

Catchments and Coast Committee Brisbane Water and Gosford Lagoons Meeting Record 25 August 2020



Location:	Zoom Meeting	
Date:	25 August 2020	
Time	Started at: 2.03pm	Closed at: 4.07pm
Chair	Councillor Jane Smith	
File Ref	F2018/00097	

Present

Councillor Jane Smith, Ian Carruthers, Andrew Jones, Michael Kilp, Jenny McCulla (joined 3.02pm), Adrian Williams, Samantha Willis, Michael Alsop (non-voting, joined 2.40pm)

External Representatives present:

Neil Kelleher – Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Emma Maratea – Rhelm (joined 2.20pm, left 3.38pm), Richard Murphy – Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Peter Scanes – Department of Planning, Industry and Environment,

Council Staff present:

Luke Sulkowski – Unit Manager Environmental Management, Ben Fullagar – Section Manager Catchments to Coast, James Lawson – Section Manager Environmental Infrastructure, Peter Sheath – Section Manager Flood Strategy and Planning, Parissa Ghanem – Team Leader Floodplain Management, Vanessa McCann – Team Leader Estuary Management, Warren Brown – Senior Estuary Management Officer, Kellie Langford – Senior Coastal Management Officer, Melanie James – Estuary Management Officer, Kristy McQueen – Estuary Management Officer, Zoie Magann – Advisory Group Support Officer

Item 1 Welcome, Acknowledgement of Country and Apologies

Apologies received: Councillor Richard Merhtens

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

Item 2 Disclosure of Interest

Jenny McCulla declared a less than significant non-pecuniary interest for Item 5 as a resident of Davistown, with regard to the floodplain management programs discussed.

Item 3 Confirmation of Previous Meeting Record

The Advisory Group confirmed the Meeting Record from 20 May 2020

The Advisory Group reviewed the Action Log, noting all actions were listed for this meeting or the next.

Item 4 Update on Coastal Management

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

The below key points were noted:

- Update on scoping studies:
 - Open Coast and Coastal Lagoons: work underway by Royal Haskoning. Project Plan has been submitted – completion planned for September/October 2020.
 - Lower Hawkesbury w/ Brisbane Water Estuary: scoping study recently completed by consultant. Application for Coast and Estuary Grant to be made for next stage of Coastal Management Program (CMP).
 - Tuggerah Lakes Estuary: scoping study being completed in-house but supplemented with external specialists as required. Assisted by NSW Government Expert Panel.
- Lake Macquarie CMP: project being led by Lake Macquarie City Council, but incorporates southern parts of Lake Macquarie that are within Central Coast Council area. Staff participated in initial stakeholder forum and will be involved in ongoing development of CMP.
- Coastal erosion emergency and recovery at Wamberal and North Entrance:
 - Staff have been responding to coastal erosion emergencies at Wamberal Beach and North Entrance Beach (in northern part of LGA, but still discussed due to emergency status). The following updates were provided for both sites.
 - North Entrance Beach:
 - Emergency toe protection works have been completed at North Entrance, with placement of approximately 3,000 tonnes of large andesite rock at base of eroded dune.
 - It is anticipated that sand recovery will continue and largely cover the existing toe protection works. Some of the sand from upcoming dredging program will be used to nourish site.
 - Karagi Reserve carpark will remain closed as it is being used as a works compound.
 - Staff will carefully monitor site in coming months.
 - Council is assisting residents by writing to outline planning pathways, options and survey results. Property boundaries are being surveyed and staff continue to meet with relevant agencies to review approval processes. Development of CMP will also help achieve longer term results.
 - Wamberal Beach:
 - Part way through emergency toe protection works, which will continue in line with engineering advice and as weather and tide conditions allow safe access.
 - Rock bags were used initially, but remaining works can be completed using placement of large rocks as per coastal engineer advice. Approximately 4,000 tonne of rock expected to be used.
 - Beachfront remains closed near affected houses, as does Wamberal Surf Club carpark which is being used as a holding area for the works. Ocean View Drive is now open to through traffic as cranes are no longer required for rock placement.
 - Approximately 18 houses were evacuated – staff uncertain as to whether all residents have returned home yet or not.

- Noted there were limited options for access and ability to place protection materials at the site. Concerns raised about possibility of materials breaking down and entering ocean (e.g. plastics).
- The previous Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) is being reviewed by Manly Hydraulics Laboratory with a view to explore options for coastal management moving forward. Expected that review will be complete by end of 2020.
- Community engagement is a priority – not just for residents but for wider community.
- Need to ensure CMP and any other related documents work together and relevant agencies have a consistent approach. There seems to be misunderstanding of position/ responsibility of various stakeholders involved in coastal management. Neil Kelleher (DPIE) noted the [*State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989 \(SERM\)*](#) provides provisions for clear roles and responsibilities.
- Staff noted that Council is not a designated emergency response agent, but supports and facilitates responsible agencies.
- A member raised concerns about when the CMP would be ready for review/consultation. Staff advised scoping study is currently being developed by consultant so not yet available.
- Other helpful links regarding coastal management:
 - <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2016/20>
 - <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Coastal-management>

Action: Staff to confirm if residents who were evacuated from homes in Wamberal Beach have all returned.

Action: Staff to check timeline of CMP progress and table key milestones at the next meeting, with a view to consider stages the Advisory Group could be involved in.

Recommendation: That Council note the need for further clarity on roles and responsibilities regarding coastal management, specifically with regard to emergency events such as coastal erosion, and consider developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with relevant stakeholders to address this.

Item 5 Update on Flood and Stormwater Management

Peter Sheath (Section Manager Flood Strategy and Planning) introduced Emma Maratea from Rhelm. Emma provided a presentation on the draft Davistown and Empire Bay Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan (FRMSP), which has been prepared for Council by Rhelm.

