



## **Appendix D**

### **RPS Consultation Outcomes Report**

## CONSULTATION OUTCOMES REPORT

An input to the Citywide Scoping Study for coastal management in the Shoalhaven



November 2019

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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Stakeholder and community engagement is a critical part of developing Coastal Management Programs (CMPs). The purpose of the CMP is to set the long-term strategy for the coordinated management of the coast 'in NSW.

All coastal regions, including estuaries, in NSW are governed by a coastal management framework. The framework includes:

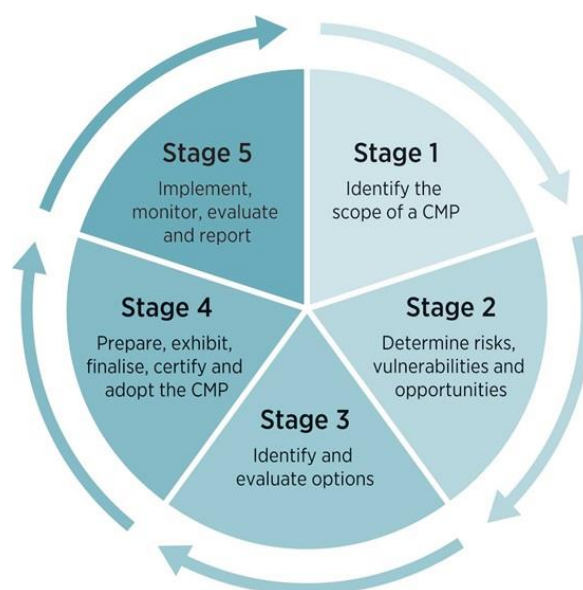
- the Coastal Management Act 2016,
- a State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018 and,
- Coastal Management Programs that have been prepared in accordance with the NSW Coastal Management Manual.

Shoalhaven City Council (Council) has commenced the development of Coastal Management Programs (CMPs) for the Local Government Area (LGA). Development of a CMP is to be implemented following a five stage process, the first stage of which is a Citywide Scoping Study which will inform the development of detailed coastal management programs. Council has committed to the development of detailed CMPs for Lake Conjola, the Open Coastline, and St Georges Basin (including Sussex Inlet), and the Lower Shoalhaven River (including Crookhaven River) Estuary. Future CMPs will be prepared for other estuaries in the LGA as further resources become available.

This consultation outcomes report details community sentiment and feedback captured during a series of workshops and information sessions held through the Shoalhaven LGA in September and October 2019. The workshops and information sessions were an opportunity to build awareness about the process of coastal management planning and to hear from stakeholders about what they value, issues of most importance in their local areas and preferred methods to manage the coast.

Feedback was also sought on the proposed governance arrangements and preferences for community involvement in coastal management planning. Feedback will be considered as an important source of information to inform a Citywide Scoping Study which is currently being developed and is the first phase of developing CMPs for the LGA.

Feedback and reports from previous coast and estuary planning, including from the Our Coast Our Lifestyle, and submissions and surveys gathered through Council's Get Involved Page will also be considered as inputs to the Citywide Scoping Study but are outside the scope of this report. The Study will be made available for public exhibition in early 2020.



**Figure 1: Five stages for the CMP, Source: NSW Office of Environment and Heritage**



**Figure 2: Local coastal surrounds**

## By the numbers



We engaged stakeholders at **6 locations**; Ulladulla, St Georges Basin, Nowra, Lake Conjola, Sussex Inlet & Shoalhaven Heads.



Over **550 pieces of feedback** were collected from the workshops and community information sessions.



We engaged with **233 stakeholders** in the workshops and community information sessions.



We received **15 additional submissions** after engagement.

## Key Insights

Stakeholders expressed the social importance, values, strong connections and sense of belonging people have with their local areas. Stakeholders expressed they wanted to improve social and economic wellbeing of local communities, by improved maintenance of beaches and headlands which support recreational and business activities. Stakeholders valued the natural environment and recognised the importance of tourism for job creation and increased infrastructure for their local areas.

Overall, respondents who participated in the consultation commonly expressed feelings of concern around foreshore erosion, dune management, over-development, sedimentation, jurisdictional issues between Government agencies, flooding, tourism, boat wake and active estuary management, in particular the management of lake openings at Lake Conjola and Shoalhaven Heads. In seeking to determine an appropriate way forward for coastal management planning there was universal support amongst stakeholders for increased transparency from Council around its decision making and prioritisation of projects. In highlighting the importance of transparency, community stakeholders seek opportunities to have their concerns adequately recognised and addressed.

Feedback received from the interactive stakeholder workshop sessions provided a great platform to canvas views on the proposed Shoalhaven Coast and Estuary Committee Model with several suggestions for membership received. Participants at both the workshop and community information sessions shared feedback on their preferred methods and channels of communications and engagement. This will help inform future engagement programs, ensuring approaches are targeted to the right audience and are accessible and fit for purpose. During the workshops and community information sessions, several participants acknowledged the value and importance of opportunities to hear from Council and to feel able to participate in decision-making on coastal management issues.

The following table summarises the key issues expressed as priority concerns for the residents of the Shoalhaven Local Government Area. Detailed finding are included in subsequent sections and copies of feedback forms, post it notes, submissions and workshop notes are included in Appendices A and B.

## Summary of key findings

Table 1: Summary of key findings for each location

Summary of key findings		
Location	Issue	
Ulladulla	Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The natural beauty of local foreshores, beaches and estuaries is a draw card.</li> <li>Improve beach access, disabled access, improve local boat ramps, dune management and signage for visitors to the areas around Ulladulla.</li> <li>Visitor volume changes along North Mollymook beach is becoming unsafe.</li> <li>Future CMP to improve existing infrastructure to deal with increases in population</li> </ul>
	Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council to improve overall resilience and plan for upper thresholds within the CMP as identified by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change(IPCC).</li> <li>Want a clear approach from Council on how they will plan and prepare for future climate related disasters to the area.</li> <li>Improve mitigation measures around planning for coastal risk, access risks and inundation vulnerability.</li> </ul>
	Safety and erosion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern regarding erosion of beachfront properties at Mitchell Parade, Beach Road North Mollymook and the degree of personal responsibility.</li> <li>Risks to the community included the vulnerability of existing sewerage infrastructure and the management of this with expected higher sea levels.</li> <li>Increase in vegetation planting and riparian corridors to stabilise soil and minimise sedimentation into local waters.</li> </ul>
St Georges Basin	Conflicting recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforcement of dog leash areas to protect nesting shorebirds at Buckleys Beach, North Mollymook, Lake Tabourie, Lake Conjola and Sussex Inlet.</li> <li>Jet skis and speeding boats making excess noise, eroding river banks and creating unsafe environments for swimmers.</li> </ul>
	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council to involve and engage with local high school students within the CMP process.</li> </ul>
	Flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sea level rise and increased flooding will impact low lying areas of the Basin more often</li> <li>CMP to help facilitate future connection roads and limit over development if determined to be in a high-risk area.</li> </ul>
	Multi-tenure arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CMP to address the complexity around coastline and estuary management between Government agencies.</li> <li>Collingwood beach</li> </ul>
	Collingwood beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents from Collingwood Beach expressed concerns of dune renourishment not being carried out and erosion at the back of the beach due to stormwater runoff.</li> <li>Banksia trees are not appropriate in holding together the dunes, need to be replaced by other dune plantings</li> </ul>
	Inundation lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inundation lines need to be determined through site visits instead of via satellite.</li> <li>Need increased transparency for hazard maps and to inform property owners of next steps.</li> </ul>
	Tree removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>45 degree rule being exploited by developers and in return urban desserts have been made through large subdivisions.</li> <li>Potential tree vandalism around the Basin for increased views</li> </ul>
	Emergency response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need for more evacuation centres in response to Sussex Bowling Club no longer being available.</li> </ul>
	Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council is struggling to keep a balance between tourism and the natural environment.</li> <li>Facilities are inadequate to handle population growth, giving an example of Hyams Beach and access to Vincentia</li> </ul>
	Protection of heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect assets that are important to the social fabric of the community.</li> </ul>

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- New tourist development and subdivisions clearing local character for example Huskisson.

