

Terrigal Water Quality Sub-Committee Meeting Record 24 November 2020

Location:	Zoom Meeting
Date:	24 November 2020
Time	Started at: 4.03pm Closed at: 5.16pm
Chair	Luke Sulkowski, Unit Manager Environmental Management
File Ref	F2018/00097

Present:

Petra Horwood – Terrigal Haven Supporters Group, Colin Johnson – Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, David Mylan – Terrigal Haven Supporters Group, Jaimie Potts – Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Peter Scanes – Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Samantha Willis – Central Coast Waterwatch

Council Staff present:

Luke Sulkowski – Unit Manager Environmental Management, Ben Fullagar – Section Manager Catchments to Coast, Vanessa McCann – Team Leader Estuary Management, Warren Brown – Senior Estuary Management Officer, Kellie Langford – Senior Coastal Management Officer, Melanie James – Waterways Officer, Arun Looman – Environmental Monitoring Officer, Zoie Magann – Advisory Group Support Officer

Item 1 Welcome, Acknowledgment of Country and Apologies

Apologies received: Troy Gaston – University of Newcastle, Laurie Lewington – Terrigal Sea Urchins, Scott Cox – Director Environment and Planning,

The Chairperson welcomed the Sub-Committee and completed an Acknowledgement of Country.

Item 2 Disclosures of Interest

No disclosures were made.

Item 3 Confirmation of Previous Meeting Record

The Sub-Committee reviewed the Meeting Record from 25 August 2020.

There were no actions for noting in the Action Log.

Item 4 Update from State Government

Colin Johnson (Department of Planning, Industry and Environment - DPIE) provided an update on the State Government's involvement in the Terrigal Water Quality Audit.

The following key points were noted:

- Updated report expected to be published by year end – *Microbial source-tracking to assess water quality in Central Coast lagoons*.
- Report addresses data from monthly sampling across five key sites between August 2019 and July 2020 (excludes March and April 2020 due to COVID). Quality of following lagoons are reviewed in report: Avoca, Cockrone, Wamberal and Terrigal.
- Findings continue to show significant correlation between rainfall and enterococci levels across all lagoon sites – highest levels during large rainfall events in October 2019 and February 2020. This means rainfall is major factor in posing health risks to swimmers in lagoons.
- Dry weather samples were very low in enterococci levels. Water quality is generally suitable for primary contact recreation in all lagoons in dry weather.
- Cockrone and Wamberal Lagoons have typically good water quality. Enterococci levels are largely from animals, although Wamberal does appear to receive periodic sewage inputs in heavy wet weather from Forresters Creek.
- Terrigal and Avoca Lagoons are both impacted by sewage contamination in wet weather.
- Reiterated that three days is advised period to not swim following a rain event. Members raised concerns that beach isn't being closed when this happens (flags still up and lifeguards on duty). Staff advised there are multiple signs in place to warn against swimming and lifeguards remain on duty as people may still choose to ignore warnings and place themselves at risk. Staff also noted the request to remove flags in wet weather has broader implications for surf lifesaving beyond Terrigal Beach. Members raised concern about health and safety of Council Lifeguards, Staff indicated that WHS covered conditions in wet weather.

Action: Colin Johnson to confirm with Advisory Group Support Officer once report has been made publicly available.

Action: Staff to check in with beach safety team to discuss options for swimmer safety information (particularly following wet weather), and provide update to members via email before year end.

Item 5 Update on Terrigal Water Quality Audit Program

Arun Looman (Environmental Monitoring Officer) provided a recap and update on the Terrigal Water Quality Audit Program.

The following key points were noted:

- State of Beaches Report 2019-20 shows that Terrigal Beach has retained 'good' rating for second consecutive year, however Terrigal Lagoon received 'poor' rating which is consistent with other estuarine sites.
- Substantial progress has been made on audit with significant remediation works progressing as per forecasted timeline.
- As of 31 October 2020, the following sewer network remediations have taken place in Terrigal Beach and Lagoon catchments:
 - 50.9 sewer pipes inspected and 17.2 upgraded.

- 1,276 maintenance holes inspected.
- 684 private properties inspected.
- 15 illegal private connections identified (excludes other minor private defects found during smoke investigations).
- 4.8km of defective and other high-risk pipes relined in Terrigal CBD and Haven area.
- 12.3km of defective and other high-risk pipes relined in the Lagoon sub-catchment area.
- Priority remediation works have focused on catchment areas where high human markers were identified as source.
- Future investigations and scheduled works include the following:
 - Smoke testing and CCTV in certain catchment areas.
 - Ongoing water sampling.
 - Relining of pipes to continue as per existing contract.
- Members noted concerns about increasing development in catchments which may further stress sewer network and impact on water quality. Staff noted Council has planning procedures that plan and undertake network upgrades where needed.
- Community groups have been collecting data and turbidity seems to remain an issue.
- Members requested more wet weather data be shared as dry weather results are good and do not show whole issue. Staff mindful of publishing multiple interim reports with varying swim safety risk estimates prior to an adequate wet weather sample size being reached, as different data may be confusing. Staff noted that summary of the first 56 days of water quality samples are available on the website.
- Webpage continues to be updated and technical reports are available online:
<https://www.yourvoiceourcoast.com/all-projects/terrigan-and-coastal-lagoons-audit>

Action: Staff to assess wet weather data availability for modelling and to consider how this information could be provided to swimmers.

Action: Staff to keep Sub-Committee updated regarding Audit progress and timeline with consideration to Council's current financial situation.

Item 6 General Business and Close

Luke Sulkowski (Unit Manager Environmental Management) noted Council recently received an Environmental Health Management Award at the *NSW Local Government Excellence in the Environment Awards 2020* for the Terrigal and Coastal Lagoons Audit and water quality improvement program. The Sub-Committee was thanked for their role in the Audit.

The meeting closed at 5.16pm

Next Meetings: May 2021 (TBC)
4pm – 5pm
Location TBC