

# Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce

**Meeting Date:** Wednesday, 16 June, 2021  
**Location:** Council Chambers, City Administrative Centre, Bridge Road, Nowra  
**Time:** 4:00pm

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## Agenda

1. **Apologies**
2. **Confirmation of Minutes**
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3. **Declarations of Interest**
4. **Reports**
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Objectives and Achievements ..... 19
5. **General Business**

**Membership**

Clr Mitchell Pakes - Chairperson

All Councillors

Mr Gareth Ward MP (Nominee – Mr Paul Ell)

Mr Mike James

Mr Phil Guy

Mr David Lamb

Mr Bob Williamson

Mr Barry/Brian Allen

Mr Craig Peters

Mr Gerald Groom

Mr Stephen Short

Ms Robyn Flack

Ms Carole Cassidy

Mr Rob Russell

**Quorum** – Three (3): One (1) Councillor and Two (2) Community Members

**Purpose**

- Examine options for pursuing a partial or complete opening of Shoalhaven Heads
- Review Councils current Entrance and Estuary Management Plans for Shoalhaven Heads
- Report directly to Council

## MINUTES OF THE SHOALHAVEN HEADS ESTUARY TASKFORCE

**Meeting Date:** Thursday, 3 December 2020  
**Location:** Teams  
**Time:** 11.30am

The following members were present:

Clr Patricia White  
Clr John Wells - Chairperson  
Clr Amanda Findley – (remotely)  
Gareth Ward MP – (remotely)  
Gerald Groom – (remotely)  
Phil Guy – (remotely)  
David Lamb – (remotely)  
Robyn Flack – (remotely)  
Carole Cassidy – (remotely)

Also present:

Phil Costello – (remotely)  
Kelie Clarke – Environmental Services Manager  
Nigel Smith – Coastal Coordinator  
Leslie Reid – Natural Resources Officer  
Ray Massie – (remotely)  
Greg Britton, Haskoning Australia – (remotely)  
Jessica Zealand – (remotely)

### Election of Chairperson

**RESOLVED** (Gareth Ward / Clr White)

That Clr Wells be appointed as the Acting Chairperson for this meeting of the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce.

CARRIED

### Apologies / Leave of Absence

An apology was received from Clr Pakes and Clr Levett.

## Confirmation of the Minutes

**RESOLVED** (Clr Findley / Clr White)

That the Minutes of the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce held on Tuesday 21 May 2019 be confirmed.

CARRIED

## Declarations of Interest

Nil

## PRESENTATIONS

### SH20.1 Dredging Options - Shoalhaven River at Shoalhaven Heads

**HPERM Ref:**  
**D20/531353**

Greg Britton, Haskoning Australia, gave a presentation on the Channel Dredging and Beach Nourishment project. (Attached to these Minutes.)

Greg explained how key site information is obtained, then presented conceptual descriptions of how the Shoalhaven Heads project might be implemented. The figures given in the presentation were for illustration purposes and open to adjustment.

Greg explained the WRL and MHL studies which identified the options for beach nourishment as either shift the existing channel to the south-east, or create a new channel. His recommendation would be to retain the existing channel, widening it through the existing alignment. He advised that many dynamic processes may erode any sand that is replaced. There are no distinctive natural processes that would lead to natural replenishment – this can only be achieved by artificial renourishment. This option would require ongoing maintenance,

With regard to volumes, Greg suggested in general a 1 in 10 slope. If too steep, the sand will naturally regrade; if too flat, this will generate more material and the channel will need to move further to the south east.

Phil Guy asked whether 5m widening is sufficient. Greg Britton clarified that 5m is being used as an indicative figure to arrive at these conceptual numbers. Greg will provide staff with information on the beach width / gain at different water levels, such as at mean high tide.

Greg provided the example of the dredging and beach nourishment project at The Entrance (Central Coast Council). This is an estuary beach where flooding occurs. He explained the dredging process, the location of dredgers and pipelines, where the return water flows through culverts, and how material is pumped to the shore. The depth of the beach they rebuilt on the open coast was wider than 5m, as they sought protection for dwellings.

The budget for the 2020 dredging program at The Entrance was \$1.2million, and was of 4 to 6 weeks' duration. (Information is available on the Central Coast Council website.)The Shoalhaven Heads timeframe would be approximately two months from start of dredging.

The main legislation relating to beach nourishment is the SEPP (Coastal Management) 2018. Greg Britton considered an EIS may not be necessary. For dredging, SEPP (Infrastructure) 2007 is applicable. He advised a common REF to address both nourishment and navigation as a tied proposal as a process for Council to proceed under the approval pathways.

He recommended Council obtain an Environmental Protection Licence even though it will not reach the extraction threshold. He advised the pre-existing sand extraction at Pig Island would not necessarily hamper the granting of an EPL, although there would be a cumulative impact that a

regulator would have regard for. This would need to be addressed.

Greg advised there should be no issues in the use of dredged material to cover the new rock wall protecting River Road to allow it to revegetate. This would require material additional to that which would be produced by the dredging as planned. He warned that the angle of the rock wall is too steep for sand to be placed directly against it, as over time it will flatten, so the base of any sand wedge would need to be wide. Staff confirmed there is a revegetation strategy for the wall.

The Taskforce thanked Greg Britton for his presentation.

## REPORTS

### **SH20.2 River Road Foreshore Precinct Rehabilitation Project Progress Report**

**HPERM Ref:  
D20/524277**

Kelie Clarke – Environmental Services Manager advised the call for tenders for the bank revetment works have closed, and a confidential report will be presented to the Strategy & Assets Committee on 8 December to recommend the appointment.