Location	Issue	
Nowra	Hazard maps and policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved communication and engagement from Council around hazard mapping, identified geotechnical cliffs, slopes instability hazards and inundation studies.</li> </ul>
	Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a need for improved facilities to bring in tourists and places for the community to get together on the foreshore.</li> <li>• 45 degree rule being used wrongly due to market demand for views and vistas of the beaches and waterways.</li> </ul>
	Water quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasised the value of the River and its social and ecological value to the community.</li> <li>• Plastic silage wraps a contributing source of plastic pollution in the Shoalhaven River.</li> <li>• Sedimentation from recent foreshore and subdivision developments are impacting existing oyster farm businesses that rely on clean water.</li> <li>• Need to engage oyster farmers early on in the process when large subdivisions are being proposed.</li> </ul>
	Agricultural land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Erosion of riverbanks and E. coli from unrestricted cattle on Dairy Farms encroaching onto the waters along the Crookhaven River and Shoalhaven River</li> <li>• Need for increased support from DPI and Crown Lands to enforce controls on farmers to minimise impacts on water quality of the Rivers.</li> </ul>
	Land tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complexity between Inter Government agencies in particular for addressing erosion, asset risk and remediation works.</li> <li>• Need for more short-term responses to practical actions in response to damage done by East Coast Lows and high tide events.</li> </ul>
Lake Conjola	Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council to increase transparency, clarity on decisions and listening to concerns from the community.</li> <li>• Stakeholders expressed need for a longer-term entrance opening outcome that provides certainty and a more responsive management approach.</li> </ul>
	Previous reports and studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance for Council in its CMP to adopt actions and recommendations from the Patterson Britton &amp; Partners Report 1999.</li> </ul>
	ICOLL classification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intermittently Closed and Open Lake and Lagoon (ICOLL) classification for Lake Conjola not supported by most within the community.</li> <li>• The existing Interim Entrance Management Policy for Lake Conjola does not provide enough flexibility in terms of management.</li> </ul>
	Health of Lake Conjola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most stakeholders wanted the entrance to be dredged on an ongoing basis to improve water quality, boat access, swimming conditions and overall amenity.</li> <li>• Groundwater readings around the existing treatment plant had tested evidence of nutrient plumes exceeding safety standards.</li> <li>• Stakeholders raised concerns that older developments at Manyana, Cunjurong, Bendalong have uncontrolled runoff into the Lake.</li> </ul>
	Funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholders wanted to see more investment back into Lake Conjola, Fisherman's Paradise and Berringer Lake through upgraded boat ramps to improve accessibility for larger boats.</li> </ul>
	Ecological communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rapid rate of deforestation from farmers and residential development along the coast and the use of fertilisers were contributing to reduced water quality levels within local lakes, waterways, wetlands and estuaries.</li> </ul>
Sussex Inlet	Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area has a history of excellent water quality and should not be allowed to deteriorate in the face of new development.</li> <li>• Boats should be prohibited entering Badgee Lagoon beyond the Taliac Canal intersection due to fuel spillage and the disturbance of water birds and marine life.</li> </ul>
	Erosion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excessive boat wash was resulting in bank erosion and ageing shoreline structures need replacement to prevent hazards, erosion and sedimentation.</li> </ul>
	Navigational Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood tide shoal leading from the estuary into St. Georges Basin is getting too shallow for vessel navigation.</li> </ul>

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Inundation lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerned around properties impacted by inundation lines and want clarity about the official position of Council regarding defending it's coast, estuaries, floodplains or retreating.</li> </ul>
Swan Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due to worsening conditions of the Lake should have a CMP and a review of the Swan Lake Entrance Management Policy.</li> </ul>
Emergency response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to establish a community action team to respond to events when isolated from SES.</li> </ul>
Floodplains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major part of the existing housing and commercial component of the town has been built on the floodplain.</li> </ul>
<b>Shoalhaven Heads</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need for improved maintenance and enhancement of Shoalhaven Heads for tourism related purposes.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With increased development and tourism impacts, water quality needs to be monitored more closely in order to protect the unique historical asset of oyster farming in the South Coast.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shoalhaven River entrance area to be dredged to help widen the channel and reduce flooding risk.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State Government agencies, Council, community and key stakeholders need to work more collaboratively to have improved oversight on decisions.</li> <li>Renourished sand dunes in front of existing Shoalhaven Heads Surf Life Saving Club have impeded patrols of beach.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need for improved mitigation around storm pipes, due to pipes causing erosion and siltation, in particular around River Road.</li> <li>Coomonderry Swamp, Seven Mile Beach National Park and Comerong Island need the CMP to better protect the diverse range of birds, reptile and frog species, which includes a significant population of the threatened green and golden bell frog.</li> </ul>



Figure 3: Snapshot of a workshop session in St Georges Basin



Figure 4: Snapshot of a drop-in session in Sussex Inlet

## 2 APPROACH TO ENGAGEMENT

Our approach to engagement to inform a Citywide Scoping Study, as part of Stage One of the CMP process, was shaped by previous feedback from residents, business owners, community groups and visitors in 2012, 2015, 2016 and 2018 for the Coastal Zone Management Plan and the Our Coast Our Lifestyle engagement project.

An approach to consultation and engagement for the scoping study was developed to deliver a coordinated, timely and focussed program to engage a wide range of stakeholders. Hearing valuable feedback from residents, business owners, community groups and visitors to the Shoalhaven LGA area was done through interactive workshop sessions, community information sessions, and one on one conversations with facilitators and Government agency experts.

The engagement intent underpinning this process was to build trust, understand community values and inform all interested parties early in the process before decisions in relation to the new legislative and planning framework. We approached the engagement by developing three consultation themes to help guide respondents and gain a deeper appreciation of their local experiences and desired outcomes.

### Theme 1: Program Context

Council has commissioned a Citywide Scoping Study as the first stage in the preparation of CMPs for the Shoalhaven's open coastline and estuaries. Building awareness and understanding about the five stage process of coastal management program development was an important outcome for this consultation program. A detailed presentation and nine large (A0 sized) display posters were used to help stimulate discussion and provide context for the engagement.

To help inform participants about the new CMP, presentation and poster content was developed to address the following key questions:

- What are the requirements for a new CMP?
- What stage of the process are we at and what decisions are being made now?
- What is the difference between a local CMP, a citywide CMP, and Estuary Plan etc?
- What we have heard in previous consultations?

### Theme 2: Understanding the priority issues in your region

A total of six interactive stakeholder workshop sessions were conducted with invitations extended to the network of stakeholders, many of whom had participated in the development of previous plans of management. Workshops were designed to allow participants to have structured conversations about their local issues related to coast and estuary management and understand their recommendations.

To determine what issues and topics are important to the Shoalhaven community, past, present and in the future, we asked the following questions:

- Describe an issue you have identified or experienced first-hand. Is it covered by an existing program or is it new/emerging?
- Identify the scale of the problem. Is it site specific or does it occur in multiple locations?
- How could this issue be managed? Is more information needed? Is there a preferred approach?
- Are there any issues where information is missing or inadequate? Nominate impacted stakeholders who are most affected by this issue?

In addition, at community information sessions we spoke to stakeholders about the priority issues of concern in their areas, discussed the process of coastal management planning and invited submissions or a questionnaire to be filled out through Councils Get Involved Page.

### Theme 3: How do we work together?

Feedback received from the interactive stakeholder workshop sessions provided a great platform to canvas views on the proposed Shoalhaven Coast and Estuary Committee Model. We wanted to know from the community what worked and didn't work for the structure of the previous Natural Resources and Floodplain Management Committees.

To determine the best approach for Shoalhaven City Council to engage and work collaboratively with stakeholders in the preparation of the CMP we asked the following questions to the tables:

- How should the new Coast and Estuary Committee operate during the development of the CMP?
- How should consultation and engagement take place in the future?
- Preferred consultation activities:
  - Advertising and notification?
  - More stakeholder workshops?
  - Community information sessions?
  - Online engagement - Get Involved Page and questionnaire?

Participants at both the workshop and community information sessions shared feedback on their preferred methods and channels of communications and engagement. This will help inform a future consultation and engagement strategy, ensuring approaches are targeted to the right audience and are accessible and fit for purpose.

