



**BEECROFT
CHELTENHAM
CIVIC TRUST INC**
the voice of our community

Mr Damien Tudehope
Member for Epping

Blocked sewer main under [REDACTED] Avenue Beecroft

Dear Damien,

The Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust is seeking your assistance in resolving this difficult long term problem. The Trust believes that approaching you directly will be the best way to quickly resolve this serious health problem.

As President of the Trust I was approached by a local resident, [REDACTED], regarding a long term sewer problem on her neighbour's property. [REDACTED], who lives next door at [REDACTED] Avenue, is included in this request and her email to the Trust has been reproduced below. Her email clearly outlines the history of the problem.

The Trust strongly believes the responsibility lies with Sydney Water. The blockage is considered to be a serious health problem and cannot continue to be ignored. It may be worthwhile to also contact the Department of Health as this blockage is likely to be classified as a biohazard.

As a background, Sydney Water does occasionally grant consent for permanent structures to be built over sewer mains. The process, called 'building over sewer', involves concrete encasement of the pipes. The contractor who encased the sewer main during construction would have had to pay Sydney Water for their 'engineering supervision' of the work. There should be a Sydney Water file for this property. The file should also include the requests from the residents seeking assistance. The Trust would expect that the inspection, and removal, of the 'pyramid' of concrete and relining of the damaged vitreous clay sewer pipe will be carried out remotely from the nearest manholes.

The General Manager, Hornsby Council, has been included in this email in case Council is contacted by Sydney Water and are requested to comment.

You may wish to contact Ms [REDACTED] directly on this matter. Her email address and mobile number are included in this email. Her email to the Trust is below.

I am extremely grateful for your offer to help, even though it has gone nowhere for a long time. We live at [REDACTED] Avenue Beecroft (Strata Plan [REDACTED]) and are a group of 4 townhouses. [REDACTED] and I own No 2 and [REDACTED] inherited No 1 from his Dad who passed away 2 years ago. Our daughter [REDACTED] and her family live in No 1.

No 3 is owned by an Australian guy who lives in Canada but his daughter lives in it with 2 other uni students. 1,2 and 3 have not had sewer issues.

No 4 has the issue that since the 2 villas were built next door in No 34 (Strata Plan [REDACTED]) he has had to have the main sewer cleaned every month or so as it all comes gurgling up into his downstairs toilet.

*The villas next door were built in the mid 1990's around 95 or 96. They are a strata property and so are we. My boys were preschoolers and loved to watch the earth moving equipment (as boys do!) and we used to enjoy this activity every day. The day came to enclose the **main sewer line** with concrete and my boys found this very exciting. While the front end digger was removing the soil in preparation for the cement pour, I saw him accidentally hit the main sewer pipe and cause a gaping hole at least 30 cm x 30 cm. The cement pour started to happen and I called out to the foreman "Stop the pour, your guy has smashed through the pipe!" and he replied "Leave us to do our job woman, go away!"*

He threw a piece of board over the hole and that was pushed aside with the pouring of the concrete. The concrete poured into the hole and again I called out and again I was ordered to leave them alone.

Immediately after the pour no 4 experienced the blockage with sewerage gurgling all over his floor. He called a plumber who placed a camera in the pipe noting the main sewer had some sort of diminishing size happening restricting the flow. The hole is only a few centimetres and he could not work out why.

The cement poured through the hole creating a pyramid and also remained dripping through the top, a bit like a stalactite and stalagmite.

Our owners corporation apparently wrote to the council and the water board. Both responded that they had signed off and approved the work therefore it was the responsibility of the other party. I have never seen the correspondence or the responses of any party.

No 4 continues to have problems to this day and I am sure that they would be most grateful to have the problem solved. We don't have much hope up to now as it seems to be no-one's responsibility and the owners next door are also innocent victims as their home is built right over the top.

I am looking forward to your response.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]

Can you please keep the Trust informed of progress in this matter.

Thanking you in anticipation ,

yours faithfully,

Ross Walker

President

Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust

14 August 2018