The estimated start date is the first week of January. Construction work on draining has begun.

Gareth Ward MP expressed concern about the project, as the boardwalk that had featured in the original application has been omitted, and it appears to have become a maintenance project. He felt the \$1.2M funding is not being used as intended. Kelie Clarke clarified the designs have been subjected to community consultation, including the viewing platform components. Other maintenance work is being funded by Council, not through grant funding.

Phil Guy described some of the circumstances in the community during the consultation. The proposed viewing platform had caused concern for the Hotel where the boardwalk would become a gathering point, given the proximity to alcohol. The plans were altered.

The Taskforce members present confirmed the community's preference for a boardwalk, not a footpath. Cllr Wells proposed staff clarify the final plans.

### **Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)**

That the Taskforce receive the River Road Foreshore Precinct Rehabilitation Project Progress Report for information.

### **RECOMMENDATION (Cllr Wells / Gareth Ward)**

That the Taskforce

1. Receive the River Road Foreshore Precinct Rehabilitation Project Progress Report for information.
2. Request Council provide an explanatory letter to the Member for Kiama outlining the points of contact with the community, how the project has changed, the details of the final proposed project, and how the objectives of the original grant application to the State are being achieved.

CARRIED

### **SH20.3 Shoalhaven River Estuary - Coastal Management Program Progress Report**

**HPERM Ref:  
D20/524505**

Nigel Smith – Coastal Coordinator advised that Council now has adopted the Scoping Study, with the core program for Lower Shoalhaven CMP due for completion by the end of 2022. Staff are now in the process of drafting the tender brief. Combined meetings of the Coastal Management

Program Advisory Committees and the Floodplain Risk Management Committees had been held in the past week, and members in the relevant areas will have the opportunity to review and provide comments to the draft tender brief. A new grant has been submitted as the original costs of the CMP have exceeded the original grant.

Phil Guy asked whether the community will receive a response to its submission response. Staff advised the feedback is addressed in the appendices in the Scoping Study, and confirmed the community will be approached again to talk through process. There is still time to include feedback.

A separate meeting will be arranged to discuss concerns raised by Jess Zealand about the consultant's understanding of certain issues, especially regarding Entrance Management. Leslie Reid will be in contact.

**Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)**

That the Taskforce receive the Shoalhaven River Estuary - Coastal Management Program Progress Report for information.

**RESOLVED** (Phil Guy / Gerald Groom)

That the Taskforce receive the Shoalhaven River Estuary - Coastal Management Program Progress Report for information.

CARRIED

<b>SH20.4</b>	<b>Review the Purpose/Objectives of the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce</b>	<b>HPERM Ref: D20/530128</b>
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**Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)**

That the Taskforce review the purpose/objectives of the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce.

**RESOLVED** (By consent)

That the Taskforce review the purpose/objectives of the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce at a workshop early in the New Year.

CARRIED

There being no further business, the meeting concluded, the time being 1.05pm.

Clr John Wells  
ACTING CHAIRPERSON

## SH21.1 Shoalhaven Heads - Channel Dredging and Beach Nourishment

**HPERM Ref:** D21/208501

**Department:** Environmental Services

**Approver:** Phil Costello, Director - City Development

**Attachments:** 1. Shoalhaven Heads – Channel Dredging and Beach Nourishment Stage 1 Tasks - prepared by Royal HaskoningDHV (May 2021) (under separate cover) [↗](#)

### Reason for Report

To present the findings of the Royal HaskoningDHV assessment of Channel Dredging and Beach Nourishment Options at Shoalhaven Heads.

### Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That the Taskforce receive the Shoalhaven Heads – Channel Dredging and Beach Nourishment Options Report for information and endorse the next steps. In summary, the next steps include:

- Endorsement of the Transport for NSW (TfNSW)/Maritime Infrastructure Delivery Office) grant application and acceptance by Council;
- Subject to the provision of grant funding, pre-dredge feasibility studies will be undertaken including, but not limited to, hydrographic survey and land survey, engineering studies and terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna studies for input to a REF (or EIS);
- Subject to the outcomes of the pre-dredge studies, preparation of a REF (or EIS), including intergovernmental consultation, and submissions and approvals; and,
- Subject to environmental approvals from the REF (or EIS), prepare a detailed cost-benefit analysis to ascertain the viability of undertaking channel dredging and beach nourishment.

### Options

1. Receive this report and endorse next steps as outlined.

Implications: Information will continue to be sourced to determine project viability.

2. Provide an alternative recommendation.

Implications: Details will need to be provided for Council staff to ratify.

### Background

The estuary foreshore adjacent to River Road at Shoalhaven Heads experienced localised significant erosion following a series of storm events that culminated in the June 2016 East Coast Low (ECL). The erosion was a consequence of the open ocean entrance, elevated water levels, large ocean swells that penetrated the entrance and intensely strong winds that

generated local seas across the estuary. Ordinarily, the foreshore adjacent to River Road is relatively sheltered.

Council engaged Royal HaskoningDHV (RHDHV) in August 2020 to provide assistance in investigating and developing a design for significant beach nourishment and channel dredging. This engagement aimed to address a number of objectives in a holistic and integrated manner. These objectives included:

- improving foreshore amenity (beach nourishment);
- mitigating ongoing foreshore erosion (beach nourishment in combination with the rock revetment);
- providing a navigation channel, of suitable depth and width for safe navigation, between the Holiday Haven Caravan Park boat ramp and the public jetty at Jerry Bailey Road; and
- consideration of the opportunity to ‘value add’ to the above works for the benefit of water quality, flooding, and ecology.