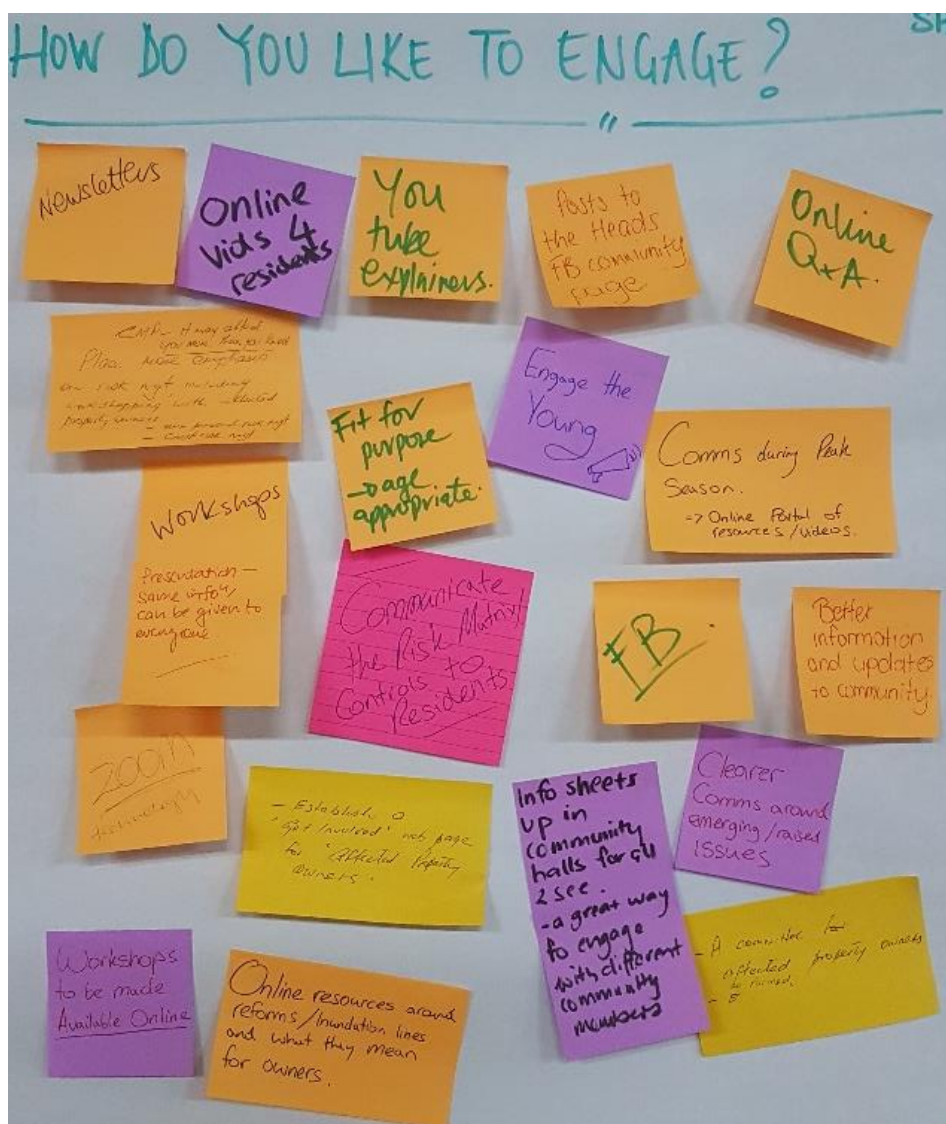


Figure 5: Feedback received from Shoalhaven Heads session

### 3 WHAT WE HEARD – AN OVERVIEW

The following section summarises the collective feedback received during a series of workshops and community information sessions held through the Shoalhaven LGA in September and October 2019. Key insights were collected through notes from the workshop sessions, community information sessions, email submissions and one on one conversations. This section also includes a selection of written post-it notes and other materials brought to the sessions from stakeholders. Feedback that was gathered during the consultation program has been summarised for each location in the table below. Detailed feedback for each location is provided in subsequent sections. In addition, a full unedited copy of written submissions, recommendations and questions received have been attached at Appendix A.

In total we engaged 233 stakeholders (excluding staff) in the workshop sessions and community information sessions during the six days. Stakeholders expressed the values of living within these unique areas and the social importance, strong connections and sense of belonging people have with their local areas. Stakeholders expressed they wanted to improve social and economic wellbeing of local communities by improved maintenance and access to beaches, estuaries and headlands which support recreational activities and estuary management, in particular the entrance management of lake openings at Lake Conjola and Shoalhaven Heads.



Engaged **110**  
stakeholders in the  
**workshop sessions.**



Engaged **123**  
stakeholders in the  
**community drop-in  
sessions.**



Over **550 pieces of  
feedback** received during  
the sessions.

Overall, respondents who participated in the consultation commonly expressed feelings of concern around foreshore erosion, dune management, over-development, sedimentation, jurisdictional issues between Government agencies, flooding and tourism. In seeking to determine an appropriate way forward for coastal management planning, there was universal support amongst stakeholders for increased transparency from Council around its decision making and prioritisation of projects. In highlighting the importance of transparency, community stakeholders seek opportunities to have their concerns adequately recognised and addressed.



Figure 6: Quick snapshot of feedback received including historical photos

All submissions, comments and notes from discussions collected during the workshop and drop-in sessions have been included in Appendix A.

## 4 WHAT WE HEARD IN ULLADULLA

The Ulladulla workshop and community information sessions were held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and was attended by a total of 43 stakeholders. For the workshop discussion 27 representatives from local businesses, Landcare groups, Community Consultation Boards, Ulladulla High School (students and teachers), Mollymook Golf Club and the Conjola Community Association actively participated. A total of 16 stakeholders, business owners and residents visited during the drop in session following the workshop discussion. Key themes discussed during these sessions included increased collaboration between community groups, high school students and Council, sea level rise, tourism implications, annoyance from conflicting use activities and E. coli levels present within waterways.

*Encroaching development impacting sight lines of the environment.*

*Stormwater, erosion and vegetation disappearance creating a risk to the community.*

*Need to plan for the upper limits rather than the lower limits of sea level rise.*

### 4.1 Feedback on priority issues in the region

#### Tourism

The natural beauty of local foreshores, beaches and estuaries was highlighted as a key drawcard to the area. However, stakeholders raised concern over the need to improve beach access from Wairo Caravan Park, increase dune management signage to avoid tourists walking over beach dunes in an ad-hoc fashion and increase collaboration with local businesses and surf clubs on future maintenance works. Other stakeholders raised concern over encroaching residential and tourism related development impacting on sight lines of the natural environment. Other stakeholders expressed new developments are leading to impacts on water quality at places such as Narrawallee Inlet, and called for more sustainable and eco-tourism development.

Increasing tourism and the impacts on local infrastructure during peak periods were raised during the workshop. One stakeholder mentioned that parking and visitor volume changes along North Mollymook beach was becoming “unsafe” for locals, visitors and surf schools. Stakeholders wanted the future CMP and Council to improve existing infrastructure to deal with increases in population. Other stakeholders in the drop in session wanted to see general improvements to all beaches, including improved disabled access, improved boat ramp access and improved toilets and picnic areas.

#### Climate change

During the workshops stakeholders raised the concern about the impact of climate change, the need for Council to declare a “climate emergency” and improve resilience. Stakeholders emphasised Council should be planning for the upper limits rather identified by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) than the lower limits of predicted sea level change for the CMP. Impacts to liveability, access constraints, local amenities and facilities such as the Mollymook Golf Club, were identified as being under greater risk in the future. Stakeholders expressed they wanted clear communication from Council around the approach and how to protect impacted individuals not ignore their issue. Stakeholders also wanted the CMP and Development Control Plan to have stronger mitigation measures around planning for coastal risk, access risks and inundation vulnerability.

One stakeholder wanted to see the Shoalhaven LGA be proactive in retaining rain water through increase in tanks and retention basins to minimise rapid erosion from heavy rains. Other stakeholders suggested the need for an increase in vegetation planting and riparian corridors to act as a buffer to minimise sedimentation and toxins entering the local water.

### Safety and erosion impacts

Issues around cut off points during flooding events were raised and the implications this has on residents, businesses and SES. There was also concern regarding erosion of beachfront properties at Mitchell Parade, and the degree of personal responsibility of the landowners. Stakeholders discussed who should be responsible for future protection works. Other concerns included the stability of Beach Road North Mollymook due to excess stormwater, erosion and vegetation disappearance creating a risk to the community. Other risks to the community included the vulnerability of existing sewerage infrastructure and the management of this with expected higher sea levels. A stakeholder stated that previous works at Blackwater Creek in Mollymook had been successful in protecting the infrastructure on the northern side of the entrance, however, the tendency for the creek to open toward the south had impacted on operations of the Mollymook Surf Club.

### Conflicting recreation uses

The enforcement of dog leash areas was also discussed for the areas of Buckleys Beach, North Mollymook, Lake Tabourie, Lake Conjola and Sussex Inlet. Stakeholders complained that some residents ignored local signs and dog prohibited boundaries, impacting on nesting shorebirds sites and local biodiversity. Stakeholders suggested that improved maps showing go versus no go zones were needed in addition to improved education around the damage off-leash dogs can do to nesting shorebirds. Shorebirds were raised by stakeholders as holding significant importance to the character and desire of the Shoalhaven area.

Annoyance from conflicting activities were discussed during the workshop session. Stakeholders complained about loud jet skis and quad bikes disturbing both amenity and the natural landscape due to erosion impacts on the river banks. Concerns around safety were also raised due to quad bikes and jet skis being dangerous for other users of the shared space, for example with swimmers and walkers. Stakeholders wanted better enforcement to prevent quad bikes damaging the dunes and improved communication around safety within shared spaces.

