

**Report by the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board
15 February 1876**

The 1876 *Eleventh Progress Report* by the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board identified problems with housing and sanitary conditions. The writers of the report walked through Pyrmont on 15 February 1876. The occupants of houses near Edward and Marian Streets complained that 'the effluvium which rises from Darling Harbour at low tide is here very offensive'.

In Mount Street 'closets are over common cesspits...as there is no sewerage'.

At the top of John-street... there is a cow-shed, the drainage from which was lying in pools in the yard, stinking.

The inspectors also visited houses in Bowman Street:

In Bowman-street we came to four houses built of rubble, with corrugated iron roofs, belonging to the Hon. G. Wigram Allen (wealthy Sydney lawyers) ... Attracted by the dirty appearance of the second house we entered it to make a closer inspection. The tenant informed us that it was a stinking hole, and vermin abounded in it. We saw no reason to doubt either statement but everything to confirm it. The closet at the back is in a broken down dilapidated condition and in a filthy state, as well also the closet in the adjoining yard; we were obliged to leave hastily - we could not stand the smell. The drainage of these houses runs down along the surface gutters to a vacant piece of land close by, the stench from which is something frightful. The closet belonging to the house at the end of this row is in a shocking state of repair; the door is broken down, and a log of wood is placed over the seat to prevent the children from falling into the pit. The tenants ... all complained of ill health, and no doubt their dwellings are very unwholesome. The floors rest on solid earth, there being no excavation underneath them.

Thence we proceeded to Chowne-street, of recent construction, and the houses are in a good state of repair but badly ventilated.