The RHDHV investigation was aimed to inform future steps including to:

- consider options and the feasibility for dredging and beach nourishment;
- finalise a preferred option in consultation with the community; and
- develop the design of the preferred option and seek the necessary environmental approvals including completion of the required additional specialist studies. The approvals sought would include a five (5) year licence from the Crown for dredging.

#### Scope of Works

The report developed and finalised by RHDHV addressed the following scope of works:

- site inspection;
- review of existing relevant background information - previous reports and discussions with Council staff and community representatives;
- confirmation of design objectives;
- development of a minimum of two basic concept options for navigation channel dredging and beach nourishment using the existing available information and the latest available hydrographic survey;
- selection of a preferred concept option in consultation with Council and community representatives;
- preliminary assessment of the environmental approvals pathway; and
- identification of additional studies to ascertain the feasibility of the options investigated, including timeframes and approximate costs.

#### Design Objectives/Considerations

##### *Beach Nourishment*

The beach nourishment addressed in the RHDHV report supplements that undertaken as part of the recently completed rock revetment works. This nourishment involved placement of sand to a level of 1.3m AHD over a length of 130m along the rock revetment, with material sourced from the dry-notch maintenance, as detailed in the Technical Specification for the works.

Beach nourishment material as described in the RHDHV report would be sourced from channel dredging rather than dry-notch maintenance. Accordingly, the balance between the beach nourishment volume and channel dredging volume is an imperative consideration. The beach nourishment volume is dependent on the target additional beach width, the cross-shore nourishment profile, and the length of foreshore to be nourished.



### *Navigation Channel*

The concept design of a safe navigation channel linking the Holiday Haven Caravan Park boat ramp and the public jetty at Jerry Bailey Road, in line with Council's objectives, requires consideration of a design vessel and relevant channel design guidelines, which determine the necessary channel dimensions.

The existing navigation channel linking the above two locations is situated immediately adjacent to the foreshore. A consequence of the nourishment concept, discussed in further detail in the RHDHV report, is that the beach widening would partially infill the existing channel. Subsequently, the resultant two options for the alignment of the channel are limited, which are discussed in the following section.

It is noted that Council has advised the current highest priority for upgrading of boat ramps at Shoalhaven Heads is the Wharf Road boat ramp further upstream in the Shoalhaven River, as shown in Figure 1. If this facility is upgraded within the next two years, the design of the navigation channel to the Holiday Haven Caravan Park boat ramp may require further consideration.



Figure 1: Wharf Road Boat Launching Ramp, Shoalhaven River (source google maps)

### Options Assessment for Navigation Channel Dredging and Beach Nourishment

#### *Channel Alignment*

As noted previously, a consequence of the beach nourishment concept for the foreshore is that the beach widening would partially infill the existing navigation channel. Two broad options exist for the alignment of the channel:

- shift the existing channel to the south-east by dredging along the northern edge of the sand bank thus retaining the alignment of the existing channel; and

- consider creation of a new channel alignment by cutting a channel across the sand bank in a southerly direction from the Holiday Haven Caravan Park boat ramp and proceeding upstream on the southern side of the sand bank.

Further discussion on these options can be found in the attached RHDHV report – Section 4.1.

#### *Conceptual Design of Navigation Channel Dredging and Beach Nourishment*

RHDHV prepared a conceptual design for the navigation channel dredging and beach nourishment based on adoption of the existing channel alignment and the design criteria outlined in Section 3.3, namely:

- design bed level of channel: -2.0m AHD
- design width of channel: 20m
- beach nourishment:
  - target additional beach width: 5m.
  - upper beach level: 1.5m AHD
  - cross shore beach profile: 1V:10H

Further discussion on the conceptual design can be found in the attached RHDHV report – Section 4.2.

#### *Methods of Channel Dredging and Beach Nourishment*

There are two main methods of dredging the navigation channel for purposes of beach nourishment:

- mechanical dredging, e.g. use of an excavator mounted on a barge, referred to as a backhoe dredger (BHD); and
- hydraulic dredging, e.g. use of a cutter suction dredger (CSD) or an excavator fitted with a submersible pump and mounted on a barge.

Further discussion on this can be found in the attached RHDHV report – Section 4.3.

#### *Opportunity to Value Add for Water Quality, Flooding and Ecology*

Consideration should be given during further design development of the channel dredging and beach nourishment project to the opportunity to potentially ‘value add’ for water quality, flooding, and ecological benefits.

Generally, this would involve an ‘engineering with nature’ approach which adopts the following principles:

- a proactive approach to planning and infrastructure that delivers benefits where possible to both recreation and the environment;
- an understanding of the local environment and the current natural and anthropogenic influences;
- meaningful stakeholder engagement; and
- preparation of proposals/design with a net environmental and social benefit.

It should be noted that the RHDVH report identified no likely net benefit to water quality and flood behaviour in response to the implementation of the conceptual design. Furthermore, the report stated potential negative impacts on ecology including the following biophysical features of the local environment:

- Seagrasses (will require approval from NSW DPI Fisheries);
- Estuarine processes as a result of a change in sea bed profile;
- Endangered and migratory shorebirds and other threatened species/habitats (will require approval from the state and commonwealth environmental departments);
- Beach nourishment and sand/sediment migration processes including the potential disturbance of acid sulphate soils;
- Riparian vegetation;
- Scouring; and
- Flooding impacts/effects.

Further discussion on this can be found in the attached RHDHV report – Section 4.4.

### Next Steps

Council will be seeking advice in the interim to confirm the environmental approvals pathway before the conceptual design can be progressed.

