

# Catchments and Coast Committee Brisbane Water and Gosford Lagoons Meeting Record 19 December 2019



Location:	Central Coast Council Gosford Office Level 1 Committee Room 49 Mann Street, Gosford	
Date:	19 December 2019	
Time	Started at: 2.04pm	Closed at: 4.02pm
Chair	Councillor Jane Smith	
File Ref	F2018/00097	

## **Present**

Councillor Jane Smith, Michael Kilp, Jenny McCulla, Samantha Willis,

## **External Representatives present:**

Neil Kelleher – Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Elizabeth Nevell – Salients (left 3.39pm), Peter Scanes – Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Dr David Wainwright – Salients (left 3.39pm)

## **Council Staff present:**

Luke Sulkowski – Unit Manager Environmental Management, Ben Fullagar – Section Manager Coastal Protection, Matthew Barnett – Team Leader Catchment Operations, Vanessa McCann – Team Leader Estuary Management, Warren Brown – Senior Estuary Management Officer, Kellie Langford – Senior Coastal Management Officer, Rudy VanDrie – Planning Engineer Hydrology, Melanie James – Waterways Officer, Kristy McQueen – Estuary Management Officer, Zoie Magann – Advisory Group Support Officer

## **Item 1 Welcome, Acknowledgement of Country and Apologies**

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Apologies received: Councillor Troy Marquart, Michael Alsop, Ian Carruthers, Andrew Jones, Adrian Williams, Peter Sheath – Section Manager Waterways

Councillor Jane Smith completed an Acknowledgment of Country and connection to land statement.

## **Item 2 Disclosure of Interest**

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Councillor Jane Smith declared a less than significant non-pecuniary interest as a teacher for the Department of Education as some education programs relate to the management of coastal lagoons and the specific data provided.

### **Item 3 Confirmation of Previous Meeting Record**

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

The Advisory Group reviewed the Action Log, with the below update noted:

**Action 22:** Dredged sand volume was up to 20,000 cubic metres, with 10,000 placed on the beach for nourishment. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/lands/public/notifications/ettalong-channel>

### **Item 4 Update on Coastal Management Programs (Standing Item)**

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Ben Fullagar (Section Manager Coastal Protection) provided a verbal update on the Coastal Management Programs (CMPs) project. It was noted that CMPs need to be completed by end of 2021.

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

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Rudy VanDrie (Planning Engineer Hydrology) provided a presentation on current flood and stormwater projects, including updates on pending Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plans (FRMSPs).

Some of the key points were as follows:

- Anticipated completion dates for current FRMSPs are:
  - Coastal Lagoons Overland Flood Study – January 2020
  - Brisbane Water Overland Flow Study Catchments – February 2020
  - Woy Woy Peninsula FRMSP – August 2021
  - Davistown and Empire Bay FRMSP – February 2021
  - Narara Creek FRMSP – June 2020
  - Ourimbah Creek FRMSP – Public Exhibition completed
- Community engagement for Davistown and Empire Bay FRMSP was held 16 and 17 October 2019. Community feedback was sought from a total of 80 attendees across the two days.
- There are a number of case studies underway with the following anticipated completion dates:
  - Davistown and Empire Bay Climate Adaption Landform Case Study – December 2019
  - Woy Woy Climate Adaption Landform Case Study – June 2021
  - Integrated Water Management Case Study (Everglades Catchment Case Study and Woy Woy Peninsula Groundwater Modelling) – June 2020
  - Flood Intelligence Tool (Narara Creek Catchment and Coastal Lagoons) – February 2020

The Advisory Group discussed the matter listed for General Business in this item. There was a letter forwarded to Council from a community member regarding encroachments. Staff advised they are following up on this matter and will be notifying the relevant residents, surveying boundaries and taking remedial action as required. It was noted the Environmental Management team are exploring options to secure an officer dedicated to encroachments in the Central Coast LGA.

**Action:** Staff to continue investigating matters raised in letter regarding encroachments and provide updates as appropriate.

**Action:** Jenny McCulla to email concerns regarding wetlands and historic infrastructure to Advisory Group Support Officer for forwarding to relevant staff.

