contribute.

The engagement was planned, implemented and reported in accordance with Council's [Community Engagement Matrix](#) (2017).

A project page was established on our have your say platform with information provided in an accessible and easy to read format.

The project was primarily promoted through our regular email newsletter (EDM) channels and site signage.

Feedback was captured through an online comment form embedded onto the have your say project page.

Engagement feedback was qualitative only and did not seek a level of support or ask a sentiment question.

An open-field comments box provided community members a space to give their feedback on the proposal.

Email and written comments were also invited.

We asked a uniform set of questions of participants in all activities. Results provide responses across a spectrum of demographics, expertise, experience and understanding of our local government area.

5. Findings

Feedback overwhelmingly indicated that people are extremely supportive of the project, noting it would vastly improve the amenity of the beach and ocean.

Some respondents thought more needed to be done to improve environmental impacts. Issues identified included better removal of leaf litter from streets, particularly where cars are parked, and street sweepers cannot access; banning contract gardeners from blowing leaves onto the street; and the use of plastic bags at Dee Why shops.

Comments in relation to the stormwater infrastructure were also raised, such as the need to extend the existing stormwater outlet out to sea. Other comments suggested alternative solutions to the GPT proposed such as a net tech device on the outlet or better use of the existing GPT.

There were some comments that raised concern about the water quality at Dee Why Lagoon, suggesting more needs to be done there, especially in relation to rubbish removal.

5.1 Verbatim community and stakeholder comments and Council response²

Number	Comment	Council response
1.	<p>The installation of a GPT will be a major improvement to the amount of pollutants entering the sea water via the stormwater drain.</p> <p>The load on the GPT could be vastly reduced by removing the organic matter from the streetscape before it enters the stormwater system. A walk along any of the streets between Dee Why and the beach will reveal the amount of leaf litter that lays in the gutters. Council's streetsweepers have minimal effect as cars are regularly parked blocking access for the street sweeper. Manual labour may be the only way to remove this leaf litter.</p> <p>The other thing that could be done is to ban contract gardeners from using blowers to blow leaf litter and grass onto the street. Blowers should be limited to gather this matter together before it is picked up and either placed in the Council's vegetation bins or removed by the contractors.</p>	<p>We agree that removing organic matter from the streetscapes is important as it is a major contributor to stormwater pollution. Councils streetsweepers remove what they can, however it is difficult at times due to parked cars and other obstructions.</p> <p>Manual labour to support sweeping has been proposed, however would be a costly option. More recently extensive review has been done to identify high priority street sweeping areas for stormwater improvement. These areas are now swept on a regular schedule as well as before storm events.</p> <p>The idea of banning contract gardeners from using blowers to blow leaf litter onto the grass and street has been passed on to our compliance team for their consideration.</p> <p>Seaweed is a species of kelp and becomes dislodged from the offshore reefs in times of large ocean swells and stronger prevailing winds and currents. Normally with the large surf conditions, we lose sand. The accumulation of kelp is nature's way of rebuilding the beach as it acts as foundations for the sand to be collected and in turn re-</p>

² *Personal details and inappropriate language have been redacted where possible. Spelling and grammatical errors have been amended only where misinterpretation or offence may be caused.

Number	Comment	Council response
	<p>If the object is to improve the sea water quality then some consideration must also be given to the removal of the sea weed build up that naturally occurs after strong seas dislodge the weed from the reef and the currents deposit it in the southern corner of Dee Why beach. The build up of weed is a natural storage area for all the pollutants that come out of the stormwater drain. The stench of rotting weed on the beach is a deterrent for people coming to enjoy the beach.</p>	<p>establishes the beach front. It is also great for the local ecosystem and part of a natural marine ecological cycle that provides food and shelter to shore birds and assists in sand deposition and accretion.</p> <p>Council does not rake or remove the kelp on any of our beaches, as it is part of a healthy beach ecosystem. As such, we do not generally support the removal of seaweed from beaches.- Council understands that decomposing seaweed can be unpleasant but accepts that this is a natural part of the marine ecosystem. The kelp usually dissipates with the incoming tides or becomes buried by new sand movement.</p> <p>To remove seaweed from beaches, a permit under the Fisheries Management Act 1994 is required from the Department of Primary Industries (Fisheries) as it is considered to be “harming marine vegetation”. This regulation is in place because marine vegetation provides shelter and nursery areas for aquatic animals. It is considered an essential component of estuarine and coastal environments.</p>