The RHDHV report documented a number of significant environmental constraints at the site, which potentially impact the viability of this project progressing. A rigorous approvals pathway and environmental assessment process needs to be undertaken, possibly with the requirement for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the NSW Planning Secretary's environmental assessment requirements (SEARs).

The next stage of this project involves a number of pre-dredge studies, the preparation of a REF or EIS, design and optimisation of channel position and configuration, and environmental review of proposed works and approvals. Progression of this project to the next stage is dependent on a successful grant outcome as there are currently no budget allocations. The grant application is detailed below in the Financial Implications section. A successful grant outcome will also need to be reported to Council before it is accepted, as there are matching Council contributions required.

This will be assessed as part of a successful grant application before the possibility of any actual on the ground dredging works is determined. No grant funding, or budget allocation, has been applied for at this stage.

The viability and likelihood of Council undertaking navigation channel dredging and beach nourishment is therefore contingent on the outcomes of the grant application and if successful, the outcomes of further investigations and the environmental approval process. Additionally, if Council progresses past the environmental approvals stage to implementing the proposed design solution, consideration will then be guided by a cost benefit analysis before proceeding further. Indicative costs associated with channel dredging of this magnitude are in the order of \$2 M - \$3 M.

In summary, the next steps include:

- Endorsement of the grant application and acceptance by Council;
- Subject to the provision of grant funding, pre-dredge studies will be undertaken including, but not limited to, hydrographic survey and land survey, engineering studies and terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna studies for input to a REF (or EIS);
- Subject to the outcomes of the pre-dredge studies, preparation of a REF (or EIS), including intergovernmental consultation, and submissions and approvals; and,
- Subject to environmental approvals from the REF (or EIS), prepare a detailed cost-benefit analysis to ascertain the viability of undertaking channel dredging and beach nourishment.

Refer to the Financial Implications section below for more information.

## Community Engagement

Several different methods will be utilised to communicate and engage with key stakeholders throughout the future stages of this project – pending a successful outcome with the grant application. The most appropriate stakeholder engagement method will be selected to target specific audiences to ensure the information is disseminated effectively and efficiently to the community. It is essential Council affords the community an opportunity to provide feedback on projects, such as this one, to incorporate the social dimensions and effects.

## Financial Implications

Council staff submitted a grant application to MIDO (Maritime Infrastructure Development Office) under their NSW Boating Access Dredging Program funding program on 7 May 2021. The purpose of this application is for pre-dredge studies of the Lower Shoalhaven River to investigate an environmental approvals pathway and design for dredging and beach nourishment.

### Key things about this program of interest to Council:

- This grants program will replace the Rescuing our Waterways program which was previously administered by Crown Lands.
- The funding has been made available from the \$205 million Maritime Infrastructure Stimulus Program announced in October 2020.
- The new program is administered by Transport for NSW (TfNSW), with MIDO now being responsible for coordinating the planning and delivery of maritime infrastructure, including dredging, in collaboration with our partners and stakeholders.
- The Boating Access Dredging Program allocates funding to councils for local dredging projects to ensure safe navigation of channels and entrances, particularly in regional waterways.

### What will be funded?

Eligible projects are expected to improve navigation and waterway access and thereby promote recreational and commercial boating opportunities, economic growth, and productivity. Dredging projects which are eligible for funding under the program include:

- Dredging projects that will deliver navigational benefits and improved access to waterways for recreational and commercial vessels;
- Dredging projects that will improve access to on water public infrastructure such as boat ramps and wharves;
- Pre-dredge activities for projects which are eligible and likely to proceed to dredging; and
- Dredging strategies and/or their supporting studies (e.g. sediment hydrodynamics).

This grant application required a proposed workplan for the project which detailed costings. Costs were formed based on consultant's advice on the preliminary design and environmental approvals associated with similar sized dredged programs, as well as best practice in the coastal environment based on Council technical staff experience. Council's experience with similar grant applications has led to the approach of making high level cost estimates in the proposed work plans. Final costings and workplans will be best informed by the market once Council publicly advertises a tender for the proposed design and approval works.

The costings of the grant submitted in the proposed workplan were split into four milestones and costed as detailed in the table below:

Milestone Number	Milestone	Total Cost (ex GST)	Applicant's (Council's) contribution (ex GST)	Grant amount sought (ex GST)
1	Pre-dredge Studies	\$200,000	\$50,000	\$150,000
2	Preparation of REF or EIS	\$100,000	\$25,000	\$75,000
3	Design and optimisation of channel position and configuration	\$100,000	\$25,000	\$75,000
4	Environmental review of proposed works and approvals	\$50,000	\$12,500	\$37,500
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$450,000</b>	<b>\$112,500</b>	<b>\$337,500</b>

If it is determined a REF is required, rather than an EIS, the cost of this milestone will be reduced. It is also worth highlighting that the milestones in the proposed workplan are dependent on the success of the previous one i.e. pre-dredge studies (Milestone 1) may determine that progressing to an EIS or REF is not plausible.

Pre-dredge studies (Milestone 1 - \$200,000) include the following:

- Hydrographic survey and land survey;
- Preparation and implementation of a sampling and analysis plan (SAP);
- Engineering studies including design and drawings sufficient for input to a REF (or EIS) and to support applications for necessary approvals (excludes detailed design and documentation);
- Terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna studies; and
- Hydrodynamic model.

### Risk Implications

Risk 1: Community expectations and anecdotal evidence on the way forward may not be consistent with the recommendations derived from the studies undertaken as part of a successful grant application.

Risk 2: An unsuccessful MIDO grant application may not enable the pre-dredging studies to progress.