## **Item 6 Presentation on Lagoon Openings (Actions 23 and 24)**

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Dr David Wainwright (Salients – Council Consultant) provided a presentation on lagoon openings, specifically the Gosford Lagoon and Creek Entrance Management Review study which was undertaken in 2016/17. The aim of the study was to develop a policy and procedures to help guide Council's approach to lagoon openings.

The following key points were noted:

- Historically "poor" water quality was blamed on a closed entrance.
- Contradicting pressures regarding entrance management – some advocate forcibly opening lagoons, whereas some prefer a more "natural" regime.
- Number of factors to consider regarding lagoon opening – cost, public safety, property damage, water quality, ecological health and recreation.
- Negative community perceptions regarding lagoon openings and concerns about use of contractors. Confirmed Council staff are responsible for entrance management and contracted staff are not used.
- Major safety concerns for staff and public about forced opening (WHS legislation means site could be considered a high-risk construction site).
- Number of reasons to not alter current breaching practices dramatically (existing developments and flood planning, uncertainty about how ecological processes might respond to change, focus should be on catchment due to impact on water quality)

David also addressed concerns regarding the Green and Golden Bell Frog. The frogs inhabit Bareena Lagoon (north of entrance channel to Avoca) and require a specific environment to thrive. A water monitoring device will be placed in the area next year to gather data about impacts of entrance management.

It was noted community understanding and education on lagoon openings could be improved.

**Action:** Staff to explore opportunities for education about lagoon openings, alongside the sessions organised for floodplain management.

## **Item 7 Release of the 17/18 Waterways Report Card**

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Vanessa McCann (Team Leader Estuary Management) provided a presentation on the 2017/18 Waterways Report Card for ecological health. It was noted the report card measures environmental condition not swim safety, which is measured as part of the Beachwatch Program.

Some key points noted were as follows:

- The 2018/19 report card is expected April 2020, and 2019/20 is expected November 2020 (annually thereafter).
- Grades are determined by measuring what is affecting water quality and how the system is responding (short-term and long-term).
- Currently monitor southern end of Lake Macquarie, Tuggerah Lakes, Brisbane Water and coastal lagoons. Lower Hawkesbury and freshwater catchments will be included in 2018/19 report card.
- Results for Brisbane Water are largely excellent. Of the 9 sites six received an excellent grade, one received a good grade, one received a fair grade, and one received a poor grade (Kincumber Creek).
- Poor grade for Kincumber Creek due to high turbidity. Staff monitoring closely and will continue to review data including results further upstream.

- There are four catchment audits currently underway at Wamberal Lagoon, Terrigal Lagoon, Avoca Lagoon and Cockrone Lagoon.
- Avoca Lagoon has a very poor grade and is a current focus of staff.
- Information about the audits are available on the Council website and community members are encouraged to engage: <https://www.yourvoiceourcoast.com/tcla>
- In 2017/18 there were a number of efforts to improve estuary health including:
  - Over \$5mil invested in estuary improvement projects.
  - 128ha of natural area rehabilitation completed.
  - Three new stormwater improved devices installed and 418 maintained.
  - 967T of sediment and pollutants removed before it reached waterways.
  - 80 Landcare groups supported and various engagement/education initiatives delivered (eco-tours, information sessions, short film screenings, school visits, four new iBooks)
- Healthy waterways need healthy catchments, meaning ecological health is everyone's responsibility.
- Monitoring undertaken will help inform management actions through implementation of CMPs.

Comments were made that management of catchments for estuary / lagoon health needs to be a component in planning instruments (eg. LEPs / DCPs). It was noted that former Gosford Lagoons Management Plan included that there be no intensification of development in catchments – this was then removed. In light of water quality issues there should be consideration to a “neutral or beneficial” test in planning instruments for impacts of development on water quality in receiving waters.

## **Item 8                    General Business and Close**

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*The matter listed in General Business for discussion was addressed in Item 5.*

No further general business was discussed.

The meeting closed at 4:02pm

**Next Meeting:            Thursday 12 March 2020**  
**2pm – 4pm**  
**Central Coast Council Gosford Office**  
**Level 1 Committee Room**