

MINUTES OF THE SHOALHAVEN HEADS ESTUARY TASKFORCE

Meeting Date: Wednesday, 2 May 2018
Location: Jervis Bay Rooms, City Administrative Centre, Bridge Road, Nowra
Time: 4:02pm

The following members were present:

Clr Mitchell Pakes - Chairperson
Clr Nina Cheyne
Clr John Wells – left the meeting 4.54pm
Clr Patricia White
Clr Kaye Gartner
Clr Mark Kitchener
Paul Ell
Phil Guy
Mike James
David Lamb
Stephen Short
Robyn Flack

Others present:
Phil Costello – Group Director, Planning Environment and Development
Kelie Clarke – Manager Environment Services
Ray Massie – Coast and Estuaries Officer
Alasdair Stratton – Manager Natural Resources and Floodplain
Carole Cassidy

Apologies / Leave of Absence

A leave of absence was received from Clr Alldrick. Apologies were received from The Hon Gareth Ward and Gerald Groom.

Confirmation of the Minutes

RESOLVED (Clr Wells / Phil Guy)

That the Minutes of the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce held on Monday 20 November 2017 be confirmed.

CARRIED

Matters Arising

Phil Guy said the community had been told the boat ramps at Shoalhaven Heads were well placed to receive funding from the Better Boating Program, and want to know why Shoalhaven Heads had

dropped to eighth position on its release. Mike James agreed there was disappointment with downgrading, as it had been suggested artificial reef would stimulate boating in our region.

Action: Paul Keech to address this as a Question on Notice.

Declarations of Interest

Nil

REPORTS

SH18.1 Membership Applications Rob Russell and Carol Cassidy

HPERM Ref:
D18/132845

Carole Cassidy's name should be corrected to 'Carole' as it is in the recommendation and application.

Clr Wells stated these are two excellent nominees.

RECOMMENDATION (Clr Wells / Robyn Flack)

That Council appoint Carole Cassidy and Rob Russell as members of the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce.

CARRIED

SH18.2 Update on the review of the draft 2012 Coastal Zone Management Plan

HPERM Ref:
D18/133099

The recommendation on the Agenda should be amended to read 'That the Taskforce receive...'

Council staff are confident the CZMP will be adopted in time for certification. They have been consistently liaising with OEH and working closely with government agencies closely. Staff will also be seeking to discuss with Gareth Ward the process of certification.

Action: To meet with Gareth Ward, seeking his support for certification of the CZMP.

It was confirmed that the CZMP applies to city's ocean foreshore only, not to lakes or estuaries. Kelie Clarke had previously circulated data about beaches and proposed works, but he and Clr White are yet to discuss with her.

Staff were asked whether the CZMP takes into account such matters as moving the sand in front of the surf club in Shoalhaven Heads. Kelie confirmed Council will be investigating feasibility, looking at the seawall and surf club foundations, and the useful life of the building. The CZMP does not specify proposed works. Following the works carried out before Christmas last year, Council had asked how this will be addressed on a consistent basis. We are at the stage of submitting a report to Council on a maintenance plan for the area.

Kelie also confirmed the CZMP includes addressing beach access ways and viewing platforms. Community access to beaches is important.

Phil Guy raised concern at the exclusion of estuaries, and the potential impact on the community's ability to apply for State funding that may be on offer once CZMP ratified. Kelie clarified the funding is for estuaries as well. OEH had advised that our information on estuaries intended for the CZMP did not comply with the new format for an estuaries management plan. Council is to investigate funding for the Shoalhaven River under the new Act that came into force on 3 April. A Coastal

Management Program (CMP) can cover the entire coast or individual estuaries. The Shoalhaven Estuary probably needs its own CMP as it is so large.

The CZMP has to be certified within 6 months of 3 April. Once ratified, we will still have to draw up a Coastal Management Program in line with the new Act. Council will therefore have an up to date management plan going forward. Kelie confirmed that programs do have to be approved by OEH.