### Management of Lake Conjola

There was concern that the existing Interim Entrance Management Policy for Lake Conjola was not working and does not provide enough flexibility. The Interim Entrance Management Policy and in particular the lake trigger level for intervention was expressed by stakeholders as being not popular with the local community and the need for revised upper and lower trigger levels to be considered. Other concerns were raised in relation to the Lake Conjola Interim Entrance Management Policy and disagreement of it being classified as an Intermittently Closed and Open Lake or Lagoon.

Instead, stakeholders suggested from their own research and local experience that Lake Conjola is a wave dominated barrier estuary. Stakeholders also stated that the active lake management policy outlined within the Patterson Britton & Partners report (1999) worked well and kept the Lake entrance open for 12 years without the need for intervention. It was outlined by concerned stakeholders that they wanted to work closely with Council in addressing the management and ongoing maintenance for Lake Conjola.

The need for increased collaboration between the community and council was emphasised during the workshop session and the need to involve high school and university students within the consultation and committee process.

## 4.2 Feedback on proposed working groups and future engagement

When stakeholders were shown the proposed Shoalhaven Coast and Estuary Committee Model the following comments, questions or suggestions were raised:

- Improve engagement with High Schools students doing Geography and Marine studies electives. Also share coastal hazard data e.g. GIS layers of hazard lines for use as an educational resource by students
- Ask Culburra/Ulladulla board riders clubs to share and promote surveys with members
- Local community groups want more access to data in general to be provided by NSW Government to undertake their own data analysis
- Want to be kept informed about the process and learn more about the management of Lake Tabourie
- Old committee setup used to work well, with a good collection of minds, but sometimes politics got in the way
- Business representation needed especially for open coast, management of infrastructure and tourism.
- Utilities representation e.g. energy utilities, Shoalhaven Water, SES, RMS representation needed
- Important to note many in the community are not computer literate – need a mix of traditional and online/digital methods
- More forward notice for future community workshops is needed
- Council's webpage is a good tool for communicating with the community.

## 5 WHAT WE HEARD IN ST GEORGES BASIN

The St Georges Basin workshop and community information session held on 25<sup>th</sup> September attracted a total of 38 stakeholders. For the workshop discussion 19 stakeholders including representatives from the SES, and the Collingwood Beach Preservation Group (CPBG) actively participated. A total of 19 attendees visited the drop in session including representatives from the Save Husky Church group and additional members of the SES. Formal submissions were also sent from CBPG and these documents have been included in full in Appendix A. Popular topics discussed included achieving balance between infrastructure needs and tourism, protecting the local fish industry and urban character, sea level concerns and erosion, vegetation preservation and improving evacuation procedures.

*"Incorporate extreme weather events and consequences into the CMP"*

*"protect our wetlands and riparian vegetation as these are the natural filters for the Basin and water quality"*

*"Are Council's facilities up to scratch to handle population growth?"*

### 5.1 Feedback on priority issues in the region

#### Flooding of low lying areas

During the workshop, it was commonly expressed by stakeholders that sea level rise and increased flooding will impact low lying areas of the Basin more often. Stakeholders expressed that every effort should be made to mitigate and shorten the duration of flood through releasing flood waters in the shortest possible time. Stakeholders in both the workshop and drop-in session wanted improved access into and out of the low-lying areas of the Basin during evacuation events. Other stakeholders emphasised the importance of safety to be included within the CMP to help facilitate future infrastructure and limit over development if determined to be in a high-risk area.

#### Multi-tenure arrangements

One stakeholder discussed the challenge of multi-tenure along the shoreline of St Georges Basin and if the new CMP will trump all jurisdictions. Illegal jetties and straightening of tributaries were also highlighted as issues. Stakeholders agreed that they wanted the CMP to address the complexity around coastline and estuary management between Government agencies.

#### Collingwood beach

Residents from Collingwood Beach expressed concerns of dune renourishment not being carried out and erosion at the back of the beach due to stormwater runoff. Other stakeholders were concerned foreshore erosion is active all around the St Georges Basin estuary as a whole and that erosion causes siltation of the estuary and reduces capacity to hold back runoff in a storm event. Stakeholders requested that the CMP adopts a strategy to address this.

#### Tree removal

Several stakeholders expressed both during the workshop and drop-in sessions concerns around coastal land clearing prior to large subdivisions that contain no trees and reflect 'urban deserts'. Stakeholders expressed concern around increased urban runoff from hard surfaces into St Georges Basin. Concern about dead trees as a result of potential tree vandalism along Collingwood Beach and other areas around the Basin for views was also expressed by some stakeholders. Other stakeholders questioned who will pay for repair of public and private assets once vegetation buffer protection is removed by vandals and assets exposed to storms and rising sea levels?

During the workshop stakeholders with concerns regarding the management of coastal trees suggested that replacement trees must be enforced and must be planted in same location. Improved signage and communication to coastal residents on benefit of vegetation and trees on the foredune and hind dune was also suggested for the CMP to address.

Residents along Collingwood Beach and Vincentia suggested the selection of Banksia for dune plantings at Vincentia and Collingwood Beach was not in accordance with the Office of Environment and Heritage Coastal Dune Manual. Despite previous engagement with Council on this issue it was discussed by these residents that the Banksia was not appropriate in holding together the dunes and that dead Banksias be removed and replaced with more suitable plants.

### **Inundation lines**

For those residents impacted by inundation lines around St Georges Basin and Collingwood Beach, stakeholders expressed that the information used to determine flood inundation lines and hazards lines to be clearer. There was strong concern amongst a collective group of stakeholders in regard to property value and insurance premiums and discrepancies in maps used by companies. One stakeholder raised that the adopted hazard lines are underestimated by Council and there is a need to follow the Eurobodalla Shire Council and adopt the worst-case scenario or a higher sea level prediction.

Stakeholders agreed for the CMP, there is a need for local analysis to determining inundation lines and risk likelihood. Stakeholders also voiced the need increased transparency for hazard maps and to enforce insurance companies to use the same mapping that council has provided instead of a blanket approach premium to the whole suburb.

### **Emergency response**

Representatives from SES attended both the workshop and community information session. There was concern around the need for more evacuation centres in response to Sussex Bowling Club no longer being available. There was discussion around the need for improved communications for flood prone areas in particular for tourists around the evacuation procedure, early warning detections and the go to meeting place.

### **Tourism**

During the workshop stakeholders suggested that Council is struggling to keep a balance between tourism and the natural environment. There was a general consensus that people moved to St Georges Basin and its Estuary for the natural beauty and this beauty should be respected.

On the topic of tourism, one stakeholder questioned if Council's facilities are inadequate to handle population growth, giving an example of Hyams Beach and access to Vincentia. The question was raised due to many concerns on increased sewerage smell, parking and access, water usage and beach erosion during peak holiday season at St Georges Basin. Other stakeholders explained that 300% increases in population during peak periods was not sustainable and that locals avoid the area and shops.

Stakeholders agreed tourism is vital and keeps local businesses going but suggested tourist developments to be more respectful to local area and character and the need to promote Eco tourism in the area. In response to infrastructure constraints during peak season on stakeholders, it was suggested Council should introduce a Levy Tax on tourism business to help pay for infrastructure.

### **Protection of social and local heritage**

During the community information session some stakeholders wanted to ensure coastal and naval assets that are important to the social fabric of the community are protected. The stakeholder explained a recent tourism development potentially replacing an old Anglican church and the impact this is having for the community of Huskisson. The stakeholder also expressed the social importance and character of mature trees and how the developer had removed mature trees due to the 45 degree rule and was concerned this rule is also being exploited by developers to clear land on waterfront properties.

## 5.2 Feedback on proposed working groups and future engagement

When stakeholders were asked to comment on the proposed Shoalhaven Coast and Estuary Committee Model and possible options for future engagement the following comments and suggestions were raised:

- Comments on the current CZMP are that it is too much information for someone to digest and find what they are looking for.
- Stakeholders want to be engaged through online surveys due to nature of house ownership/ rental and holiday properties.
- Comms material, stakeholder events and Council updates to be included with Council rate letter to see what rate payers are getting in return.
- Better planning and notice for consultation sessions as this was poorly advertised (i.e. letter box drop not arriving).
- Future engagement to be advertised within local shops and notice boards to engage all members within the community.
- Needs to be public knowledge on where Crown Land is located/Aboriginal land for the public to better understand land use decisions.
- SES should be engaged throughout the CMP process.
- Seek confirmation that Council will commit to recognition and inclusion of the Collingwood Beach Preservation Group in the ongoing development of the Coastal Management Program.
- What's the criteria to join the Committee? Is it merit based?