Risk 3: Preliminaries and environmental assessments undertaken as part of a successful grant may dictate that the full extent of the proposed works cannot be executed due to approvals from State and Federal levels not being granted.

Risk 4: If findings of the MIDO grant reveal that dredging or other treatment management options can proceed with the appropriate environment approvals, it may be too cost prohibitive for Council to implement.

Risk 5: Consultant procured under a successful grant agreement not adequately understanding scope and not meeting desired objectives.

## SH21.2 River Road Foreshore Precinct Rehabilitation Project Progress Report

**HPERM Ref:** D21/209794

**Department:** Environmental Services

**Approver:** Phil Costello, Director - City Development

### Reason for Report

This report is to update the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce on the progress of the Shoalhaven Heads River Road Foreshore Precinct Project (Regional Growth - Environment and Tourism Fund Grant # RNSW1279).

### Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That the Taskforce receive the Shoalhaven Heads River Road Foreshore Precinct Project (Regional Growth - Environment and Tourism Fund Grant # RNSW1279) Progress Report for information.

### Options

1. Receive the River Road Foreshore Precinct Rehabilitation Project Progress Report for information.

Implications: Nil.

2. Provide an alternative recommendation.

Implications: The details will need to be provided for staff to ratify.

### Background

Environmental management works are being undertaken at the River Road reserve foreshore to ensure the long-term health and safety of the area. These works primarily involve the construction of a rock revetment of the bank, stormwater infrastructure improvements, and tourism infrastructure.

A Tender process for the revetment construction occurred in November 2020, and the Strategy and Assets Committee approved the recommendation to award the contract to MGN Civil Pty Ltd in December 2020 (MIN20.920).

By way of summary, the purpose of the project was to:

- Reduce the risk of further damage to the foreshore and infrastructure from ongoing coastal and estuarine processes;
- Provide immediate and ongoing environmental benefits by improving the health of the foreshore;
- Enhance access to, and use of, the River Road Precinct for the benefit of the local community and visitors; and
- Improve recreational and tourism infrastructure for the Shoalhaven LGA, thereby increasing visitation rates and expenditure locally and regionally.

The project was funded to cater for tourism infrastructure works since the projected increase in tourism visitation – estimated as a conservative increase of around 4-5% over current

figures – has the potential to create significant off-peak and shoulder season visitation and associated spend.

Accordingly, works conducted comprised:

- Rock protection wall in the highest risk areas;
- Stormwater detention and discharge works to reduce impacts caused by these on the foreshore area;
- Beach nourishment and beach scraping works; and
- Foreshore vegetation remediation.

Additional “tourism infrastructure works” included:

- New viewing platforms; and
- New beach access stairways replacing the storm damaged assets.

### Project Update

The Rock Revetment design, completed by consultant Magryn & Associates, was peer reviewed by Greg Britton from Royal HaskoningDHV (RHDHV) in October 2020. A number of issues were identified by both Council staff and RHDHV that required amendment before construction of the rock revetment could commence.

Council and MGN Civil commenced Stage 2 of the project – Construction, in early February 2021.

The construction works completed to date include:

- a) Rock revetment construction as per the design and peer review amendments;
- b) Stormwater remediation works are ongoing;
- c) New access stairs and a segment of the boardwalk within the rock revetment;
- d) Undertaking beach scraping/nourishment works, supplemented from dry-notch maintenance, in conjunction with the Coastal staff; and,
- e) Undertaking site rehabilitation/revegetation works as per the plan.

Refer below for photographs.





Beach nourishment works



Access stairs



Access stairs and rock revetment



Rock revetment and segment of the boardwalk



Rock revetment



Revegetation works

SH21.2

There have been concerns from the grant body, also shared by the Member for Kiama Gareth Ward MP, that the scope of the grant is not being met. This issue is in regard to the tourism infrastructure, specifically the construction of a segment of the boardwalk. The detailed design process originally determined that the proposed boardwalk concept presented in the grant application was unfeasible due to engineering constraints and potential public safety concerns. These have been raised with the grant body to ensure that an alternate solution that meets engineering constraints, mitigates public safety concerns, has disability access, and delivers the grant expectations is appropriately implemented.

The Project Control Group met on 10 May 2021, and along with discussions with the grant funding body, a way forward has been identified. This includes a concept plan for the



remaining proposed boardwalk structure (along a different alignment to original – top of bank), an associated Bill of Quantities (BoQ), and a proposed timeline for completion of construction works (December 2021).

### **Community Engagement**

The community has been regularly engaged throughout the design stage of the project. The drainage design went through several iterations, with the final option being supported by the community.

A sod turning event occurred in October 2020 to mark the commencement of the construction works at the site.

An official opening will be undertaken in accordance with the funding agreement once all works are completed on site.

### **Financial Implications**

Whilst the construction of these works will result in maintenance and monitoring costs for Council, it will ultimately alleviate repair and environmental management costs, which are only expected to escalate with each storm event causing further damage. Additionally, the project also provides the opportunity to address the deficiencies in tourism offerings in Shoalhaven Heads by constructing a new and improved infrastructure to attract and retain visitors to the area – the “tourism infrastructure works”.

Costings for a proposed boardwalk structure are still being determined by Council and to be agreed in consultation with the funding body.

### **Risk Implications**

The majority of works are now complete. There is a very minor risk associated with the non-completion of remaining works within the nominated timeframe.

## SH21.3 Update on the Lower Shoalhaven River Estuary Coastal Management Program (CMP)

**HPERM Ref:** D21/212553

**Department:** Environmental Services

**Approver:** Phil Costello, Director - City Development

### Reason for Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress and status of the Lower Shoalhaven River Estuary Coastal Management Program (CMP).

### Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That the Taskforce receive the report on the status of the Coastal Management Program for information.

### Options

1. Accept the report for information.

Implications: Nil

2. Provide an alternative recommendation.

Implications: The details will need to be provided for staff to ratify.

### Background

Following on from the information provided in *Shoalhaven City Council's Coastal Management Programs (NC20.4)*, staff have commenced working on the Coastal Management Programs (CMPs) according to the schedule adopted on 23 June 2020 (MIN20.436).

The Coastal Management Manual recommends council follow a five-stage risk management process for the preparation and implementation of a CMP. The five-stage process is illustrated in Figure 1, below.

#### Stage 1 – Identify the scope of the CMP.

The Final Shoalhaven Coastal Management Program Scoping Study (referred to as The Scoping Study) was adopted by Council at the Strategy and Assets Committee meeting on 9 June 2020.

The Scoping Study outlines more specifically the objectives of the individual CMPs, as well as the forward program for each. Stage 1 has been completed.

#### Lower Shoalhaven River Estuary - Coastal Management Program (CMP) Status Update

The grant application for the Lower Shoalhaven River Estuary CMP was approved and signed by NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) in April 2021. Council then signed the funding agreement and submitted to DPIE in May 2021. Council has commenced writing the Project Brief in collaboration with DPIE staff, utilising the forward program and other relevant sections of the adopted Citywide CMP Scoping Study. Council is now proceeding to put together a Request for Tender to engage a consultant to undertake

Stages 2-4 of the CMP. The Request for Tender is planned to be finalised and advertised in July 2021.

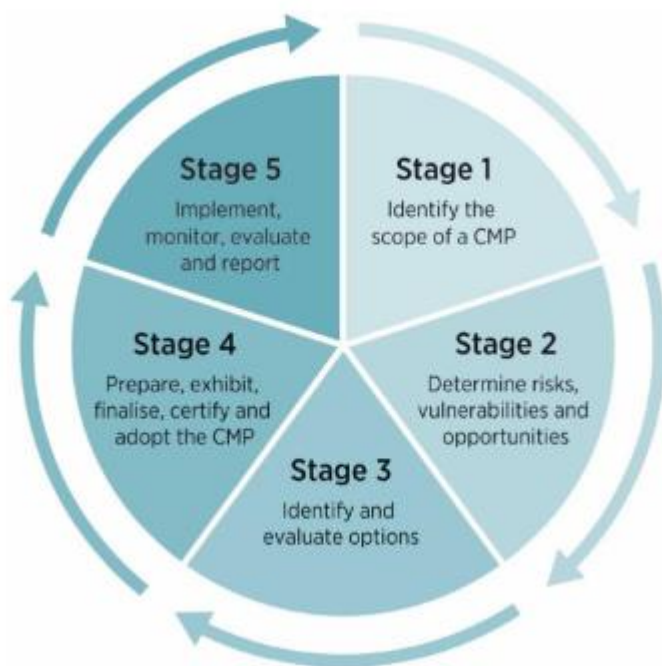


Figure 1 Stages in preparing and implementing a CMP (Coastal Management Act 2018)

## Community Engagement

### Stakeholder and Community Engagement for Future Stages of the CMP

Community engagement tasks will commence once a consultant has been awarded the CMP tender. Several different methods will be utilised to communicate and engage with key stakeholders throughout each stage of the CMP. Each communication channel and tool has been selected to target specific audiences to ensure the information is disseminated effectively and efficiently to the community and sufficient opportunity is provided for community feedback.

A Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategy has been developed as part of Council's adopted Citywide CMP Scoping Study (refer to Appendix F of this study). Specific stakeholders identified for consultation include Government Agencies, Local Government, and the Community. Council also has a Northern Coastal Management Advisory Committee that meets regularly with the principal objective of the committee to assist Council in the development and implementation of one or more CMPs for the northern area of Council – including the Lower Shoalhaven River Estuary CMP. There are community representatives on this committee that have the role of facilitating broader community consultation and participation in coast and estuary management through informing and liaising with member community groups, such as SHET.

### Stage 2 and 3 Communication and Engagement Activities:

As mentioned above, Appendix F of the Scoping Study provides a Stakeholder and Community Engagement Strategy. Within the Strategy, an Action Plan has been provided detailing the key communication and engagement activities that will be undertaken during each stage of the project. These include:

#### **Face to Face**

- Public Meetings
- Drop-in sessions.

- Scheduled one-on-one meetings.
- Community Consultative Bodies (CCBs)
- Q&A surveys (physical and via phone)

**Non-Digital Media**

- Print media.
- Fact sheets
- Audio/visual media

**Digital media**

- Get Involved
- Council website
- Social media
- Survey Forms
- Email letters

**Policy Implications**

At Stage 4 of the CMP process, a draft CMP developed for the Lower Shoalhaven River Estuary will need to be publicly exhibited, incorporating community feedback, and finalised. It will need to consider all submissions and recommendations and ensure that all statutory and mandatory requirements have been met.

Once the draft Lower Shoalhaven River Estuary CMP has been adopted by Council following the development through to Stage 4, then it will be sent to the Minister for Local Government for certification.

**Financial Implications**

Shoalhaven City Council received a grant for \$326,666 from DPIE in May 2021. The funding commitment is 2:1, with Council contributing \$163,333 to the Lower Shoalhaven River Estuary CMP development. Bringing the total approved budget for the project to \$490,000.

**Risk Implications**

Risks of this project include but are not limited to:

- delays to the project schedule;
- failure to meet community expectations; and
- not finding a suitable consultant to undertake the work.

