

Catchments and Coast Committee Brisbane Water and Gosford Lagoons Meeting Record 20 May 2020



Location:	Skype Meeting	
Date:	20 May 2020	
Time	Started at: 3.06pm	Closed at: 5.07pm
Chair	Councillor Jane Smith	
File Ref	F2018/00097	

Present

Councillor Richard Merhtens, Councillor Jane Smith, Ian Carruthers, Andrew Jones, Michael Kilp, Adrian Williams, Samantha Willis, Michael Alsop (non-voting)

External Representatives present:

Neil Kelleher – Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (arrived 4.04pm), Colin Johnson – Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (left 3.35pm, returned 4.04pm), Peter Scanes – Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (left 3.35pm, returned 4.04pm)

Council Staff present:

Scott Cox – Director Environment and Planning (arrived 3.28pm), Luke Sulkowski – Unit Manager Environmental Management, Ben Fullagar – Section Manager Coastal Protection, Peter Sheath – Section Manager Waterways, Parissa Ghanem – Team Leader Floodplain Management and Senior Planner (left 4.06pm, returned 4.26pm), Vanessa McCann – Team Leader Estuary Management (arrived 4.35pm), Warren Brown – Senior Estuary Management Officer, Kellie Langford – Senior Coastal Management Officer, Melanie James – Waterways Officer, Zoie Magann – Advisory Group Support Officer

Item 1 Welcome, Acknowledgement of Country and Apologies

Apologies received: Jenny McCulla

Councillor Jane Smith declared the meeting open and completed an Acknowledgement of Country and Connection to Land statement.

Item 2 Disclosure of Interest

Samantha Willis declared a less than significant non-pecuniary interest for Item 6 with regard to the CEN's involvement in works being undertaken at Ettalong Creek, as she is the CEO of the CEN.

Councillor Jane Smith declared a less than significant non-pecuniary interest for Item 4 with regard to the Terrigal Walking Track, as a board member of the Central Coast Marine Discovery Centre, which is involved in the project.

Item 3 Confirmation of Previous Meeting Record

The Advisory Group confirmed the Meeting Record from 19 December 2019.

The Advisory Group reviewed the Action Log. Regarding Action 28 (opportunities for education about lagoon openings and floodplain management), it was noted that the relevant study has not yet been completed but outcomes will be brought to a future meeting for the Advisory Group's information.

Item 4 Update on Coastal Management Programs (Standing Item)

This item was deferred to follow Item 5. It was followed by Item 7.

Ben Fullagar (Section Manager Coastal Protection) provided a presentation on coastal management, noting recent events and project updates.

The below key points were noted:

- February 2020 storm event: large coastal storm coincided with high tides resulting in widespread flooding across Central Coast.
- Considerable erosion has occurred at Terrigal, Wamberal and Avoca between June 2019 and February 2020.
 - The change in sand volume was largest at Terrigal and Wamberal, with Avoca experiencing moderate erosion.
 - Noted there has been recent recovery in beaches since February 2020 storm event.
- Clean up operations across Central Coast beaches have been a massive job for the Coastal Protection team.
 - Debris from Hawkesbury River following the storms and floods continued to wash up for months.
 - Issue was not unique to Central Coast and was also experienced by other neighbouring Councils.
 - Approx. 1,000 tonnes of kelp removed from Terrigal Haven, 500 tonnes of debris removed from Terrigal/Avoca, and hundreds more tonnes removed from Copacabana, MacMasters, Kilcare, Ettalong, Umina, Pearl Beach and Patonga.
- Tuggerah Lakes Estuary Expert Panel has now been established by State Government. Scoping studies will be completed in-house. The term of the panel is expected to be until end of 2020 calendar year.
- The Hawkesbury River Scoping Study is underway between neighbouring Councils (Central Coast, Hornsby, Northern Beaches, The Hills, Kur-ring-gai, and Hawkesbury). Aim is for integrated approach and development of Coastal Management Program (CMP).
- Noted there are a number of other coastal projects currently underway: Wamberal coastal protection, Terrigal Lagoon walking track, MacMasters Beach coastal protection, Umina/Ocean Beach erosion management strategy.

The efforts of staff with cleaning up the debris were acknowledged and commended.

Item 5 Update on Flood and Stormwater Management (Standing Item)

This item was deferred to follow Item 6. It was followed by Item 4.

Parissa Ghanem (Team Leader Floodplain Management and Senior Planner) provided a presentation, identifying status of current floodplain projects in the southern part of the LGA.

The below key points were noted:

- Everglades Catchment – Case Study Integrated Water Management: model is being developed to help understand interaction between groundwater and surface water. Aim is to explore how effective the Integrated Water Management approach is with regard to improving surface water run-off, which will complement Floodplain Risk Management Studies and Plans (FRMSPs).
- Woy Woy Peninsula FRMSP (including Kahibah Creek): consultation will be undertaken with relevant stakeholders, with anticipated completion date of August 2021.
- Brisbane Water Catchments Overland Flood Study: currently being undertaken by Cardno. Community survey was conducted, and results helped calibrate model. Anticipated completion is September/October 2020.
- Narara Creek FRMSP: damages assessment has been completed. There is a flood intelligent tool near completion which will help with flood forecasting (customised website to provide real time data which will help emergency services such as SES). Expected to be complete early 2021.
- Ourimbah Creek FRMSP: lower area of catchment is in southern part of LGA (Lisarow). Report is going to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 25 May 2020 for Council to adopt the FRMSP. Council may qualify for State and Federal grants once adopted.
- Coastal Lagoons Overland Flood Study (Wamberal, Terrigal, Avoca and Cockrone Lagoons): project is at handover stage and near completion. Aim is to understand where flooding occurs in areas. 6,600 questionnaires were distributed to residents, with 650 responses received.
- Davistown Empire Bay FRMSP: surveys have been completed. Anticipated completion date is February 2021.

