

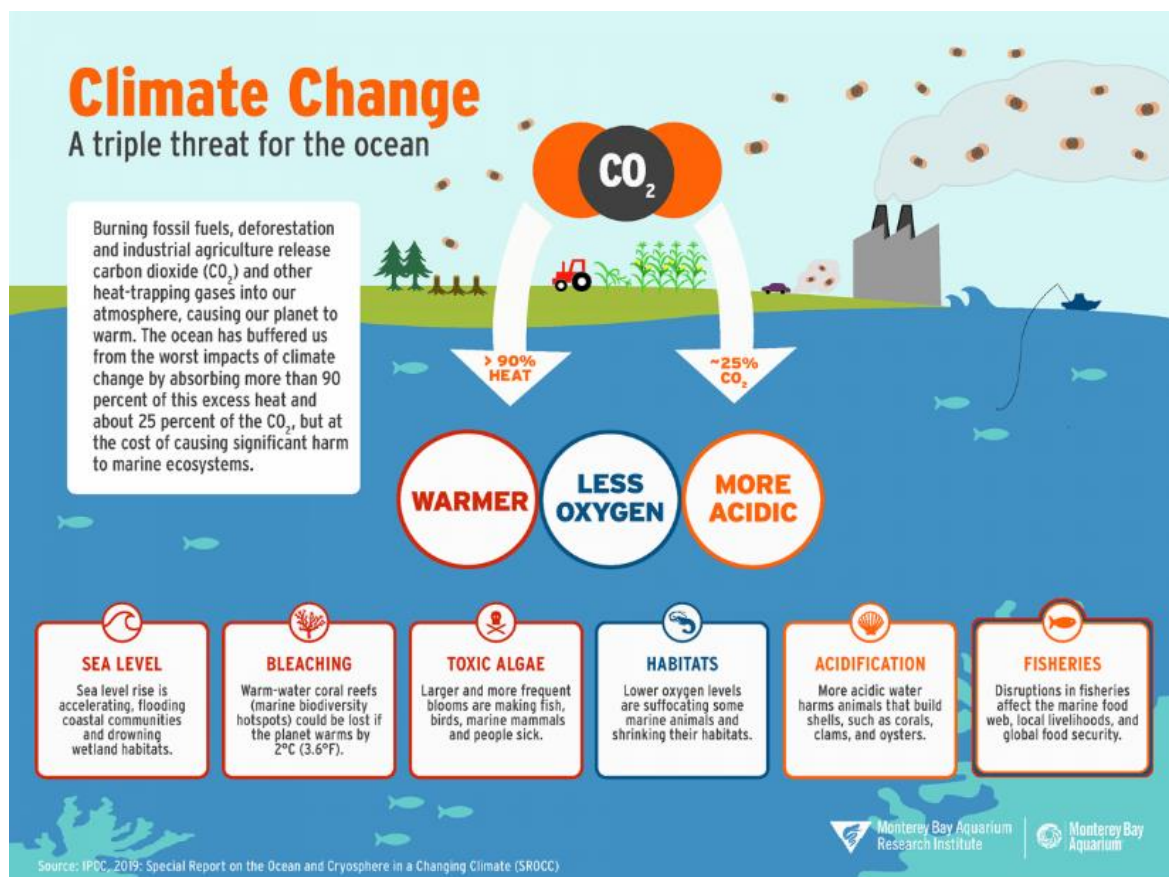
# Climate Change and the Coast

## Fact sheet

### What are the impacts of climate change on our coastline?

Shoalhaven's coastline supports a range of environmental, social, cultural and economic values that are threatened by climate change. Climate change is causing changes to our natural environment, such as:

- More frequent inundation and flooding of coastal areas and estuaries including low-lying development from more frequent and intense storms.
- More extreme storms imposed by East Coast Lows.
- Greater exposure to coastal hazards, such as storm surge and erosion.
- Increase of risks to coastal communities and developments.
- Increasing temperatures on land and in the ocean that causes heat stress to plants and animals. This can result in shifting habitat ranges, such as the southern migration of tropical species along the east coast.
- The redistribution of shallow marine and intertidal habitats.
- Estuaries may become more saline and saltwater extend further upstream due to increased saltwater entering from the ocean as sea level rises.
- Disruption of important fisheries breeding and migration lifecycles and aquatic ecosystems.
- Increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide leading to ocean acidification which can limit the growth of organisms such as shellfish and temperate corals that require carbonate.



Impacts of climate change on coastal areas (from: Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute).

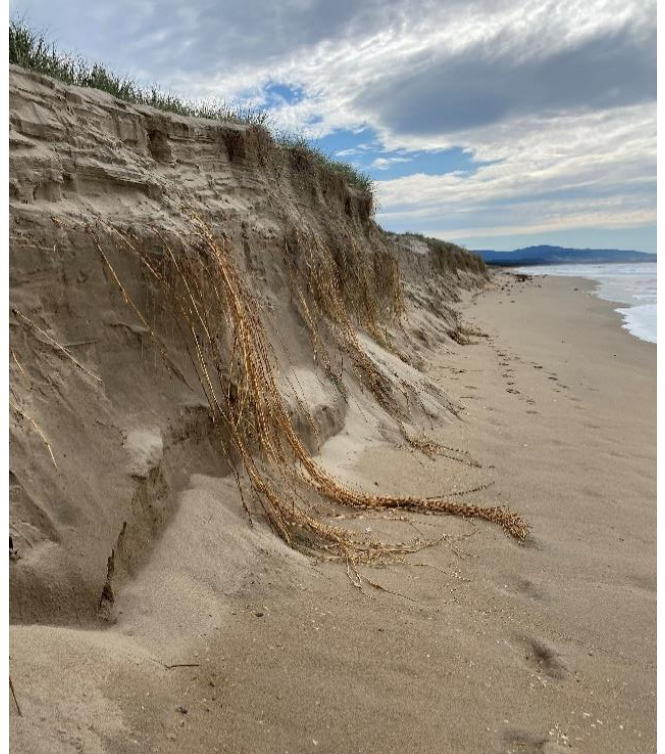
## How do we manage the impacts of climate change on beaches?

Widespread reduction in global carbon dioxide emissions is the most effective way to limit the impacts of climate change on the coast. However, some changes are already being observed as a result of changing weather patterns and [include higher land and sea temperatures, and heavier rainfall](#).

The impacts these changes cause require management through different adaptation approaches such as:

- Coastal planning, to better manage where current and future coastal development occurs. This is guided by the requirements for the various coastal zones identified in the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021* and the [Shoalhaven Development Control Plan](#) and [Shoalhaven Local Environmental Plan 2014](#).
- Environmental and ecosystem management, where habitats are protected and restored to promote natural coastal resilience.
- Education and community involvement in developing adaptation measures.
- Integrating traditional owners' knowledge into coastal management.
- Engineering, which involves building structures to protect assets.
- Strategic coastal management that takes into account all of the above strategies and helps develop plans for effective long-term management of coastal areas.

Further background information on climate change, as well as impacts on coastlines, is provided [online](#) by the NSW Government.



*Example of shoreline erosion after a storm affecting Shoalhaven Heads beach, August 2020.*



### Find out more

[getinvolved.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/  
foreshore-protection-management](https://getinvolved.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/foreshore-protection-management)

Or search “**Foreshore**” on our website.

### Contact Us

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