

**EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL**

**PUBLIC FORUM**

**Ordinary Meeting of Council on 16 July 2024**

Please refer to the minutes of the [Council Meeting](#) for outcomes of the agenda items.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Subject/Comments</b>	<b>Presentation Provided</b>	<b>Hybrid</b>
Jason Ford	MR24/003 Coastal Protection Works, Surfside Beach	Yes	In person
Trish Hellier	1. MR24/003 Coastal Protection Works, Surfside Beach 2. CAR24/004 Toilet Strategy Update	Yes	In person

## **COASTAL PROTECTION WORKS, SURFSIDE BEACH**

My wife and I live at Myamba Parade Surfside. And so, I am here today to voice our concerns about the erosion at Surfside beach and the lack of any practical action to remediate or mitigate that erosion. While I can only formally speak on behalf of my extended family, I know that my comments reflect the concerns of the vast majority of Surfside residents and users and visitors to Surfside Beach.

The erosion along Surfside Beach has been well documented for many years. But there has been a recent and noticeable acceleration in erosion events and damage. At the end closest to Cullendulla, Council infrastructure has either already been impacted or is under threat – not just storm water pipes and beach access stairs, but I see that fencing and the boardwalk from the carpark to Cullendulla is also now close to being damaged.

There is a genuine fear from many residents that people's homes are at risk.

At this point and for completeness, I want to acknowledge the Eurobodalla Open Coast Coastal Management Program that was adopted by Council on 13 December 2022 and gazetted March 2023. I have read the CMP a number of times and I understand how it intersects with Government funding arrangements. I note that Council cites a number of actions being implemented under the CMP as what it describes as "priority actions" (Council file reference S010-T00018). I also note the coastal protection works that have been prioritised under the CMP, utilising grant monies and other Commonwealth and State funding agreements. This includes works at Wharf Road and an inundation levy at Surfside West.

But what this all misses is addressing the erosion along Surfside Beach, parallel to Myamba Parade.

It has been frustrating and very concerning that despite numerous queries, discussions and concerns raised with all levels of Government, from the perspective of those raising the concerns there appears to have been nil practical actions taken to either remediate or mitigate Surfside Beach erosion. While the problems continue to get worse, no physical works have taken place. If we were dealing with a bushfire, flood or other natural disaster, it would likely be dealt with, with urgency. But I wonder whether because erosion is a slow moving disaster, so too is the response.

When the CMP was formalised, my family was pleased to see what we thought was a clear pathway for action at Surfside Beach – I refer to action ID CH1\_L which references beach nourishment from dredged material. But then, at a community meeting facilitated by Council officials on 20 December 2023 at Surfside Beach, the audience was advised that there were no actions or works scheduled to address erosion at Surfside Beach, given the single CMP action to address Surfside Beach requires an allocation of funding that had not been sourced. The audience was also advised that the Council did not have any other plans to mitigate or address the erosion concerns that were being voiced by the community.

In response to that community meeting and for me to understand how Surfside Beach is being prioritised, who is responsible for works associated with dune nourishment and when the community will see any sort of remediation or preventative action, I engaged with other community members, sought further advice from the Council and sought information from Government officials and office holders. The following extracts and statements reflect some of those efforts:

- Via written correspondence to a neighbour on 10 May 2024, the Hon Penny Sharpe MLC, NSW Minister for Climate Change, Energy, Environment, and Heritage advised that “Eurobodalla Shire Council is responsible for managing the coastal zone at Surfside Beach and implementing the actions in the CMP...”.
- Via written correspondence on 29 February 2024, Dr Marjorie O’Neill MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Transport, advised me that “Transport for NSW Maritime is developing a strategy to secure funding for a long-term state-wide dredging program”.
- Via written correspondence on 4 July 2024, the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water confirmed that “Eurobodalla Shire Council (Council) manages the coastal zone at Surfside Beach”. The correspondence noted that “The CMP includes several actions at Surfside Beach to help address coastal erosion, including dune management works and opportunistic sand nourishment from Clyde River dredging operations.”
- On 1 July 2024, in response to a request for an update on the sand dredging planning, the office of Dr O’Neill advised me that “The draft Review of Environmental Factors (planning approval) will be placed on public exhibition late 2024 and the community will be invited to provide comments as part of the TfNSW Maritime Infrastructure Delivery Office “Have Your Say” consultation process.”
- I have twice written to Dr Michael Holland MP, Member for Bega, but neither he nor his office have responded.

But despite significant erosion and significant concerns raised by many, from the perspective of the community there appears to be no sense of urgency from those entities and officials who have responsibilities under the CMP.

And so I move on to discuss the Mayoral report to be dealt with at agenda item 7. I support both recommendations. That is: Council advocating to the NSW Minister for Environment, Energy, Climate Change and Water for further funding including Clyde River dredging as a matter of urgency; and Council advocating to the Secretary for Transport for NSW to prioritise and fund Clyde River dredging for Surfside Beach nourishment.

I want to be clear that I am grateful for the report. But I do also ask that Council be proactive and transparent on progressing its advocacy to NSW Government entities, officials and officeholders, and to others. I know the community would appreciate frequent updates on progress and discussions, either via publishing information to the Council website or via direct email to residents.

I accept that Council's financial, staffing and other non-financial resources are limited. But I would like to know whether there other actions that can be taken in the interim period, while we wait on resolution of funding and the actual/physical sand dredging that will lead to dune nourishment at Surfside.

I note the recent physical works and community consultation on proposed works at Longbeach, which demonstrates that opportunistic dune nourishment from dredged material is not the only potential solution to beach erosion (even if it is the only option contemplated in the CMP). Are there actions that can be taken outside of the CMP? Is the Commonwealth Government's Disaster Relief Package an option? What else may have been tested or considered? Are there other things that community members could do to strengthen or support Council's advocacy to NSW Ministers, Departmental Heads and others?

