18 February 2019

Professor Bruce Thom chaired the meeting.

Coastal Council members in attendance were:

- Professor Bruce Thom, Chair, NSW Coastal Council
- Kate Brooks, NSW Coastal Council
- Ron Cox, NSW Coastal Council
- William Glamore, NSW Coastal Council
- Angus Gordon, NSW Coastal Council
- Jane Lofthouse, NSW Coastal Council
- Annelise Tuor, NSW Coastal Council

The Council discussed a range of matters related to annual reporting, stakeholder engagement and its work program undertaken since its last meeting in November 2018.

ANNUAL REPORTING

The Coastal Council completed its annual baseline audit of local government Coastal Management Programs (CMPs) and Coastal Zone Management Plans (CZMPs) for 2018. As requested, the baseline audit was submitted to the office of the Minister for Environment on 19 December, 2018. All councils provided information on the status of their CZMPs and CMPs and issues impacting their capacity to deliver certified CMPs by December 2021. Members acknowledged the support of local government and OEH Regional Offices in completing the audit, noted most councils are at an early stage in planning their CMPs (Stage 1 Scoping) and discussed the barriers and challenges to CMP preparation identified by councils. These included a need for timely and consistent advice on CMP scoping and stage tasks; improved coordination with state agencies, including MEMA, on CMP scoping and actions; coordination and resourcing of councils preparing joint CMPs; difficulties resourcing CMP planning and actions via an inflexible grant program; time frame to prepare CMPs by December 2021; and, need for capacity building activities and fit-for-purpose guidance materials to assist local government deliver their CMPs. Results of the baseline audit will inform Coastal Council work program priorities in 2019.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Members of the Coastal Council continue to actively engage with state and local government representatives to better understand the issues hampering the implementation of sustainable long-term management of our coast. To this end, workshops have been held with the OEH South East Regional team and Maritime Infrastructure Delivery Office, a joint initiative between Roads and Maritime Services and the Department of Industry, to facilitate better awareness of the opportunities for delivery of state government programs in collaboration with local government through CMPs. Ongoing communication with MEMA, through Coastal Council Members on the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel and monthly updates to the Marine Estate Agency Steering Committee, have proved invaluable in promoting linkages between MEMA Strategy projects and CMP priorities. Capturing the respective responsibilities of public authorities and local government in CMPs is seen as central to realising community expectations for coordinated management of the coast. Engagements via forums organised by groups like the Sydney Coastal Councils Group and Cooks River Alliance also provide the Coastal Council with deeper insights into the challenges for CMP preparation and an opportunity to revisit work program priorities.
The benefits of engagement with a broad cross section of coastal practitioners on Coastal Council activities and priorities was discussed. Apart from the regular publication of meeting summaries on the Coastal Council web pages, the potential of using annual forums like the NSW Coastal Conference was an effective means of stakeholder engagement.

COASTAL COUNCIL WORK PROGRAM - UPDATE

A key deliverable of the Council’s work program for 2018 was the successful completion of the baseline audit of local government CZMPs and CMPs. This information is assisting Council’s engagement with stakeholders for better coordination of state agency and local government actions in relation to CMPs. Priorities for building local government capacity to address the requirements of the Coastal Management Act, State Environment Planning Policy and Manual are also being identified, including the preparation of fit-for-purpose guidance materials to help council officers scope and plan CMPs and to develop appropriate economic analyses for assessment of coastal management options.

Options to address known issues (ie. greater flexibility in grant funding guidelines under the OEH Coast & Estuary Grant Program and guidance materials to assist local government CMP scoping) have been discussed with the OEH Executive.

In addition, Council’s work program is addressing a range of emerging issues for which a consistent whole of government approach is required to support councils’ CMPs. Two areas of immediate investigation include: (1) identifying options for streamlining the development of coastal vulnerability maps utilising existing information; and (2) documenting the issues and options for sand nourishment as a realistic management response for open coast and estuary shorelines. Both matters are being progressed in discussions with the relevant state agencies.

NEXT MEETING The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for April 2019.