2.	<p>What about the dee why lagoon? It badly needs better pollutant traps. I have been there about 5 times to clean up and come out with 5+ bags of rubbish. Going again this Saturday morning. Appreciate council improving efforts to stop pollution getting into the ocean but more needs to be done.</p>	<p>Council's Stormwater team engages a contractor to specifically undertake rubbish and litter clean up around the Dee Why Lagoon area including the high flow bypass channel near the Hawkesbury Avenue GPT and the GPT itself.</p> <p>The area is also inspected fortnightly by Council's Environment Officer who manages the bush regeneration of the area and organises litter removal if required.</p> <p>While improving the water quality at Dee Why Lagoon is important, it is not in direct response to the exhibited stormwater upgrade at Dee Why Beach. This feedback has been noted and forwarded to our Environment and Climate Change Team for their review and investigation.</p>
3.	<p>Rediculous solution to a simple problem. Waste of tax payers money. Maintenance and usefulness will not function over time Just use a simple net to catch on exit flow. And start putting more bins with better recycling. Ban the use on plastic bags and switch to paper or bio. Especially shops on beach. This is not the solution too a bigger problem. This is nearly as bad as the vertical breakwall been constructed in front of 10 houses at Collaroy. It doesn't solve the bigger issue.</p>	<p>The use of net devices at stormwater outlets is not recommended as once filled with rubbish they can inhibit the flow of water during wet weather events. From our experience, they fail during high flow events leaving a concentrated amount of rubbish at the location.</p> <p>We agree that the GPT solution needs to be done in combination with education on littering, reducing the use of plastic and better waste management. Council is planning to install signage next to the GPT to educate people on its function and how they can help reduce the amount of pollutants in stormwater. Council also regularly releases videos on social media to inform people of this issue and what they can do. The proposed GPT is a Rocla CDS unit which is a device that has proven to be very successful in reducing pollution in other areas such as Manly. The CDS technology is known to be the most reliable and efficient way of treating gross pollutants in stormwater drainage systems.</p> <p>Single-use plastic will be phased out by recently passed legislation, <i>Plastics Reduction and Circular Economy Act 2021</i>. From 1 June, the supply of lightweight plastic shopping bags will cease. From 1 November, the supply of single-use plastic cutlery, straws, stirrers, plates and bowls, cotton buds, expanded polystyrene food containers, and products containing plastic microbeads will cease.</p>

		<p>The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) will issue fines for breaches after this date. Further information and resources can be found here: https://dpe.mysocialpinpoint.com.au/plastics-ban-nsw</p> <p>Council's cleansing team and litter crew work hard to keep the Northern Beaches clean. If you see litter or pollution, Community members are encouraged to report it online or call our customer service team on 1300 434 434. If there is a site that needs a new litter bin any recommendations are reviewed in line with other criteria such as location, nearby bins, other litter reduction approaches and service requirements.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>What is being done about Dee Why Lagoon?</p> <p>Northern Beaches Clean Up Crew have offered to show Council where the problem areas are in relation to rubbish and degrading plastic that is breaking down and polluting the water.</p>	<p>Council's Stormwater team engages a contractor to specifically undertake rubbish and litter clean up around the Dee Why Lagoon area including the high flow bypass channel near the Hawkesbury Avenue GPT and the GPT itself.</p> <p>The area is also inspected fortnightly by Council's Environment Officer who manages the bush regeneration of the area and organises litter removal if required.</p> <p>While improving the water quality at Dee Why lagoon is important, it is not in direct response to the exhibited stormwater upgrade at Dee Why Beach. Therefore, your feedback has been noted and forwarded to our Environment and Climate Change Team.</p> <p>Council will work with Northern Beaches Clean Up Crew to understand problem areas.</p>

