

MINUTES OF THE SHOALHAVEN HEADS ESTUARY TASKFORCE

Meeting Date: Wednesday, 12 March 2025
Location: Jervis Bay Room, City Administrative Centre, Bridge Road, Nowra
Time: 4.00pm

The following members were present:

Clr Selena Clancy – Chairperson
Mayor Patricia White
Clr Matthew Norris
Mr Gareth Ward MP – Joined 4:31pm
Mr Phil Guy
Ms Jessica Zealand
Mr Rob Russell
Ms Jan Turbill
Ms Robyn Flack

Others present:

Mr Claude Domio – Observer
Mr Lindsay Usher – Acting Director City Development

Apologies / Leave of Absence

An apology was received from Clr Peter Wilkins.

Confirmation of the Minutes

RESOLVED (By consent)

That the Minutes of the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce held on Wednesday 27 November 2024 be confirmed.

CARRIED

Declaration of Interests

Nil

REPORTS

SH25.1 Action Table Report - Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce 12 March 2025

HPERM Ref:
D25/13528

The Taskforce members requested and explanation on why there was a 3 month delay between last meeting and sending the letters as requested in item SH24.10. Acting Director Usher advised he would take this on notice.

During General Business, in regard to SH24.10, Mr Gareth Ward MP noted that he wrote to the Minister on 7 March 2025 and is currently awaiting a response.

Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce:

1. Accept and receive the Action Table Report (Attachment 1) for information.
2. Acknowledge the following actions as complete and remove from the action table:
 - a. SH24.10 - Presentation Entrance Management and Flooding - Seek Assistance NSW Government - Member South Coast - Nominate Advisor to Discuss Actions & Formulate Future Strategy - Quarterly Progress Reports

RESOLVED (By consent)

That the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce:

1. Accept and receive the Action Table Report (Attachment 1) for information.
2. Acknowledge the following actions as complete and remove from the action table:
 - a. SH24.10 - Presentation Entrance Management and Flooding - Seek Assistance NSW Government - Member South Coast - Nominate Advisor to Discuss Actions & Formulate Future Strategy - Quarterly Progress Reports

CARRIED

GENERAL BUSINESS

SH25.2 Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce - Members Request - Update From Staff

HPERM Ref:
D25/74050

The Members of the Taskforce requested an update from staff on the following items:

1. An update on the Entrance Management Plan for flooding and particularly the “evidence based technical review” of the trigger points.
2. Coast Management Program – Lower Shoalhaven River – details of feedback (closed 10th February) and next steps.

Acting Director Usher advised that, following the close of exhibition period, the process from here is that staff will work through the submissions received during the exhibition period, make any appropriate changes based on the submissions, then report back to Council for adoption.

It was further advised that there will be Coastal Management Committee meetings prior to the Coastal Management Plan being reported to Council, for their review

3. Plan for removal of the flood debris, especially around River Road Reserve.

Clr Clancy noted that the removal of the flood debris should be a quick fix that will have a big impact for the Shoalhaven Heads community.

4. Plan for removal of excess sand at Shoalhaven Heads Beach.

Acting Director Usher advised the Taskforce that a motion submitted by Cllr Clancy was resolved at the Ordinary Meeting 11 March 2025 in relation to the formation of a Shoalhaven Heads Dune Care Group. The resolution is as follows:

1. Council work with the Shoalhaven Heads Community to establish a Dune Care Group
2. The Dune Care Group could work from the Golf Club beach track to the southern Bird Park beach track, covering approximately 1km to 1.5 km.
3. The Dune Care work would predominantly be in front of the Shoalhaven Heads Surf Club.
4. Council hold a working group meeting by no later than 17 April 2025, inviting any interested Councillors, Shoalhaven Heads community representatives and appropriate SCC staff to establish a Dune Care Plan.

The Taskforce further discussed access points, and the impact of excess sand on vegetation and the viewing platform, and that previous sand scraping works have been unsuccessful in managing excess sands from impacting vegetation and the viewing platform.

Ms Jessica Zealand suggested that a Sand Management / Dune Care Policy should be incorporated into the Entrance Management Plan.

5. Lodgement of the Permit to remove Mangroves from the front of the Council caravan park.

The Taskforce noted that it remains their view that a permit to remove mangroves should be included in the Coastal Management Plan, and are they are yet to see it included in the plan, or applied for separate to the plan

Acting Director Usher advised that due to staff on leave he could only provide limited advice on the above requests, and would provide further written responses with the minutes following the meeting.

SH25.3 Additional Item - Water NSW - Write to Gareth Ward

Ms Jessica Zealand discussed the impact of Tallowa Dam releasing water downstream, and queried whether Water NSW has any responsibilities for their environmental impact downstream.

RECOMMENDATION (By consent)

The Members of the Taskforce request that staff to write to Gareth Ward MP regarding Water NSW's responsibilities for their environmental impact downstream of the dam.

CARRIED

SH25.4 Additional Item - Entrance Management Plan - Extend Review Period

Mr Phil Guy noted that the Taskforce is of the opinion that there was not enough time given to review the Entrance Management Plan adequately, and get sufficient community comment. It was further noted that that the Taskforce considers the trigger points unnecessary, and that the plan should have more flexibility about it.

RECOMMENDATION (By consent)

That the Entrance Management Plan review be extended until 26 May 2025.

CARRIED

SH25.5 Additional Item - Lower Shoalhaven River Floodplain Risk Management Study & Plan - Floodplain Committees - Update

Ms Robyn Flack sought an update regarding the Lower Shoalhaven River Floodplain Risk Management Study & Plan, and when the Floodplain Risk Management Committees would be meeting, noting that Phase 3 of the plan is due to take place June – July 2025.

RESOLVED (By consent)

That an update be provided to the Taskforce of when the next Floodplain Risk Management Committee will be meeting, and on the status of the Lower Shoalhaven River Floodplain Risk Management Study & Plan.

CARRIED

Comerong Island Ferry Cost

The Taskforce members discussed the cost of running the Comerong Island Ferry, and whether any strategic value exists in continuing to run the Comerong Island Ferry.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded, the time being 5:24pm.

Clr Selena Clancy
CHAIRPERSON