Completing the application is a top priority for Council. The public exhibition process will inform the community that after the CZMP Council will be transitioning to these other management plans. This will provide the opportunity to be more specific on programs in different areas. There will be a flowchart explaining how the plan was developed, a Q&A, and all information posted on the Council website. It is anticipated the completed draft will be submitted to the Council meeting at the end of May, and on public exhibition shortly after.

Clr Wells added Council has engaged a dedicated consultant to prepare the CZMP.

RESOLVED (Phil Guy / Paul Eil)

That the Taskforce receive the update report on the revision of the Shoalhaven Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) 2018 for information.

CARRIED

**SH18.3 Technical peer review of the River Road Foreshore
Shoalhaven Heads: Assessment of the Coastal
Management Options Report by MHL.**

**HPERM Ref:
D18/133125**

Phil Guy expressed the community's dissatisfaction with the process of the peer review, and the perceived lack of consultation. He raised two concerns: first, that it had not been the community's suggestion to have a peer review; and second, that he and Robyn Flack had asked to see the brief being given to the consultant, but this did not happen until the SNRFMC meeting last month. Kelie Clarke clarified that the brief had been generic and contained little information. She had advised Phil and Robyn at the time that the report would be going to the SNRFMC meeting, and she had provided information for the community meeting. The date on the report was incorrect – the draft was not finalised on 20 February.

Robyn added that MHL's review identified the short term nature of proposals. She noted the potential \$200k saving in adopting soft engineering options. The project should not have a short term focus.

Kelie advised the WRL report had looked at the sand as an option, among a number of scenarios. Ray Massie explained that hard engineering such as rock armour is a necessity now because of the erosion. The geoengineering and WRL reports both recommend this. Soft engineering can form part of a maintenance program, but it is a recurring, not permanent, solution.

Clr Wells agreed that MHL had included an alternate soft option but it was not risk management focused. He now considers there may not be sufficient sand from the notch to provide the amount MHL suggests is needed for a long term solution. The quantity of sand needed will involve dredging, which in turn will require an EIS and associated oncosts.

A storm water engineer is going to be appointed to design the storm water drains. Work on the drains is critical ahead of the next east coast low.

Clr Wells reminded the meeting that the funds secured by Gareth Ward for the project is tourism money, intended to beautify the region and optimise visitation. Since the opening of the Berry bypass, business in Shoalhaven Heads is down 30%. This is an opportunity to rebuild the local economy, improve recreational amenity and productivity. But it should be done safely. Paul Eil agreed that Mr Ward wants the Taskforce to maintain that focus.

Clr Wells recommended the Taskforce receive the report and ask MHL for a detailed briefing with this meeting and Council staff to explain what is practical, and how the proposals will work.

Questions should be emailed to Kelie Clarke via Janice Cormie in the Governance Unit: AllGovernance@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au

RESOLVED (Robyn Flack / Clr Wells)

That the Taskforce

1. Receive the Manly Hydraulics Laboratory technical review of the WRL River Road Coastal Option Report titled *MHL2595 – Review of River Road Foreshore, Shoalhaven Heads: Assessment of Coastal Management Options Report dated February 2018*, for information; and
2. Note the incorporation of the following technical information in the detailed design of any future coastal erosion remediation control structure at the River Road foreshore precinct:
 - a. Coastal erosion remediation structure be designed for a more conservative large river entrance opening to reduce the risk of failure.
 - b. A minimum design life of 25 years for coastal erosion remediation structure be adopted.
3. That Manly Hydraulic Laboratory (MHL) be requested to give a briefing to this Committee on their 'Review of River Road Foreshore, Shoalhaven Heads: Assessment of Coastal Management Options Report'. (Matt Blacka to be invited.)