The below key points were noted:

- FRMSP recently completed and planned for public exhibition in October 2020. Study area includes Davistown, Empire Bay and Bensville.
- Various documents feed into draft FRMSP: Brisbane Water Flood Study 2010, Davistown Empire Bay Flood Studies 2010, Brisbane Water FRMS and FRMP 2015, Davistown and Empire Bay Climate Change Adaptation Study 2020.
- Flood risks are identified from assessment of existing flood data and community consultation.
- Key objective of associated Climate Change Adaptation Study is to maintain liveability of suburbs, improve drainage issues and protect against existing flood risks by raising ground levels to achieve minimum protection level of 1.5m AHD
- Noted that roadside swales become inundated as sea levels rise – works proposed in draft FRMSP consider landforms of each suburb and how flood waters discharge with regard to drainage easements.
- Recommended ground works include:

- Road and pathway improvements (Davistown)
- Implementation of foreshore barriers (Davistown and Empire Bay)
- Placement of drainage easements (Empire Bay)
- Recommended flood planning actions include:
 - Flood Planning Area = 1% AEP Extent including 30% increase in rainfall (catchment flooding only)
 - Flood Planning Level = 1% AEP + 0.5m Freeboard
 - Floor levels for sensitive, vulnerable or critical uses should be set at the higher of the PMF and FPL
 - Prepare seawall construction and maintenance guidelines
- Recommended emergency response actions:
 - Review of evacuation centres to consider flooded access roads
 - Improve flood education programs
 - Improve flood warning systems
- Noted that provisions of [Coastal Management SEPP](#) may apply to some proposed flood works.
- Concerns were raised about impact on Davistown wetlands and bird species. Staff noted there is no proposal to undertake works on the wetlands. There was a study undertaken to see if the wetlands could be moved, but options are limited in this area.
- Regarding seawall design, Peter Scanes (DPIE) noted Lake Macquarie City Council have commissioned work in this area so would be beneficial to review that rather than starting new investigations.
- Concern raised about previously proposed Davistown seawall not going ahead – noted there were limitations with regard to site access and impact on vegetation. Also questioned if seawall increases risk for properties adjacent but not behind barrier – noted this is not the case.
- Member suggested that interim drainage systems may be needed as any works recommended in FRMSP progress to reduce impact on nearby properties.
- Regarding development controls in place to protect growing flood risks, this matter was considered in the Brisbane Water Flood Study 2020 (which also considered future sea level rise) and in the Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

Staff noted they have received queries about voluntary house raising, and are consequently considering a scoping study to assess feasibility. Concerns were raised by members about responsibility of cost and lack of clarity. At this stage staff are only proposing to collect data from property owners to assess interest and the study itself is clear that there is no commitment of funds towards any potential voluntary house raising scheme. Given the initial concerns of the members, staff will defer progression of the proposed exercise to further consider and address these concerns.

Action: Staff to follow up on matter raised at previous meeting as it is ongoing: *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.*

Item 6 Encroachment on Riparian Areas (Action 30)

Item deferred to next meeting due to insufficient time.

Item 7 Progress Report on Dredging of Brisbane Water (Action 31)

Ben Fullagar (Section Manager Catchments to Coast) provided an update on dredging at Ettalong.

The below key points were noted:

- There is \$1.45M funding in 2020/21 budget for completion of follow up dredging at Ettalong Channel in accordance with 'Rescuing our Waterways' funding agreement with NSW Government.
- Survey of channel depth currently being undertaken by contract surveyor – expected to be complete September 2020.
- Planning, environmental assessments, approvals and monitoring activities are also included in the funding agreement and are to be undertaken prior to any dredging.
- Concerns were raised about responsibility for dredging with regard to Ettalong Channel being identified as a 'Key Investment Location' in the NSW Coastal Dredging Strategy. Council has received legal advice that the Channel is Crown Land and is the responsibility of State Government.
- Noted that the Lower Hawkesbury/Brisbane Water Scoping Study will have impact on Ettalong Channel, as will the Erosion Management Study being conducted.

Action: Invitation to be sent to relevant State agency for a representative to attend next meeting with a view to clarify responsibility for dredging in Brisbane Water. Staff will have preliminary discussions with attendee before meeting to brief.

Item 8 Vision for the Committee (Action 32)

The Advisory Group discussed adoption of a vision as previously proposed:

- Clean, healthy, safe and environmentally sustainable beaches and waterways.
- Stakeholders near creeks, waterways, the coastline and coastal cliffs have minimal risks from flooding, storm events, instability and climate change.

The Advisory Group agreed this wording encompasses their vision and requested the Terms of Reference be updated to include a related statement.

Recommendation: That Council amend the adopted Terms of Reference to include a vision statement as follows:

The vision of the Catchments and Coast Committee Brisbane Water and Gosford Lagoons is:

- *Clean, healthy, safe and environmentally sustainable beaches and waterways.*
- *Stakeholders near creeks, waterways, the coastline and coastal cliffs have minimal risks from flooding, storm events, instability and climate change.*

Item 9 General Business and Close

It was noted several policies were referred to Council for revocation at the 24 August 2020 Council Meeting as part of the Policy Project. Councillor Jane Smith requested the following two policies come to the Advisory Group for consideration:

- a. Section 149 Certificate - Natural and Other Hazards Encoding Policy
- b. Setbacks Policy for Creeks, Rivers & Lagoons

Action: Advisory Group Support Officer to circulate meeting papers about policies being considered for revocation to Advisory Group members for review, and add item to agenda for next meeting.

The meeting closed at 4.07pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday 24 November 2020
2pm – 4pm
Location TBC