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Roebuck students clean up our drains

THERE is nothing like letting kids get into drains to switch them onto meaningful science.

Five classes from Roebuck Primary School recently investigated 396m of the stormwater drains bordering their school, with their findings hoped to lead to better water quality in Roebuck Bay.

Under the direction of science specialist Anthony Collopy, the students picked up 83kg of debris from the drains.

Year 7 student Mathew Berry was one of the enthusiastic students who then lugged the rub-

On The Bay

with Kandy Curran



bish back to school and classified it, based on what each item was made from and its weight.

"We cleaned the drains to research how much rubbish is going into the ocean and there was a lot," he said.

"It was hot and sweaty, but good to know we were doing our part to

reduce pollution from going into Roebuck Bay and our oceans."

They analysed the types of rubbish, where it was found in the drain, probable causes and actions the students suggested could reduce litter in the stormwater drains, as 13-year-old Adam T'Hart said.

"The majority of rubbish was plastics, soft-drink cans and heaps of chip packets, but we also found a dead cat, socks, car rims, glass, a roll of barbed wire and metal pickets," he said.

The analysis revealed most

plastics were found close to school buildings, downwind and downstream from where students ate lunch.

Building rubble and timber was mostly found close to the new Spoonbill block and in the drain bordering houses behind the oval. Cigarette butts and bio waste were mainly found around the footbridge which crosses the drain from the school to the park.

While the students did not collect or measure green waste, as there was too much of it, they did not find any garden dumpings.

This was pleasing as green waste and fertiliser washed into the stormwater drains are known triggers for toxic blue-green algal blooms of lyngbya which have been worsening in the bay each wet since 1999.

Roebuck students hope to research how many metres of drains there are in Broome and calculate an approximate total weight of rubbish, waiting to be flushed into the bay in downfalls.

■ **Kandy Curran is the Roebuck Bay Working Group project co-ordinator.**

EPA chairman collects Broome views on James Price Point hub

FLIP PRIOR

ENVIRONMENTAL Protection Authority chairman Paul Vogel has described the level of public interest in the proposed \$30 billion gas project at James Price Point as "unprecedented" as he prepares to visit Broome to gauge community views on the proposal.

Mr Vogel said no other resources projects in his four years as chairman of the environmental watchdog had come close to the levels of community "interest, concern and anxiety", save for the proposed coal mine



Paul Vogel. Picture: Mogens Johansen

associated with the development, and not the social impacts on Broome, but he said locals' views were still "immensely useful" to its decision-making.

If any concerns were raised about the adequacy, timing or methodology of technical or environmental surveys, the EPA could request further work or an independent review, he said.

"That's what happened with, for example, the dinosaur footprints, as there was a view these were significant but hadn't been properly assessed," he said.

Mr Vogel warned the EPA's Board members will visit the

State Development Browse liquefied natural gas project executive director, would not be among the group or party to any discussions, Mr Vogel said.

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