

MEDIA RELEASE

35 actions adopted under Resilient Coast Strategic Plan

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THE Douglas Shire is now better equipped to manage the impact of coastal hazards. Douglas Shire Council formally adopted the Resilient Coast Strategic Plan at yesterday's Council Meeting, committing the organisation to 35 priority actions to reduce the impacts of coastal hazards on communities and natural assets. Council is the first in Queensland to adopt a Resilient Coast Strategy. The team of coastal scientists, engineers and economists, in partnership with Council, used the highest level of technical analysis and local feedback to develop the strategic plan. Some actions include a shire-wide dune protection and maintenance program as well as Shoreline Erosion Management Plans (SEMPs) for Newell Beach and Port Douglas. The strategic plan also includes new storm tide inundation mapping for the remote stretch of coastline from Cape Tribulation to Degarra, an area that was previously not included in existing mapping.

Douglas Shire Mayor Julia Leu said the community was now equipped with the knowledge to proactively plan for future coastline impacts.

"We know our community and visitors value our coastline and it is a key reason why people choose to live, work, visit and invest in the Douglas Shire," she said.

"I am immensely proud that we are the first Council in Queensland to develop a Strategic Plan to better prepare our community from coastal hazards and the impacts of climate change.

"We now have more accurate and refined data for Douglas Shire that gives everyone greater confidence to plan.

"This strategic plan enables us to be better prepared to reduce the impacts of coastal hazards on our communities, environment, cultural values, infrastructure, liveability and services.

"We are in a fairly strong position when it comes to coastal hazard resilience and this is due to the efforts to protect our foreshores and strong community stewardship in the Douglas Shire

The Resilient Coast program was predominantly funded by the Queensland Government and Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) through the QCoast2100 program.

"Importantly, this strategic plan was built on robust community engagement that has been held across Douglas Shire in the past 12 months," Mayor Leu said.

"I would like to thank the Queensland Government and LGAQ for facilitating the QCoast2100 program.

“They not only provided the majority of funds to make this project a reality, but also offered valuable support and advice throughout the project.”

Council Sustainability Officer Nicola Learmond said the implementation of actions would be a collective effort.

“Council and the community have a shared responsibility for the management of coastal hazard risk.”

“The strategic plan encourages cross-sector collaboration to improve the understanding of future coastal hazard implications for local native species and ecosystems.”

Member for Cook Cynthia Lui said this wonderful achievement is a perfect example of how beneficial the partnerships between State and Local Government are.

“This project was funded as part of the Queensland Government's \$12 million QCoast2100 program and it's fantastic to see the Douglas Shire Council deliver this.

“With climate change impacting, our coast lines are changing and this plan will result in action to help reduce coastal hazards and prepare for storm tide inundation.

“I'm sure the locals will be happy to know there is a long term strategic plan in place for them and for future generations.”

To view the strategic plan, please visit: <https://ourcoast.douglas.qld.gov.au>

Community engagement summary:

The strategic plan has been developed via a transparent process:

- Community workshops were held in May and October 2018, at multiple venues including Mossman, Cape Tribulation and Port Douglas.
- A Resilient Coast Stakeholder Advisory Group including representatives from agricultural and tourism, natural resource management organisations and government agencies.
- Two online surveys helped build an understanding of key coastal values and impacts from historical events.
- Other special interest groups provided input and feedback via tailored briefings.
- Dedicated project website with a monthly project updates and factsheets.
- 30-day public comment period on the draft strategic plan in March 2019.
- Direct input and feedback from more than 250 community members
- Draft plan downloaded more than 250 times.

Contents of the Plan

- An overview of landscape features, values, history, and important elements of a Resilient Coast for Douglas Shire.
- An overview of coastal hazards, including erosion and storm tide inundation, areas that may be exposed to coastal hazards, and the implications of exposure including potential economic costs.
- Douglas Shire's approach to adaptation, including a framework for shared responsibilities, adaptation responses and options.
- Priority adaptation actions across the Shire.
- Locality summaries with tailored adaptation actions for different communities.
- The approach to implementation, including adaptive management and change management planning.

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