CARRIED

SH18.4 Updates on the Review of the Lower Shoalhaven River Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan**HPERM Ref: D18/133816**

Phil Guy asked about the status of funding for this study. It was clarified the funds have been received from NSW OEH, a total of \$230,000 with Council's co-contribution. The study will take considerable time, being completed in 2020. Council has been advised by Cardno they are undergoing a restructure, which may impact our project delivery times. Kelie Clarke confirmed the flood management study is relevant to the Coastal Management Plan (CMP) but stands alone. There is also a standalone entrance management plan which the flood study will inform, but the CMP itself will not be signed off until 2020 by the State government. She also confirmed that the flood study is not needed to develop a CMP for the purpose of seeking funding, but the OEH guidelines are extensive, applicants are required to develop a coastal management plan in a certain way, consult with community groups, and conduct risk assessments. Council will have a Shoalhaven River Management Plan and will continue to look for other funding opportunities while preparing the CMP.

Kelie explained that a feasibility study must be carried out prior to applying for dredging funding. Council will need to contribute a significant proportion - having funding put aside will be key to obtaining those grants. Council must contribute 50% to match funds. Council has agreed to resource a Grants Officer to facilitate researching funding opportunities.

Steve Short queried the ambitious timetable, and asked whether Council is also looking at an embedded maximal flood study. Kelie confirmed that Ali Sevenler who is the responsible officer and who was unable to be present will take the Question on Notice.

Mike James reported his observations of the eastern end of canal in early March, at the bottom of spring tide, when he found the walls of Comerong Island falling continuously. Last Saturday he saw that 4m of that wall has now gone. There is escalation of river flow through to Greenwell Point. This presents a risk from storm events as time goes on. He recommended this be flagged as high importance, as the next big flood will severely impact Greenwell Point.

Action: Ali Sevenler to advise whether whether Council is planning an embedded maximal flood study.

RESOLVED (Clr White / Robyn Flack)

That the Taskforce receive the report for information.

CARRIED

SH18.5 Shoalhaven Heads Entrance Notch Maintenance**HPERM Ref:**
D18/125775

Council staff were asked why the beach was being nourished in the location identified in the report, when the Shoalhaven Heads Community Forum's intention had been to put sand on the beach in front of the caravan park. The boat ramp is affected by sand, where it forms a blockage. The sand moved during the last maintenance to the beach has disappeared. The community are concerned about the current sand location, and why sand is being stockpiled – if it is not needed for now, it could be used to beautify the area in front of the caravan park.

Alasdair Stratton clarified he had met with Robyn Flack and explained Council has a limited time during which it can use the machinery to move the sand. There was no capacity to extend this time to take the sand to the preferred location, so it has been stockpiled. Council will secure the machinery again to shift the sand within next few months.

Robyn raised the issue of sand fans where the stormwater drains expel, the sand being drawn from the bank edge. Several trees have been severely undermined on the bank. She proposed the sand from the notch might be used to maintain this area. Ray Massie explained this would need Council to do a REF as the estuary is a critical bird habitat. Council will need to talk to OEH to obtain approval for ongoing maintenance if possible, or include it in the CMP.

Recommendation (Paul Ell / Phil Guy)

1. That Council not stockpile sand removed as notch maintenance but use it to nourish the river edge in front of the Council Caravan Park and along the river edge. This is because the River Road Foreshore project may not need this sand for 18 months to 2 years and the foreshore is in need of nourishment urgently.
2. That Council staff investigate possible long term or ongoing solutions to manage the stormwater drains sand fans.

CARRIED

GENERAL BUSINESS

Kelie Clarke tabled a media release from Paul Toole regarding funding being made available for coastal dredging.

See also https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/150105/rescuing-our-waterways-2018-factsheets.pdf

Robyn Flack referred to the recommendation in the geotechnics report attached to Matt Blacka's report, that the owners of two properties on River Road be invited to monitor the area. She stressed they should be contacted. Kelie Clarke advised that correspondence had been sent out.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded, the time being 5.35pm.

Clr Mitchell Pakes
CHAIRPERSON