## 6 WHAT WE HEARD IN NOWRA

The Nowra workshop and community information session was held on 26th September 2019 and was attended by 38 stakeholders. For the workshop a total of 18 people actively participated, which was followed by 20 stakeholders visiting during the drop-in session. Key areas of interest discussed included concerns for the areas of Shoalhaven River, Culburra Beach, Warrain Beach, Currarong, Curley's Bay, Hymans Beach, Lake Wollumboola, Erawal Bay and Greenwell Point. Popular topics discussed included geotechnical cliff and slope stability hazards, complex tenure agreements, tourism and amenity, ICOLL management, water quality management, increased proactive engagement with businesses and the need to engage high school students in coastal planning and management.



### 6.1 Feedback on priority issues in the region

#### Hazard maps and policy

There was a general theme expressed in relation to improved communication and engagement from Council around hazard mapping, identified geotechnical cliffs, slopes instability hazards and inundation studies. Stakeholders expressed that residents and rate payers want to know when Council is commissioning a study, the scope, cost and the outputs before it is put into planning controls. Stakeholders also expressed the need for increased distribution of information on the management of Intermittently Closed and Open Lakes and Lagoons (ICOLLS).

#### Tourism

During the workshop there was a consideration of tourism and how to balance the needs of competing uses of the waterway. Stakeholders highlighted that with increased tourism comes a higher demand for recreational boat usage and impacts to foreshore erosion. In contrast stakeholder expressed a need for more facilities to bring in tourists and places for the community to get together on the foreshore through improved amenities, toilets, walkways and food outlets along the Shoalhaven River.

Other stakeholders raised concerns that increased tourism has led to increased vegetation clearing, as landlords want to advertise their property with great views of popular coastal beaches e.g. Culburra Beach. On the topic of vegetation clearing other stakeholders expressed that the impact of Council's '45 degree rule' is being used wrongly, but also not surprising due to personal and market demand for views and vistas of the beaches and waterways.

The issue around tourism and erosion was mentioned from Currarong Beach stakeholders, expressing concerns that many visitors to the beach, particularly tourists from the caravan park have not been using existing access tracks, but rather creating their own and in doing so trampling on the fragile dune areas and causing erosion and damage to flora. Suggestions from stakeholders included better signage and fencing to make it clearer to visitors where the appropriate access paths are.

### Plastic pollution

During the Workshop stakeholders emphasised the value of the River and its social and ecological value to the community. Stakeholders raised concern that this was being impacted as they had seen plastic silage wraps drifting down the River as a contributing source of plastic pollution in the Shoalhaven River. When discussed as a group, other stakeholders suggested the need for Council to work with landholders with plastic silage wrap to find an alternative or enforce mitigation measures. Other solutions suggested to minimise plastic in the Shoalhaven River waste was to install more pollutant traps at the end of stormwater pipes.

### Land tenure

Concerns were raised around land tenure and the complexity between Inter Government agencies in particular for addressing erosion, asset risk and remediation works. Stakeholders expressed that the diverse opinions between agencies on how an issue is to be managed or preserved has delayed practical actions being taken.

One stakeholder discussed that complex tenure arrangements may be slowing down the time taken to get a licence from state agencies, in particular if it involves works around Aboriginal artefacts and sacred places. This particular stakeholder gave the example of the community wanting urgent repairs done to the foreshore after an East Coast Low in 2016 at Warrain Crescent. Other stakeholders in Currarong also expressed the need for more short-term responses to practical actions, such as sand renourishment and repairing access tracks in response to events such as storms and heavy use by tourists.

### Water quality

The degradation of water quality was a particular issue during the workshop discussion as there was a general consensus to suggestions that the Shoalhaven River Estuary may be significantly impacted due to increased sedimentation and pollution from various activities. It was expressed that water quality is vital to the sustainability of local oyster farms, the local economy and tourism. A few stakeholders expressed their views on how sedimentation from recent foreshore and subdivision developments have not taken into consideration existing oyster farm businesses. A member representing the interests of local oyster farming expressed oyster farmers are not being effectively engaged nor having a direct say in response to environmental threats from changing land use. Stakeholders also raised mixed concerns in regard to the large development in Culburra and future planned subdivisions along Callala Bay and Currarong.

### Agricultural land use

Concern was also raised regarding erosion of riverbanks and E. coli from unrestricted cattle on Dairy Farms encroaching onto the waters along the Crookhaven River and Shoalhaven River. The Oyster farming representative wanted increased support from DPI and Crown Lands to enforce controls on farmers to have fences that prevent cattle and their faeces from entering the water and have stricter penalties for mangrove damage. During the workshop it was discussed that dairy farming and the oyster industry can co-exist with proper management and clearer terms of reference as both are an important fabric of the Shoalhaven community.

## 6.2 Feedback on proposed working groups and future engagement

When stakeholders were asked to comment on the proposed Shoalhaven Coast and Estuary Committee Model and possible options for future engagement the following comments and suggestions were raised:

- Need to engage and go out to the Indigenous community, in particular for culturally significant areas such as Paringa.
- On site meetings, town hall meetings, regular communication to local communities on local issues and actions.
- There's so much to be learned from each other - why provide separate sub-committees for estuaries - when we need to be able to come together.
- Council needs to be more inclusive to include a range of experts and a wider range of views.

## CONSULTATION OUTCOMES REPORT

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- The committee will need to allow input from people, business and industry when particular issues are being considered.
- Community Consultative Bodies need to be utilised more regularly and have input
- A list of representatives on committees need to be made public so the wider community can identify them.
- To improve engagement and better understanding of local conditions Councillors and Committee members need to go on site to see first hand issues and have onsite meetings.
- Engage the public to educate around ICOLL processes, shorebird recovery and inundation lines.
- Invite active youth to focus group opportunities
- Our Coast Our Lifestyle worked well as it captured a wider range of views than is possible with a committee.
- Engage a range of experts during consultation periods to help resolve raised concerns from local communities.

## 7 WHAT WE HEARD IN LAKE CONJOLA

The workshop and community information session were held on 1st October 2019 and was attended by a total of 51 stakeholders, including members from the Conjola Community Association, residents and local business owners. For the workshop discussion 17 stakeholders actively participated, with the drop-in session proving to be more popular with an attendance of 34 people. Topics discussed in both sessions included water quality, impacts to tourism, need for transparency, issues around ICOLL classification, Interim Management Plan, flushing of the Lake and legacy developments. Additional report submissions received from the Conjola Community Association have been attached in full of their recommendations in Appendix A.



### 7.1 Feedback on priority issues in the region

#### Transparency of decision making

An important overarching theme that the stakeholders wanted moving into the next phases of the CMP was for Council to increase transparency, clarity on decisions and listening to concerns from the community. It was expressed by several stakeholders that in response to concerns around the Lake's health and increase in Mosquitoes that there had been a lack of empathy from Council and a perception that the community is not being listened to.

The management of the Lake and its opening was the primary issue of concern and topic for discussion. Stakeholders expressed that the community wants a longer-term entrance opening outcome that provides certainty and a more responsive management approach. Stakeholders also agreed that the management of the entrance needed a co-ordinated approach between Government agencies and that a potential solution would be a long-term agreement and "licence".

#### Previous reports and studies

Several stakeholders from Lake Conjola emphasised the importance for Council in its CMP to adopt actions and recommendations from the Patterson Britton & Partners Report 1999. Reasons included recommendations and methodology is fact based and very specific to the area whereas recent reports have been too general. Other stakeholders expressed the current Interim Entrance Management Plan and in particular the lake trigger level for intervention is not living up to the needs required by the Lake Conjola Community and that they would like the CMP to return to a science based approach and consider upper and lower trigger levels. Stakeholders emphasised there are already several studies into the management of Lake Conjola and that they are tired about continued planning and would like to move onto implementing the recommendations and actions for management.

#### ICOLL classification

The classification of Lake Conjola as an Intermittently Closed and Open Lake and Lagoon (ICOLL) was debated during both sessions. Several stakeholders agreed to the comment made during the workshop that the ICOLL classification of the lake is wrong and confusing and the shoaling of the lake has been overlooked in previous reports. Other stakeholders emphasised the misunderstanding and classification of Lake Conjola under ICOLL has dictated funding.

### Health of Lake Conjola

The integral relationship between the health of Lake Conjola and tourism was emphasised during both the workshop and community information sessions. Most stakeholders wanted the entrance to be dredged on an ongoing basis. This in turn would help 'flush the lake' and improve water quality, boat access, swimming conditions and overall amenity to the lake which is integral to people wanting to visit Lake Conjola. Other stakeholders were open to both soft and hard engineering solutions, with several inquiring about whether breakwalls similar to lake Illawarra would be suitable and or feasible, to prevent sand build up. Whilst some stakeholders emphasised the need for restoration and re-alignment of the active 'feeder' channel to flush the Lake.

