



**HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR**  
**Ministry for Health & Environment**  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Catalan Bay Dust**

A beach replenishment programme was carried out by the previous administration in May last year whereby dredged sand was added to Catalan Bay and Sandy Bay. Following this, the dust nuisance increased and the public expressed concern about the dustiness of the sand at Catalan Bay. Measures were put in place to wash away the dust to attempt to alleviate the problem, with limited success.

The problem reoccurred this year, particularly in the two-thirds of the beach furthest from the sea, where wave action is limited or absent. The absence of heavy storms last winter also reduced the ability of the beach system to rid itself of the dust.

The Environmental Agency, in conjunction with the Department of the Environment, undertook dust analysis following complaints at Catalan Bay from both residents and beach users.

The analysis has confirmed that the finer fractions in the sand responsible for the dust are less than the levels detected last year, which would be expected if there is no renewal of dust from surrounding areas. This, taken together with the fact that the analysis shows that the dust has the same chemical composition as the sand, strongly suggest that they both have the same origin. Therefore it appears to confirm that the dust is in fact dried silt from the seabed, pumped ashore during the 2011 operation, and does not originate from the adjacent reclamation.

Examination of samples indicated that the samples are composed of sand together with large fragments of shells and a variety of other particles. This has confirmed that the current dust problem is a repetition of that which occurred last year.

In contrast, Sandy Bay which was replenished with the same dredged sand has no dust problem this year because the beach is much narrower compared to Catalan Bay and therefore the sand has been constantly washed by the sea. However, this has meant that there has been a predictably considerable loss of sand from Sandy Bay in comparison to the more sheltered Catalan Bay.

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The Government is currently looking at measures that will ensure that the quality of the sand at Catalan Bay is restored to comparable compositional standards to those that existed prior to the replenishment programme, and that the sand in other beaches is protected from erosion.