Delays in project schedule may be alleviated by ensuring the consultant awarded the tender is competent in the technical and project management aspects of the project. An evaluation matrix that considers a suite of criteria has been set up to ensure the consultants will be competent to carry out the work, and within the delivery schedule (excluding major, unforeseeable events). Ensuring the right consultant is engaged will also lower the risk of failure to meet community expectations. The Request for Tender will be advertised publicly for 21 days and it is anticipated there will be multiple suitable tender bids submitted.

## SH21.4 Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce - Review of Purpose, Objectives and Achievements

**HPERM Ref:** D21/215714

**Department:** Environmental Services

**Approver:** Phil Costello, Director - City Development

**Attachments:** 1. Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce - Review of Purpose, Objectives and Achievements [↓](#)

### Reason for Report

Review the purpose/objectives of the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce as per the attachment.

### Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That the Taskforce review the purpose/objectives of the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce as per the attachment.

In accordance with items SH19.3 (D19/159421) dated 21 May 2019 and SH20.4 (D20/530128) dated 3 December 2020, resolution to review the purpose/objectives of the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce (refer attached). This is being carried out at this meeting due to time constraints of these previous two meetings not permitting this agenda item to be discussed.

## SH19.3 Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce - Review of Purpose, Objectives and Achievements

**HPERM Ref:** D19/159421

**Group:** Planning Environment & Development Group  
**Section:** Environmental Services

### Purpose / Summary

Present recent resolution of Council in regard to a report from the Coastal Estuary and Floodplain Management Liaison Group and provide information on the SHET objectives and achievements.

### Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That the Taskforce

1. Receive the report for information; and
2. Review the purpose/objectives of the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce.

### Options

1. As per recommendation

Implications: The SHET purpose and objectives would be reviewed, in accordance with the restructure of the Shoalhaven Flood and Coast and Estuary Committee/Group

2. Propose an alternative recommendation

Implications: Implications would be dependent on the content of the recommendation

### Background

On 31 July 2012 Council adopted the following resolution.

- a) *A separate committee of Council to be called "Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce" be formed to examine options for pursuing a partial or complete opening of Shoalhaven Heads;*
- b) *This taskforce be charged with reviewing Councils Current Entrance and Estuary Management Plans for Shoalhaven Heads;*
- c) *All matters relating to proposals for the Shoalhaven Heads opening be presented to the abovementioned taskforce with no further matters being reported to other committees of Council;*
- d) *This taskforce shall report directly to Council;*
- e) *The taskforce include community members that would be affected by a possible opening of the Heads and they be sought through an expressions of interest process.*

This resolution also adopted the following purpose of the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce:

- Examine options for pursuing a partial or complete opening of Shoalhaven Heads

- Review Councils Current Entrance and Estuary Management Plans for Shoalhaven Heads
- Report directly to Council

In October of 2018 Council resolved to disband the Shoalhaven Natural Resources and Floodplain Management Committee, and form three smaller locally based committees, to facilitate locally based input into the coast/estuary and floodplain management plans and policies.

Following this, a meeting of the Coast Estuary and Floodplain Management Liaison Group, which comprises Councillors, Council Staff and State Government Agency Staff, met on 23 March 2019. The following resolution was subsequently adopted by Council at its meeting on 30 April 2019.

*That Council*

1. *Note the following recommendations for information.*
  - a. *Note that the Floodplain Development Manual requires a committee; however, the Coastal Management Act does not require a formal committee that requires community engagement for the development of coastal management programs.*
  - b. *Adopt an alternative model for floodplain risk management, comprising three (3) Advisory Committees – North, Central and South – that would report to Council.*
  - c. *Establish an interim Shoalhaven Coast and Estuary Committee initially comprising Councillors, staff and government agency representatives until the Coastal Management scoping study is completed.*
  - d. *Conduct focus group workshops to obtain community input during the preparation of the citywide Coastal Management Plan Scoping Study and review the model for the group after the CMP Scoping Study is complete.*
  - e. *Ensure the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce will continue independently on the same basis as at present and be encouraged to participate in delivery of the new model.*
  - f. *Initiate a strong communication program to explain how Council is now working in accordance with the Floodplain Development Manual and the new Coastal Management Act.*
2. *Staff provide a report to the Ordinary Meeting outlining the legislative requirements and the reasons for a proposed alternative model for coastal and estuary issues.*
3. *Invite OEH and other relevant government agencies to a Councillor Briefing to explain the planning processes for flood risk management and the Coastal Management Framework.*

As the per the above resolution, the structure and purpose of the new three Floodplain Risk Management Groups and the Shoalhaven Coast and Estuary Groups will have a new role and purpose in relation to community engagement.

The focus of these groups will be on collaborating and engaging with local communities on the development of Floodplain Risk Management Plans and Studies and the development of Coastal Management Plans, under the Coastal Management Act 2016 and the Coastal Management Manual.

The three Floodplain Risk Management Groups will have defined roles as per the NSW Floodplain Development Manual. A further report will be provided to Council on the

legislative requirements and purpose of these groups and the Coast and Estuary Management Groups.

Considering these recent changes to Council's framework, it may be relevant to review the purpose and/or objectives of the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce to ensure it aligns with the above.

This is also important to avoid crossover of roles and purposes of the new northern Floodplain Risk Management Group, when reviewing and managing projects, such as the Shoalhaven River Floodplain Risk Management Plan and the Shoalhaven River Estuary Coastal Management Plan.