Stakeholders emphasised that the health of the Lake was important and when the Lake is undergoing signs of stress or flooding this impacts on the wellbeing of residents and businesses. Many stakeholders wanted Council to realise the emotional impact the health of the Lake has on them and the implications of delayed action in improving the condition of the Lake's health.

During the drop-in session, one stakeholder highlighted that some boats speed around the Lake causing excess waves, leading to the erosion of the surrounding banks. This stakeholder wanted stricter penalties and signage around boat speeds and impact it has to the banks of the Lake. Another stakeholder emphasised that oyster farming has been destroyed as a result of entrance being closed and recognised the social and economic importance of this industry.

### Management of Lake opening

Stakeholders emphasised that the management of the Lake opening was important in mitigating the impacts of excess flooding and access constraints. Methodologies and management options for the opening the Lake were also discussed during both sessions with a prevailing view for the lake to be open but with different management approaches. Some stakeholders emphasised the opening should be moved to the south end as it stays open longer whilst other stakeholders expressed the Lake should be opened through the middle of the spit rather than at the northern end. One stakeholder during the drop-in session emphasised the need to seek advice from the local Indigenous community about how to best manage Lake Conjola.

At the community information sessions one stakeholder expressed an alternative view about the need for the entrance to be artificially opened, indicating that there are likely a variety of views in the community on this issue. Another stakeholder raised concern that if the Lake was open that this would invite more sharks into the area, impacting on safety for children swimming.

In addition, one stakeholder discussed the water quality of Pattermore Lagoon is more likely to be impacted by not being 'flushed' Other issues associated with periodic closure for Pattermore Lagoon included risk to aquatic ecosystems through higher nutrients and algal blooms during the Summer period.

### Nutrient plumes

In response to concerns over nutrient plumes and water quality within Lake Conjola, stakeholders suggested improvements for quality testing with additional parameters is needed within the lake and lake edge as results don't always reflect what the actual local understanding of the condition is. Some stakeholders were under the impression that Aqua data published average weekly data results of Lake Conjola instead of raw point based data results.

Poor stormwater infrastructure was also raised during the discussion. Stakeholders raised concerns that older developments at Manyana, Cunjurong, Bendalong have uncontrolled runoff, leading to stormwater washing down and eroding cliffs and dunes. In addition one stakeholder highlighted there was poor drainage from the Bendalong caravan park and erosion at the boat harbour.

Other stakeholders during both the workshop and drop in session discussed that groundwater readings around the existing treatment plant had tested evidence of nutrient plumes exceeding safety standards. Stakeholders stated that when the lake is closed, the water table is higher, meaning there is less depth between where the treatment plant discharges and the groundwater. There was also concern that the nutrient plumes were getting closer to Pattermore Lagoon.

Stakeholders also explained they would like to see entrance management actions and practices that might assist with Conjola Sewerage Treatment Plant operations, incorporated into the new CMP. Concerns were also raised in relation to increased pressure on the existing Treatment Plant when more properties come online on the northern side of Lake Conjola. Further actions and recommendations in regard to Sewerage Treatment Plant and water quality within Lake Conjola have been included in full within Appendix A.

In addition, stakeholders wanted to see the CCBs past submissions and correspondence with Council, regarding plume stability, water quality, entrance management, groundwater flows and key recommendations be included within the Citywide Scoping Study and eventual CMP.

### Funding sources

In terms of funding the maintenance of Lake Conjola, one stakeholder voiced that Council make millions of dollars profit every year from the Lake Conjola Holiday Haven Caravan Park and suggested that Council consider re-investing a portion to maintain the lake because if the lake dies the tourism business and profits would be at risk. Another stakeholder during the drop in suggested that residents and businesses of Lake Conjola should pay a levy to manage entrance similar to what has been done at Hawkes Nest where they paid for a dredge.

Stakeholders wanted to see more investment back into Lake Conjola, Fishermans Paradise and Berringer Lake through upgraded boat ramps to improve accessibility for larger boats. Many stakeholder emphasised that Berringer Boat ramp is overly used due to other jetties being too narrow and excess build up of sand. Other stakeholders emphasised excessive shoaling in the eastern basin, leading to “squeezing” of the navigation channel in the vicinity of the southern boat ramp.

One stakeholder emphasised that as a result of existing boat ramps within the area being heavily used there was increasing pressure on the Berringer Boat ramp and this was leading to the degradation of nearby vegetation. There were also navigational issues from Berringer into the main lake upstream and stakeholders wanted these to be addressed by Council.

In addition, one stakeholder wanted improved local amenities to help facilitate local business needs including local caravan parks, tourist accommodation and restaurants. This particular business owner felt that Lake Conjola was not living up to its full potential and felt that an increased focus on Lake management and spending on local infrastructure would help the community thrive.

### Ecological communities

Migrating shorebirds was highlighted as a key drawcard to the local amenity of Lake Conjola. Stakeholders communicated during the workshop there is a need for ecological communities to be identified that are likely to be impacted by elevated lake water and ground-water levels associated with periodic closure.

Contrastingly, some stakeholders mentioned migrating shorebirds have started to nest in the tidal delta with pronounced sand lobes at the entry of Lake Conjola, preventing human intervention in forcing open the lake. Other stakeholders expressed the nests needed to be protected and recommended the prevention of off leash dogs and stricter penalties. Other stakeholders recommended after nesting that the excess sand be dredged and made into a reserve nearby in isolation to provide an improved habitat for nesting.

### Legacy developments

During the community information session the impacts that legacy development applications for large subdivisions is having on small areas such as Fisherman's Paradise was raised. Stakeholders wanted to know how protection of SEPP 14 Wetlands can be incorporated into old legacy approvals. Additional concerns included the cumulative impacts of sedimentation into the lake especially when it is closed, approval of lots within now identified flood prone area and the overall impact on existing old infrastructure.

### Water quality

In addition to discussions about Lake Conjola, a representative from the Bawley Point community discussed concerns about Willinga Lake and that residents had observed an increase in algae and evidence of high levels of E.coli potentially impacting on the recent deaths of three recent Black Swans. Other concerns raised included the increase in development and land clearing (including alleged) for the large equestrian centre having impacts on water quality and increased sedimentation. Stakeholders emphasised future

development needs to be guided by improved development controls that aim to improve the health and wellbeing of Willinga Lake.

Also discussed was the rapid rate of deforestation from farmers and residential development along the coast and the use of fertilisers for large scale agriculture, farming and golf courses were contributing to reduced water quality levels within local lakes, waterways, wetlands and estuaries. Other issues raised during the drop-in session included concerns of water quality within Pattermore Lagoon and lack of flow within the water due to blockages. Other stakeholders mentioned Lake Tabourie, and that they are not supportive of increasing opening height at the Lake and are concerned that Eurobodalla Planning controls and restrictions could also be applied to Lake Tabourie.

## 7.2 Feedback on proposed working groups and future engagement

When stakeholders were asked to comment on the proposed Shoalhaven Coast and Estuary Committee Model and possible options for future engagement the following comments and suggestions were raised:

- How would we capture the views from tourists and visitors? Suggest keeping CMP survey open until summer.
- Engage with the local indigenous community.
- Online engagement allows people with different opinions to express themselves and not feel restricted
- Important that the CMP has a communicated timeframe of when it will be up and running
- Need to engage Willinga Lake and request its inclusion in a CMP due to water quality concerns
- Suggest advertising future CMP workshop sessions in key public areas near shops & kiosks.
- Improve digital engagement from Council
- Need for more specific meetings to cover topics such as entrance management and discuss the pros and cons of each option.
- Need for Lake Conjola to have its own Coastal Management Plan.
- Need for CCBs be involved in the CMP process and establish working partnerships.
- Improve SES communication and early warning flood detection, especially when full of visitors. Included SES within model.

## 8 WHAT WE HEARD IN SUSSEX INLET

The consultation at Sussex Inlet on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019 was attended by a total of 27 stakeholders. For the workshop discussion 5 stakeholders actively participated, which was followed with 22 stakeholders visiting the drop-in session. Locations discussed included Sussex Inlet, its ocean entrance and its entrance to St Georges Basin, Swan Lake, Badgee Lagoon and Berrara Creek. Themes that we heard included management of the Sussex Inlet Estuary, flooding, shoaling, navigational limitations, SES evacuation procedure, erosion of banks, local character and historic memories of the area. One stakeholder representing Safe Navigation Action Group (SNAG) showed drone footage of Sussex Inlet and historical maps and surveys of the Inlet. Historical images of Sussex Inlet showcasing the beauty and social connection were also submitted. The Safe Navigation Action Group (SNAG), Sussex Inlet Bowling Club and Fishing Club (SIBCFC) and Sussex Inlet and Districts Community Forum (SIDCF) submissions have been included within Appendix A.