Before finishing, one point I want to reference is Council's statement that "Private property owners are responsible for protecting their own property (Council file reference S010-T00018). Of course this is true, but surely there is an obligation from Council to assist in that protection – from the perspectives of Council's overarching community purpose as well as being the neighbouring landowner. Council cannot ignore events on its land where that ignorance in turn causes issues to neighbouring landholders.

I will conclude by saying that - as the beach washes away and the erosion progressively gets closer to homes, it really is frightening. We need real action as soon as possible.

Good afternoon Mayor, Councillors, General Manager, Staff, Gallery and those comfortable zooming from home my name is Patricia Hellier from Batemans Bay.

**MR24/003 Coastal Protection Works, Surfside Beach** – Whilst I support the recommendation of the two advocacy points in this proposal I believe a third point should be added.

You will note of Page 10 of the Agenda it states “Private property owners have the ability to protect their property at any time by applying for approval to undertake protection work”. I believe that this Council should advocate for the “red tape” to be cut and that property owners should be able to sandbag their properties without having to go thru an “approval process”.

It should be noted that approximately 8mtrs of erosion has occurred at the northern end of Myamba Pde affecting approximately 14 homes it is believed that there is approximately another 8mtrs of vegetation left before these properties and their assets will be impacted. I believe the cutting of the “red tape” for sandbagging approval should be the highest priority. Councillors this is peoples homes, homes that some have taken many years to acquire.

Under the heading Expenditure to date and allocation of funds I note that there is a statement “recent and previous presentation to Public Access have made reference to a \$18M grant figure that Council has received. This is untrue”. **This statement has been directed at me I dispute this statement** - my statement is on the Council Web Site and there is access to the Live Streaming – I will reiterate my statement “ **There was a \$5M grant for the CMP and a further announcement of \$12,0007,632 this equates to approximately \$18M**” (note I did not state this was a grant).

Councillors on June 2023 MP’s Phillips & Holland made an announcement of \$12,0007,632. Their statement contained the following “**Batemans Bay to receive a new Coastal Protection Works under new Disaster Ready Fund from the first round of funding we are both delighted to see strong investment to protect the South East local environment and homes from Coastal Erosion.** MP Fiona Phillips stated “**I am thrilled to see Batemans Bay region in particular, Surfside receive an upgrade**”.

At this point in time I ask, did Council receive this \$12,0007,632 from the Disaster Ready Fund? as it states in the Expenditure that Council received a **\$6M** from the Federal Governments Disaster Ready Fund” Did Council receive **\$12,0007,632 OR \$6M?**

Councillors under the same heading it states “this funding agreement is rigid and requires the **\$5M** to be split across three separate actions identified in the Certified Open Coast CMP”.

In the contract it states-**Long Beach** Coastal Protection Works (Phase 1 and 2) \$2.6M for design and construction of the entire length of works, include \$900,000 for the construction of works within the High Priority Works area.

**Wharf Road Stage 1** (Phase 1 and 2) Coastal Protection Works (Phase 1 & 2) \$2.4M

**Surfside** Coastal Inundation Levee \$1.5M

Therefore \$2.6M for Long Beach, \$2.4M for Wharf Rd – **Long Beach and Wharf Road** consumes the entire **\$5M** therefore the \$5M has not been split across the three separate areas. **Where will the Surfside funding come from?**

It also states “Council staff have been advised that the funding must be strictly used for investigation, design and construction of these works? **I ask where did this advice come from?**

**I note in point 2.** there is reference to a \$6M grant from the Federal Government's "Disaster Read Fund" . It states -this second grant is allocated to coastal protection works in Batemans Bay, with Casey's Beach being the **TOP priority** – and yet it has been quoted that the Rock Wall at Casey's Beach is \$3.5M

Councillors take a drive along **Casey's Beach and Bay Rd Long Beach** these areas in comparison to Surfside could only be described as "**pristine**" and yet Casey's Beach is being given **TOP priority** when we have homes at Surfside under **direct** threat. **WHO** allocated this monies to Casey's Beach?

The Council and State Government **OF THE DAY** approved the development at Surfside – State Government and the Council **OF THE DAY** approved the **first** Batemans Bay Bridge, the 2016 Council supported the new **BB Bridge**. It is known by the local, locals, that the pylons of the first bridge changed the Nelligen River and now it is being recognised by the locals that the 8 pylons from the **BB new Bridge** is directly affecting Surfside. Facts are Councillors there are blocks of land along Wharf Road that are now under water. There is a consortium that owns approximately 16 of these blocks which are partially under water and the buy back offer of the State Government has been rejected by this consortium.

**CAR24/004 Toilet Strategy Update** - I believe there has been a huge improvement in the cleanliness of our Public Toilets. For some years I presented in Council over the Public Toilets and back in the 2012 -2016 group of Councillors one Councillor called me "the toilet lady". In the 2016 group of Councillors I provided a some photos of the toilets at Albert Ryan Park , Cl Mayne was sitting in the Mayor's Chair made a statement "Gee these photos are less than flattering surely we can afford a "lick of paint". Well Councillors we "got that lick of paint and I have a photo here to prove it" - that lick of paint was a "splash of bright blue paint" which blended in "**not so well** with the dirty cream walls".

Today I am pleased to say that the highly used toilets at Albert Ryan Park are looking a lot cleaner and "user friendly" . I know these toilets sat in the **ROSS Report** -The only thing I have to ask is "when will we see a new block of toilets at Albert Ryan Park"? As truck driver, delivery drivers, taxi drivers, walkers, joggers and the general public use this facility frequently.

Patricia Hellier  
16.7.2024