It was noted that anticipated completion times for some projects were pushed back due to COVID-19.

Concerns were raised about excavation works happening in stormwater outlet in Hardys Bay. Staff were unable to provide info on the works but will follow up with relevant Council area.

Concerns were also raised about a current caravan park development. Staff confirmed they are liaising with the developer regarding the development, including flooding concerns.

Discussions were held regarding options for community engagement for Council projects. Lake Macquarie City Council was suggested as a good model of engagement. Staff confirmed this matter is being investigated with Comms, but progress has been hampered by current pandemic. The importance of education as a tool to supplement engagement was acknowledged.

Action: Staff to liaise with Roads, Transport, Drainage and Waste regarding excavation works happening in stormwater outlet in Hardys Bay, and provide update back to Advisory Group.

Item 6 Update on Site Visit to Ettalong regarding Encroachments (December 2019)

This item was brought forward to follow Item 3. It was followed by Item 5.

Peter Sheath (Section Manager Waterways) provided an update on the site visit to Ettalong in December 2019 to examine encroachments.

It was noted that works have been undertaken to remove woody weeds etc from the creek area, which will also support with flood storage.

Boundary surveys undertaken revealed there are properties which have encroached onto riparian areas. Staff are aware of similar encroachments in other areas of the LGA.

An Encroachment Officer is currently being recruited to help address this issue. This new position will work with the Compliance team to better manage encroachments. Council is also developing an Encroachment Policy, which will be progressed with input from the Recruitment Officer.

Item 7 Update on Recent Funding Announcements

Warren Brown (Senior Estuary Management Officer) provided an update on funding received for a project in Avoca Lagoon. \$300k was awarded to Council to fund a three-year project in Bareena Wetland/Avoca Lagoon, with regard to the Green and Golden Bell Frog.

The wetland drains when the lagoon opens, which can impact on species inhabiting the wetland. Staff will be working with Salients and the University of Newcastle to investigate the hydrological relationship and impact on any Green and Golden Bell Frogs in the area. There will also be an assessment of the Bell Frog's ecology (population investigations, habitat use, other breeding locations, impacts of hydrological cycle on frogs, assessment of use of existing and surrounding ponds/wetlands). Community engagement will be undertaken, and people will be involved in habitat restoration works.

It was noted there is a current DA proposal for former Bangaloe Stud (Avoca Drive), which may have impact on the wetland area. The lot is within the study area so may be addressed as part of the project.

Concerns were raised about a potential encroachment on Avoca Lagoon involving a sandstone retaining wall. Staff believe the land is not owned by Council but will investigate and report back to a future meeting regarding the issue of lot boundaries encroaching on lagoon areas.

Action: Staff to provide presentation on foreshores properties and lot boundaries encroaching on riparian areas to a future meeting, with a view to understand issues surrounding management and protection of these areas. Presentation to also address capacity of Council to follow through on incidents.

Item 8 Progress Report on Dredging of Brisbane Water

Ben Fullagar (Section Manager Coastal Protection) provided an update on dredging of Brisbane Water. It was noted funding has been included in the 2020/21 draft budget for completion of follow up dredging at Ettalong Channel (Little Box Head to Half Tide Rocks).

Ettalong Channel is identified as a 'Key Investment Location' in the NSW Coastal Dredging Strategy, which is available here: https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/142744/NSW-coastal-dredging-strategy.pdf

Noted the need to clarify long term management responsibility now that Ettalong Channel is included in the NSW Coastal Dredging Strategy.

Action: Staff to provide an update on monitoring and dredging activities in Brisbane Water over next 12 months to a future meeting, and understanding of long-term roles and responsibilities.

Item 9 General Business and Close

- a) Vision for the Committee: this matter has been discussed multiple times but is yet to be agreed upon by the Advisory Group. It was requested that it be finalised at the next meeting.

Action: 'Vision for the Committee' to be added to agenda for next meeting for finalisation. Draft wording to be circulated with agenda ahead of meeting.

- b) Land use around coastal lagoons: Advisory Group members were advised the draft Local Strategic Planning Statement is currently on exhibition – this represents the 20-year land use vision for the Central Coast. Noted that the former Gosford City Council had a provision in the Coastal Lagoons Management Plan to ensure that there was no intensification of development in lagoon catchments in order to protect water quality, but at some point this was removed. Noted that Central Coast Council is now spending resources on water quality issues at Terrigal, and Avoca Lagoon has a poor water quality rating. Suggested that consideration be given to re-introducing a provision "no intensification of development in lagoon catchments" in the Local Strategic Planning Statement.

The meeting closed at 5.07pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday 25 August 2020
2pm – 4pm
Location TBC