### 8.1 Feedback on priority issues in the region

#### Protecting what the community values

During the workshop session, stakeholders universally agreed that Sussex Inlet has a history of excellent water quality and emphasised the importance that current water quality does not deteriorate in the face of new development. It was communicated by stakeholders that the Sussex Inlet economy and social -well being is based on a clean, productive, naturally beautiful marine environment, supported with excellent, quality access to water for people and boats.

Other stakeholders explained sustainable fish and prawn populations and habitat that provide for long-term recreational fishing are essential to the economic future of Sussex Inlet. Stakeholders wanted to see the development and expansion of artificial reefs to facilitate replenishing fish populations. Other stakeholders wanted to see improvements to waste management and water recycling in all waterway and foreshore areas.

#### Navigational safety

There was concern by some stakeholders that the flood tide shoal leading from the estuary into St. Georges Basin is getting too shallow for vessel navigation and should be dredged for safety purposes. Stakeholders from SNAG wanted to create a plan addressing navigational safety through improved water depth, reduce foreshore erosion in the waterways, increase water quality and improve flood readiness. Stakeholders emphasised that the CMP should enforce Council to monitor depths of Sussex Inlet and within the canal estate on a quarterly basis, to assist where channel optimisation is required to maintain navigational depths and channels.

Other stakeholders wanted existing ballast removed from Sussex Inlet and felt this was causing sedimentation issues and the build up of sand, blocking the channel. Other stakeholders raised that they wanted to have access to jetties within canal estate to facilitate boating and recreational activities.

In contrast, stakeholders from the Sussex Inlet Bowling club Fishing and Social Club submitted after the workshop session that not a lot of work needed to be done to fix the existing waterways for the area. Rather they wanted to see upgrades to the Lakehaven Drive Boat ramp, additional parking for boat trailers, upgrades and widening of Chris Creek and Swan Lake boat ramps to improve overall access. The club also

emphasised they wanted all cardinal and navigational points to be illuminated and increased bar education strategies to better facilitate safer navigational crossings.

### Erosion

Other stakeholders emphasised boats should be prohibited entering Badgee Lagoon beyond the Taliac Canal intersection due to fuel spillage and the disturbance of water birds and marine life. Protection of Badgee Lagoon due to its environmental significance was discussed, as too the need of further studies.

Many stakeholders during the drop-in session made observations that excessive boat wash was resulting in bank erosion. One stakeholder observed many boats travelling too fast and not following signage and wanted better enforcement and stricter penalties. It was also highlighted that ageing shoreline structures need replacement to prevent hazards, erosion and sedimentation.

### Development on floodplains

There was concern raised by stakeholders that a major part of the existing housing and commercial component of the town has been built on the floodplain. A collective group of stakeholders emphasised there is a need for Council and Government to decide what resources will be applied to flood mitigation and to the continual loss of foreshore in the Sussex Inlet estuary. One particular stakeholder pointed to previous studies and reports to state that there is evidence that flood duration can be minimised by restricting the shoaling that occurs in the lower reaches of the estuary.

One stakeholder wanted to see a consistent approach by Council on foreshore management, particularly maintaining and construction of sea walls along the foreshore and stormwater management. An option for addressing foreshore erosion along the south of the Inlet, that would also allow consistent public access along the foreshore and improved flood conveyance was discussed by another stakeholder. Another stakeholder was concerned around properties impacted by inundation lines and want clarity about the official position of Council regarding defending it's coast, estuaries, floodplains or retreating. This stakeholder wanted Council and the CMP to be clearer on what property owners should expect living within the inundation line and what future plans are to help guide decisions on staying or moving elsewhere.

### Emergency response

Like the St Georges Basin consultation, the SES also contributed to both the workshop and community information session in the Sussex Inlet session. The SES had concerns over the entrance channel and the combination of an east coast low, high tide and peak tourism season. SES raised concerns over how the area can become very isolated during floods preventing SES services from entering the area. With the growing population of the area the SES emphasised the importance of establishing a community action team (CAT) whereby local community members are trained up to be able to fill sandbags when required in an emergency and prior to SES arrival. The SES wants to continue working closely with Council in establishing a CAT team "cache" where sandbag bags are stored in town at a location where sand could be dumped ahead of an event. The SES wanted to ensure that the community is well equipped and trained in case of closed roads and isolation during flooding events.

One stakeholder stated foreshore erosion causes siltation of the St Georges Basin estuary and reduces capacity to hold back runoff in a storm event. Concern was raised over the impact erosion will have on public assets and general safety.

### Swan Lake

There were also requests for the CMP to take into consideration the impact of previous infrastructure and development on tidal flows and sedimentation, in particular Sussex Inlet and Swan Lake. This stakeholder emphasised the bridge over Swan Lake, has contributed to sedimentation in lake and less openings due to infill required to build the bridge. This stakeholder emphasised that due to increased fill and closing of the lake that the local character of the Lake had lost its major asset, swans. Stakeholders suggested that Swan Lake to be included within the CMP and a review of the Swan Lake Entrance Management Policy. Other stakeholders emphasised there needs to be a stronger push for providing habitat for native or endemic marine, avian and mammalian species as well as monitoring and increasing educating the importance of the local environment.

## 8.2 Feedback on proposed working groups and future engagement

When stakeholders were asked to comment on the proposed Shoalhaven Coast and Estuary Committee Model and possible options for future engagement the following comments and suggestions were raised:

- Representation from Council to attend CCB meetings more often to have a say on issues.
- Input from elderly and disabled to discuss access restrictions at Sussex Beach.
- Suggested meetings with foreshore landholders would be beneficial to explain how the foreshore should be managed with clear and consistent guidelines.
- Funding over the CMP Process. Where is it being invested?
- How will the CMP resolve properties with known coastal issues?  
Would like to see Sussex Inlet and Swan Lake separate or subsection of the St Georges Basin CMP.

## 9 WHAT WE HEARD IN SHOALHAVEN HEADS

The workshop and community information session was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019 and was attended by 36 stakeholders. For the workshop discussion, 24 stakeholders actively participated, which was followed with 12 stakeholders visiting the drop in session. Topics discussed during the sessions at Shoalhaven Heads included the Estuary Management Plan, erosion and dredging, need for improved collaboration, flooding impacts and keeping a balance between increased tourism and the natural environment. Several formal submissions were received from the Collingwood Beach Preservation Group and Shoalhaven Heads Community Forum. These submissions have been attached in full in Appendix A.

*"Estuary Management Plan does not accurately represent Shoalhaven Heads community"*

*"Need to encourage residents to care, be engaged and be aware."*

*"Ratepayers want to have clarity and certainty into what plans are in place"*

### 9.1 Feedback on priority issues in the region

#### Tourism

During both the workshop and drop in session, stakeholders emphasised the value of shore birds, eco tourism, boat navigation and local natural amenities such as the Shoalhaven River and estuary. There was consensus from Stakeholders regarding the need for improved maintenance and enhancement of Shoalhaven Heads for tourism related purposes. Stakeholders from Shoalhaven Heads suggested that there is inequality of where money is and isn't being spent. Stakeholders wanted improved boating facilities and parking in Hay Avenue and River Road, increase in boardwalks and viewing platforms to improve links to key destinations and act as an attraction for tourism as well as being an everyday recreational facility.

Other concerns raised during the drop-in session included the protection of dunes and dune vegetation through increased fencing and signage outlining the ecological and structural importance. Other stakeholders emphasised the importance of balancing tourism with increased spending on unique natural assets such as Bangalay sand forest, Seven Mile Beach, Coomonderry Swamp and Comerong Island.

#### Entrance management

Other stakeholders felt that to increase safety, tourism and reduce flooding risk that the Shoalhaven River entrance area needed to be dredged to help widen the channel with excess sand to be repurposed for recreational infrastructure and erosion protection along the River Road embankment. Similarly, other stakeholders wanted to see upgraded BBQ areas, seating and shade areas as well as toilets and fishing platforms. Other stakeholders during the workshop emphasised the importance of safety during flooding events for the areas of Crookhaven, Greenwall Point area and Berrys Canal needed to be improved. Stakeholders were concerned Council has been slow in responding to opening the river mouth during flooding events

The management of stormwater was of big concern to some stakeholders during the community information session. Stakeholders expressed that towns grew quickly with no overall master plan for water management and wanted to see improved mitigation around storm pipes, due to pipes causing erosion and siltation, in particular around River Road. One stakeholder wanted to see improved decisions on the location of storm pipes to help mitigate impacts of eddies within the water and erosion of sand banks.

#### Consultation and engagement

For the CMP and Shoalhaven Coast and Estuary Committee there is a need for increased collaboration which has been identified as a key requirement by State Government agencies, Council, community and key

stakeholders. Stakeholders representing local Bushcare and surf club groups have stated there has been a lack of consultation around proposed works and implications. It was communicated that there was a need for better communication and coordination between all the different stakeholders working in dune management.

