



Wednesday 7th August 2013

NSW Coastal Panel declines Old Bar seawall proposal

The NSW Coastal Panel today announced that it had not approved a proposal from a number of beachfront landholders to build coastal erosion protection works at Lewis Street, Old Bar.

Acting Chair of the NSW Coastal Panel, Derek Rutherford said the Panel had carefully considered the proposal and determined that it could not give consent to the development application.

“The Panel considered the initial application and subsequent amendments offered by the applicant in response to our concerns, as well as expert technical and planning advice,” Mr Rutherford said.

“Under the *Coastal Protection Act 1979* the Panel has clear tests that must be met to allow it to grant approval to coastal erosion protection works.

“The Panel may only approve works where it is satisfied that adequate arrangements are in place to maintain the works over their expected life and to address erosion to the beach and adjacent lands that is likely to be caused by the works.

“It must also be satisfied that the works will not unreasonably limit public access to or use of the beach, or pose a threat to public safety.

“In this instance, following extensive consideration, the Panel was not satisfied that the likely impact of the works on the beach and adjacent lands could be adequately managed.”

Mr Rutherford said the Panel was particularly concerned about *end effects* likely to be caused by the works – that is, enhanced erosion of the beach, dunes and other land at the end of the works.

“Without an adequate strategy and funding arrangements to manage any effects, adjacent private properties and public lands will be impacted and public access and safety may be compromised,” Mr Rutherford said.

“Public access, safety and satisfactory funding arrangements for maintenance and damage restoration are the key considerations for granting consent under the Act, and the panel was not satisfied that these were met by the application.”

Mr Rutherford said the NSW Coastal Panel recognised the real and immediate threat from ongoing coastal erosion to properties at Old Bar.

“We support an integrated and long term solution for the whole of Old Bar Beach, which involve the wider community, council and all beachfront landholders and managers of public lands,” Mr Rutherford said.

“The Panel is aware that the Office of Environment and Heritage will be meeting with Greater Taree City Council in early August to discuss coastal erosion at Old Bar, and Council’s ongoing management of the coastline.

“It is essential that all affected landholders at Old Bar Beach participate in determining a solution to the erosion threat at Old Bar.”

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