

MINUTES OF THE SHOALHAVEN HEADS ESTUARY TASKFORCE

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 21 March 2023
Location: Jervis Bay Rooms, City Administrative Centre, Bridge Road, Nowra
Time: 4.01pm

The following members were present:

Clr Serena Copley – Chairperson
Clr John Wells - (Remotely)
Mr Brian Allen
Mr Phil Guy
Ms Jessica Zealand
Mr Rob Russell
Ms Natalie Lloyd
Ms Jan Turbill
Ms Robyn Flack

Others present:

Dr Michael Roberts – Manager – Environmental Services
Mr Nigel Smith – Lead Coastal Management - (Remotely)

Apologies / Leave of Absence

Nil

Confirmation of the Minutes

Note: Staff provided the meeting with a verbal update on SH22.10 – Feedback on Issues Raised.

RESOLVED (Phil Guy / Rob Russell)

That the Minutes of the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce held on Monday 19 July 2022 and Monday 19 December 2022 be confirmed.

CARRIED

Declarations of Interest

Nil

REPORTS

SH23.1 Notification of Council Resolution - Re-establishment Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce

HPERM Ref:
D22/437450

It was noted that this report is an update on the Call Meeting resolution, reaffirming the re-establishment of the Taskforce. This report was drafted prior to the Council resolution of 13 March 2023 (see MIN23.133) appointing the new members Robyn Flack, Jan Turbill and Natalie Lloyd.

The revised Terms of Reference (see MIN22.591 adopted 12 September 2022) includes membership for Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) representatives.

Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce receive the Notification of Council Resolution – Re-establishment Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce report for information.

RESOLVED (Phil Guy / Jessica Zealand)

That the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce receive the Notification of Council Resolution – Re-establishment Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce report for information.

CARRIED

SH23.2 Estuary Works at Shoalhaven Heads and Department of Primary Industries - Fisheries

HPERM Ref:
D23/27326

The Taskforce discussed the importance of exchanging information with the Northern Coastal Management Program Advisory Committee.

It was noted that the representative(s) for NSW DPI – Fisheries are invited to the Taskforce meetings.

Michael Roberts (Manager – Environmental Services) discussed the role of the Coastal Management Program Advisory Committee. The next Northern Coastal Management Program (CMP) Advisory Committee is set to be tentatively scheduled for July/August. NSW State Government agencies, such as NSW DPI Fisheries and NSW Crown Lands, are included in the CMP Advisory Committees.

The Lower Shoalhaven River CMP and Open Coast CMP are discussed at the Northern CMP Advisory Committee. NSW DPI Fisheries and other State Government agencies at this meeting provide input (as required) into the Coastal Management Act 2016 (NSW) requirements. Despite this, Council will continue to invite DPI Fisheries to the SHET meetings, and SHET members were reminded that they can attend the Northern CMP Advisory Committee meeting as a silent observer and/or raise matters of concern or enquiries with the committee members for this forum.

Members reiterated that there are barriers when it comes to permits and flood mitigation. Council discussed the role of NSW DPI Fisheries and SHET members were asked to review a Fisheries Permit – a permit issued by DPI Fisheries under the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (NSW). This will enable SHET to understand DPI Fisheries legal obligations that Council must follow when planning and implementing works.

Recommendation

That the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce:

1. Receive a presentation from the Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries on the implications and processes for ongoing works within the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary and on how storm water, erosion, sedimentation and recreation can be managed in conjunction with village prosperity and the Coastal Management Program process.
2. Extend an invitation for a representative from Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries to

be a member of the SHET so as to provide ongoing input from their perspective in relation to the activities and goals of the SHET.

RESOLVED (Clr Wells / Robyn Flack)

That the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce:

1. Continue to extend an invitation for a representative from Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries to be a member of the SHET so as to provide ongoing input from their perspective in relation to the activities and goals of the SHET.
2. Formally request a presentation from the Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries on the implications and processes for ongoing works within the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary and on how storm water, erosion, sedimentation and recreation can be managed in conjunction with village prosperity and the Coastal Management Program process.

CARRIED

SH23.3 Shoalhaven Heads River Entrance Management Plan Review

HPERM Ref: D23/27345

The Taskforce raised concerns regarding the number of floods in the last 12 years, it was noted that the implementation of the Entrance Management Plan for those eight (8) floods has been different. It was suggested that the Entrance Management Plan be reviewed after every significant event.

Phil Guy mentioned that different types of floods, need different methods to address issues and there is not flexibility in the Plan to enable these to be managed.

Michael Roberts reiterated that the last intervention involved works when the river height at Shoalhaven Heads was -0.07 metres. The trigger level is 2.0 metres. This was done following Michael requesting a dispensation from NSW Crown Lands in relation to intervention works commencing below the trigger level. This was granted on work, health and safety grounds as there were king tides forecasted to occur in the coming days and increasing volumes of rain across the entirety of the catchment.

Michael Roberts mentioned that the Entrance Management Plan will be reviewed as part of the Lower Shoalhaven River CMP. Notwithstanding, the mechanical intervention works are reviewed after each event to determine from a logistics perspective ‘what worked well’ and ‘what did not work so well’ – for the latter corrective actions are implemented to ensure continuous improvement. Trigger levels are determined by science and engineering, modelling and research and in consultation with the relevant NSW State Government agencies – to be reviewed as part of the CMP.

Members agreed that the Entrance Management Plan needs to be reviewed, Clr Wells suggested that the Plan be reviewed every five (5) years.

Recommendation

That the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Task Force receive an update on the progress with the review of the Shoalhaven Heads River Entrance Management Plan (2006) and its inclusion in the Coastal Management Program.

RECOMMENDATION (Phil Guy / Jessica Zealand)

That the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Task Force and Council schedule a meeting to discuss concerns regarding the review of the Shoalhaven Heads River Entrance Management Plan (2006) and its inclusion in the Coastal Management Program.

CARRIED

GENERAL BUSINESS

SH23.4 Additional Item - Drainage Impact - Reference Coastal Management Program

Members raised questions regarding drainage and whether drainage is included in the Coastal Management Program (CMP). Staff responded and advised that the CMP takes drainage into account.

The drain behind Jerry Bailey Road was mentioned and the impact from the sink holes on Scott Street, where is the sand from the sink hole is going?

Has there been an investigation to see if there is a link between the sink hole in Scott Street and the drain?

Staff advised referred to the asset custodian model and have been in contact with the District Engineer. It was noted that the pipe under Shoalhaven Heads Road is heavily vegetated and needs clearing out.

A question was raised about the obstruction to the north near Coomonderry Swamp, has that been rectified?

RESOLVED (Robyn Flack / Jessica Zealand)

That Council identify City Services (Works and Services) as a key stakeholder for the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce, and invite key staff to the meetings to address and inform of any rectification works in the Shoalhaven Heads area.

CARRIED

Update from staff:

The Dredging Feasibility study, project inception and site visit has now been completed. The consultant now is reviewing all of the studies that were done in the earlier substages of this particular work, including the terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna assessment, looking at morphodynamical models.

The outcome will be a detailed feasibility design study.

In terms of the River Road rock revetment rectification works, the procurement process associated with the planning proposal RA22/1003 is nearing completion. Awaiting Crown Lands licence and Fisheries permit and works are due to commence before the end of financial year.

Note: The Chairperson and members welcomed Ms Natalie Lloyd – Indigenous representative.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded, the time being 5.42pm.

Clr Serena Copley
CHAIRPERSON