It was communicated that the recently renourished sand dunes in front of existing Shoalhaven Heads Surf Life Saving Club have impeded patrols of beach and has meant -non-compliance of licencing agreement. Impacted stakeholders from the club wanted increased communication from Council on maintenance works. The sand dune in front of the surf club is blown-up by north easterly winds and blocks the view of the beach from the control tower.

The Surf Club needs to be able to see 200 m either direction along the beach. It was discussed that there is a protocol for management of sand in front of the surf club but in the future this needs to be refined in consultation with the Club.

### Environmental management

During the workshop session the importance of mangroves to be protected was emphasised. Stakeholders wanted to see an increase in 'carbon sinks' and the need for mangroves to restore water quality and key fish habitat. One stakeholder emphasised the importance of ongoing maintenance with Mangroves and weeds as the closure of waterways from Crookhaven has blocked the natural flow of water allowing 'swamp vegetation to flourish'. Other stakeholders highlighted the need for more accessible info on the marine zones in the river and to promote the value of dune habitat such as the Bangalay sand forest. One stakeholder also wanted aquatic ecology to be better protected as they had observed illegal fishing with large drag nets being used within the area.

One stakeholder emphasised the importance of the Coomonderry Swamp, Seven Mile Beach National Park and Comerong Island and the need for the CMP to better protect the diverse range of birds, reptile and frog species, which includes a significant population of the threatened green and golden bell frog. This particular stakeholder emphasised that Coomonderry Swamp is the largest freshwater coastal wetland in the southern region of NSW and needs to be properly managed in the face of a changing climate.

In addition, during the workshop session it was noted that oyster farmers have a historical and extensive knowledge of the history of the estuary and are the lifeblood of the area and need to be protected. Stakeholders wanted to ensure that with increased development and tourism impacts that water quality is monitored more closely in order to protect the unique historical asset of oyster farming in the South Coast.

## 9.2 Feedback on proposed working groups and future engagement

When stakeholders were asked to comment on the proposed Shoalhaven Coast and Estuary Committee Model and possible options for future engagement the following comments and suggestions were raised:

- Suggestion to put presentations from experts onto YouTube for public consumption/education.
- Increased communication during peak season as more tourists and residents are available for surveys and feedback.
- Proposed committee structure does not include flooding issues specifically.
- More cooperation between agencies is needed within the committee.
- Conflict between competing interests – e.g. tourism and environment.
- Committee needs a strong Terms of Reference.
- Facebook is used by the local community.
- Online videos and tutorials for residents and owners.
- Essential to engage the young within the community.
- Community pages need to be better engaged by Council.
- There is a need for clear communications around emerging issues in future issues.
- Need for presentation material to be made available online for everyone. Also allow for interactive Questions and Answer session.
- Utilise big community events such as fun runs, marathons etc to communicate material.
- Risk matrix and controls needs to be communicated to the community.

## CONSULTATION OUTCOMES REPORT

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- The Collingwood Beach Preservation Group (CBPG) would like to share the experiences of the affected property owners from Collingwood Beach impacted by inundation lines.
- Need a mix of platforms to engage with the community including; online, face to face meetings, intranet site, filmed sessions and podcasts.

## 10 FURTHER SUGGESTIONS AS PART OF THE CITYWIDE SCOPING STUDY

This section reflects suggestions heard at the workshops and drop-in sessions for each of the six locations across the Shoalhaven Coast. In addition to the detailed local suggestions raised in the previous sections, stakeholders also requested the following information or research to be considered as part of the citywide scoping study:

- Need for increased transparency and that the Risk Matrix is clearly communicated to all residents within the LGA and be tailored to their area.
- Investigate examples of LGA's that have dredging as an adopted estuary and entrance management policy.
- Review of inundation lines to reflect local geography is strongly needed.
- CMP should include a position statement, policy and approach to reflect the impacts and risks of community.
- Clarification of the interaction between State and local government agencies when managing agricultural run-off for example at Narrawallee Inlet. Community wants to know who is responsible and what can be done?
- More transparency is needed in what data Council is using for its mapping of species and habitat locations.
- Inundation lines for parts within the LGA are below predicted sea level rise. Request for local site visits to allow Inundation lines to be revised.
- Concerns on how increased storm levels could be considered into future mitigation and planning.
- Clarity on if the CMP is going to assist in recovery co-ordination for bush care sites.
- Shoalhaven River Estuary Management Plan does not accurately represent Shoalhaven Heads Community, should include Broughton Creek.
- Recognition and identification of Coastal Erosion 'Hot Spots' for the Sussex Inlet area needs to be in the CMP.
- Principles from the Patterson Britton and Partners (1999) Britton Report for Lake Conjola to be followed for management of the Lake Conjola entrance. Council needs to make long-term decisions based off expert and scientific evidence.
- Entrance Management Plans for specific areas within the LGA need to be supported by local communities in order to resolve flooding and other studied environmental issues.
- Frequency of Swan Lake ICOLL entrance opening, want Swan Lake to be included within St Georges Basin, Sussex Inlet CMP Area.
- Stingray Bay Dunes on the western foreshore of the entrance should be included in the St Georges Basin, Sussex Inlet CMP for the protection and preservation of this dune system.
- The CMP to addresses issues in a holistic way when looking into solutions.
- Study of possible effects on Badgee Lagoon and its wetlands and catchment by development in Taliac Canal.
- Educate the community about its role in coastal management and how to deliver by best practice
- Several accounts of foreshore erosion along the Sussex Inlet estuary, and an estuary wide erosion study should be implemented.
- Legacy Communities and previous planning decisions. Community wants to know who bears the cost of adaptation and relocation as sea levels rise, storm surges and tidal ranges increase?
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report just released in August 2019 – how will that expert advice be incorporated into the CMPs?
- Council to address within CMP how SES can establish Community Action Teams (CAT) within flood prone and isolated areas.
- Ensure the protection of unique assets to the state of NSW such as Coomonderry Swamp, Seven Mile Beach National Park and Comerong Island are included within the CMP and are properly managed in the face of a changing climate.


Regarding the constitution and recruitment of participants to the proposed Management Committee the following suggestions were also made:

- Council to have an intranet page highlighting who belongs to which committee and the best contact details to reach out to these committees to ensure values and issues are brought to attention.
- Council to engage a mixture of people who represent the community are well connected to members within their community. It is important that these people act in the best interest for that community.
- Potential for Council to engage important businesses that encapsulate the Shoalhaven area and have unique offerings e.g. oyster farmers and tourist related businesses.
- Need to structure the management committee to reflect people impacted, range of demographics, and tourists.
- Engage existing community groups that have a strong connection and objective to resolving coastal related issues that important within their area.
- Need to have presence from the Traditional owners of this land to have representation in the new Committee Model and have a say in management.
- Council to investigate if Coastal Engineers can be involved to help guide through the pros and cons of soft and hard engineering options when dealing with action groups and community.
- Engage the community through multiple platforms to engage a wider range of demographics.
- Engage High Schools and local TAFEs for potential partnerships and future engagement.
- Inform the community of the outcomes of this engagement and how they can continue to be engaged to influence Council's future CMPs.
- Conservation Groups to be included in the Committee Model e.g. Shorebird Recovery Group.
- What's the criteria to join the management committee? Is it merit based? If so this needs to be made public.
- Shoalhaven Water and SES representation needed in the new Committee Model.
- A committee is only as good as its Terms of Reference. Needs strong Terms of Reference to be functional and 'not a toothless body'.
- A committee needs a good cross-section of people with local experiences and represent the community not just their own views.
- How can Council better engage business and industry that don't have time for these meetings?
- Council to ensure clear communication with Committee members and the community on discussed issues, decisions and code of conduct.

## 11 NEXT STEPS

The valuable feedback gathered from stakeholders in this report will be used as a critical input to the Citywide Scoping Study and preliminary risk assessment being prepared for Council. Other community feedback from past engagements, and submissions and surveys received through Council's Get Involved Page will also be considered.

The Citywide Scoping Study will be made available for public exhibition in early 2020 on Council's Get Involved Page after which it will be used to determine the detailed assessments and evaluation of sites required in Stages Two and Three of developing the CMPs. Stages Four and Five will include exhibition and adoption of the CMP, replacing the Shoalhaven Coastal Zone Management Plan in 2021.



The community is encouraged to monitor Council's Get Involved Page for future stages of the CMP process.

## APPENDIX A

### Participant Feedback

A collection of issues, comments and questions expressed during the consultation and engagement sessions and transcribed from:

- A3 worksheets,
- Post it notes, and
- Staff notes.

## APPENDIX B

- Email submissions and reports received.

## APPENDIX C

- A0 Information Boards