5.	<p>1. The existing GPT would be more efficient with better maintenance (more frequent cleaning).</p> <p>2. The new GPT bypasses during times of maximum flow (heavy rain, storms etc) and the existing GPT does not, therefore wouldn't it be better to have both GPT's operating in series?</p>	<p>The existing GPT is undersized for the catchment and is not easily accessed for cleaning as it presents large pedestrian safety issues. To address the needs specific to this location we have designed a GPT that is sized appropriately for the catchment and is easily accessible and safely maintained without causing major disruption to pedestrians.</p> <p>All GPTs are required to bypass maximum flows as otherwise they can cause flooding issues in the catchment during wet weather events.</p>
6.	This is excellent!	Your support for this project is acknowledged.
7.	Good to see the new stormwater charge for Warringah residents is being spent!	Your support for this project is acknowledged.
8.	<p>The existing storm water outlet should be extended further out to sea. The pipe should be buried to remove the current unsightly outlet. Too many times I have seen children playing in the water that runs out of the existing outlet. This can not be healthy, no matter how much rubbish is removed. The proposal in current form does not remove germs.</p>	<p>We acknowledge the pipe is unsightly however extending it out to sea would be extremely costly. There are also other challenges such as backflow of seawater during high seas which can impede the outflow of stormwater and may cause flooding in the upstream catchment. It could also present a hazard for surfers.</p> <p>Without a pipe, stormwater would still reach our oceans running across overland flow paths.</p> <p>Poor water quality after rain is widely acknowledged and authorities strongly recommend no swimming for 24 hours after rain to allow pathogens to die off.</p>
9.	I think this is an excellent idea and can only improve the amenity of the beach and ocean.	Your support for this project is acknowledged.
10.	Wonderful idea!	Your support for this project is acknowledged.
11.	This seems a very wise course of action and it has no detrimental impact	Your support for this project is acknowledged.
12.	I support the installation of a GPT at Dee Why Beach to improve the quality of the storm water discharge to the ocean.	Your support for this project is acknowledged.

13.	Very good idea!	Your support for this project is acknowledged.
14.	I would also like to see the addition of a outdoor gym to compliment the walk area Why plant additional pines, there are enough adjacent & along park perimeter	Council is currently developing an Open Space and Recreation Strategy that will identify and prioritise new recreational facilities across the Northern Beaches. The suggestion for outdoor gym equipment at Dee Why Beach has been referred to the team preparing the strategy for their consideration. One Norfolk Island Pine will be planted in a similar spot as the one to be removed, providing shade for people in the park as well as habitat for birds. Another tree will be planted however, its location is yet to be confirmed.
15.	That's great that council are installing this to reduce rubbish going into the ocean. I walk in that area regularly so can see no issue with this plan. The pine being removed is small and having a replacement plus 1 other will help improve shade.	Your support for this project is acknowledged.
16.	I think the Dee Why Storm water improvement is a great idea.	Your support for this project is acknowledged.
17.	Very supportive of improving our water quality. As apart of the project is it possible to include an educational sign for the community, encouraging them to reduce plastic use and prevent sediment runoff in the area.	Yes we intend to install educational signage next to the proposed GPT. We agree that education is another important step to improving water quality. The sign will be similar to one we recently installed educational signage in Manly next to a recently constructed GPT near North Steyne children's playground.
18.	Good	Your support for this project is acknowledged.
19.	Thank you for taking this important step to improve the health and sustainability of our waterways and natural environment. I acknowledge that there will be some disturbance and can see that council has attempted to mitigate any issues in this well thought out plan. It is unclear whether the reinforced turf for vehicle access will be natural or artificial turf but I would not support the latter for environmental reasons. This is a great initiative and I welcome it.	The reinforced turf will be natural and likely to be reinforced with reinforcement mesh that allow the grass to grow through them.

Document administration	
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Notes	Community and stakeholder views contained in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Northern Beaches Council or indicate a commitment to a particular course of action.