Part 1 e. of the above resolution clearly states that SHET will continue independently of the new structure for community engagement on coast/estuary and floodplain management. However, the resolution does ask that SHET be encouraged to participate in the delivery of the new structure.

### **SHET Objectives and Achievements**

Council sought submissions from SHET members to objectives and achievements that the members consider valuable. The following is a list of the submissions provided to Council:

#### Objectives

*At the SHET meeting of 20 November 2017, the immediate, short term and long-term objectives of the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce were resolved as follows.*

1. *Storm-water Management River Road (immediate)*
  - a. *Redirect three storm-water outlets along River Road in front of the Hotel*
2. *River Road Erosion Control Works (immediate)*
  - a. *Undertake urgent remedial work from Matt Black's report and create a sand buffer along River Road to reinforce erosion control works and provide a recreational space around foreshores.*
  - b. *Further consideration to be given to moving the channel further out from the bank. Create a sand buffer along River Road to reinforce erosion control works and provide a recreational space around foreshores.*
3. *Trial Geotechnical Groynes (medium)*
  - a. *Design and commission groyne system into ocean at entrance to direct flow at the next flood event by producing an entrance design using the groyne system illustrated in WRL Report 2015.*
  - b. *The design to include a dune care works programme that compliments the groyne system and encourages a narrower entrance that scours deeper rather than wider entrance during a flood event.*
4. *Dredge or Dragline Programme (medium)*
  - a. *Investigate alternative boating channels to help protect foreshore sand buffers by providing a more direct access to main river basin.*
  - b. *Around Holiday Haven Caravan Park and River Road foreshore to provide wider bank buffers and restore clean sand, water recreation and boating with better water depth*
5. *Pursue Commercial Dredging (long term)*
  - a. *Options in the Shoalhaven River of Old Man Gut and Kurrajong Island that can offset the cost of maintenance dredging in the basin at Shoalhaven Heads.*



6. *Submerged wall or groyne System at O’Keefe’s Point (long term)*
  - a. *Investigate placing a groyne or groynes along the river bank near O’Keefe’s point deflecting flow from Berry’s Canal towards Shoalhaven Heads*

Council provided a report on the feasibility and approvals required to achieve these objectives, which was received by SHET.

Additional objectives of the SHET also include the following.

- Assist Council in preparation of the Shoalhaven River Coastal Management Plan
- Assist Council in the development and preparation of the Lower Shoalhaven Flood Risk Management Study/Plan
- Report directly to Council
- Investigations to increase flow to the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary
- Reduction of flow via Berry’s Canal to address erosion and flood mitigation
- Control of siltation at the entrance to Berry’s Canal
- Negotiate a commercial proposition between Cleary Bros and Council to remove sand from the southern side of Kurrajong Island.
- With the reference to the formation of the Northern Flood Risk Management Committee and the proposed Shoalhaven Coast and Estuary Management Group. The Community members of SHET see that the SHET has direct input to council with regards to the management of the Estuary at the Heads, the river and banks between the Heads and Berry’s Canal, Berry’s Canal, and Greenwell Point re Erosion, Flood mitigation, Water Quality, Navigation Issues, and general appearance and condition.

#### Achievements

The Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce members provided the following list of their achievements regarding increasing awareness of the issues affecting the health of the Shoalhaven River Estuary have been as follows.

1. The Community Members of SHET have been successfully keeping a focus on the SHET objectives within all levels of Government, examples are – Tour of the estuary, Shoalhaven River from the Heads to Berry’s Canal, Berry’s Canal and Greenwell Point re erosion issues, flooding issues, river flow, water quality and navigation issues with Fiona Phillips (Labour Candidate for Gilmore) & Katrina Hodgkinson (Nats Candidate for Gilmore); Meetings with Tony Bourke (Labour Environment Shadow Minister); Meetings with Gareth Ward (Member for Kiama); Meetings with NSW Cabinet Ministers, Melina Pavey and Matthew Kean during Cabinet meeting event in Nowra; Meetings with various councillors within Shoalhaven City Council.
2. The Community members of SHET be involved in localised projects to ensure alignment between Council SHET & Community expectations.
3. The Community members of SHET are continually seeking and monitoring local observations and needs of residents of the Heads and surrounding areas.
4. The Community members of SHET have been disseminating council information and council’s complex management strategies in a way that is understood by the locals via the CCB Forum and Community Information days.
5. The Community members of SHET are constantly monitoring Council’s complex management strategies such as the Dry Notch; Water Quality; Bank erosion; Flood mitigation; Progress re Review of Risk Management Study and Plan; Sand movement at the Surf Club; Acid Sulphate Soil Project.

6. Membership on the previous Shoalhaven Natural Resources and Floodplain Management Committee
7. Assistance and community facilitation on the preparation of the Lower Shoalhaven River Flood Risk Management Study
8. Assistance and community facilitation with the Shoalhaven Heads – River Road Foreshore Precinct Rehabilitation Project
9. Assistance and community facilitation on the review of the Shoalhaven River Entrance Management Policy review
10. Development, with Council and the Shoalhaven Heads SLSC, the Shoalhaven Heads Dune Management Action Plan
11. Assistance and community facilitation for the community information day held on the management of the Lower Shoalhaven River
12. Assistance with the development of the Lower Shoalhaven Drainage Remediation Action Plan - WRL
13. Assistance with the development of the research into the management options for improving flows of the Shoalhaven River at Shoalhaven Heads
14. Assistance and community facilitation with the Shoalhaven River Flood Notch maintenance works

**Community Engagement**

Council consults with the Shoalhaven Heads Estuary Taskforce regarding matters relating the Shoalhaven River at Shoalhaven Heads.