



Stockton Community Group Inc Submission Draft Extended Coastal Management Plan

Background

Stockton Community Group Inc. (SCG Inc) is a dedicated group of volunteers passionate about supporting community members and addressing local needs. The SCG Inc. aims to support and maintain the health and vibrancy of the social and natural environment of Stockton and surrounding areas. <https://stocktoncommunitygroup.com.au/>

Beach Nourishment

The Draft Extended Coastal Management Program (DECMP) from City of Newcastle (CN) commits to the main feature required from a Stockton Community view.

Key feature of the plan is Mass Sand Nourishment of Stockton Beach in the short to medium term (1 to 5) years delivered from offshore sources via a suitable dredge with funding from the NSW Government and City of Newcastle (CN). The rationale being the Stockton Beach erosions is a result of NSW Governments port breakwater infrastructure, Port of Newcastle dredging and NSW Government and CN seawall construction.

The beach nourishment has been shown to be the most cost-effective solution to the erosion problems and impacts and the community supports this solution. The Draft Extended Coastal Management Plan (DECMP) also identifies the need for short-term protection works and regular sand top ups.

Feedback

The following issues have been identified that negatively impact the Stockton Community and form the SCG Inc feedback on the Draft Extended Coastal Management Plan 2025 (DECMP)

1. **Ongoing sand top ups** (section 4.2.2 items BN1E, F & G, BN2B(2), BN3B, C, and BN5B (p79 DECMP).

Ongoing sand top ups are unfunded and unallocated which is a major issue that needs resolving. The future responsibility and aspects on the top ups needs to be the responsibility of the NSW Government. The NSW Government is the lead agency involved in the port construction and channel dredging which is the cause of the erosion on Stockton Beach as well as obtaining substantial financial benefits from the port activities including billions of dollars in royalties. To provide a one-off fix with mass sand nourishment without top ups will lead to an unsustainable solution and face continued extreme disaster risk.

2. Timeline for Mass Sand Nourishment (pp 56-59 DECMP)

Timeline for Mass Sand Nourishment of 3 – 5 years in Phase 3 of Stockton Beach repair project is too long and unacceptable. It is noted the timeline is inconsistent throughout the document. Every day the sand nourishment doesn't occur leaves Stockton extremely vulnerable to land erosion and inundation risk associated with east coast lows and other weather events. This increases the need for band-aid works and extra costs. It exposes southern Stockton to increased risks of erosion. Shortening the timeline reduces disaster risk, reduces costs, reduces the loss of existing sand volume and improves mass sand nourishment and delivers the Labour Government's election promise.

3. Reliable proven sand sources and opportunistic sources. (p38 DECMP)

- i) The sand from maintenance dredging of the harbour by the Port of Newcastle is currently unsuitable.
- ii) Port of Newcastle needs to be allowed to dump this sand from near the harbour entrance onto Stockton beach as previously carried out to assist in ongoing top ups.
- iii) Port of Newcastle has not dredged the channel entrance in area E for 3 years

The NSW Government needs to investigate varying the previous lease to extricate the harbour dredging licence allowing sand to be dumped at Stockton Beach by the harbour dredge.

4. Reconnect community access to the beach (p31, p68 DECMP)

Reconnecting community access to the beach at north Stockton through this 75% controlled Government land is essential and must be addressed in the CMP. Future residential developments must be factored into community connection. The proposed housing estates to the north of Stockton will significantly increase the number of people accessing the beach and amenities. It is anticipated that the projected housing estates will increase the population of the Stockton peninsula by approximately 5,000. Doubling the current population. Housing projections (NH 24/09/2024):

- i). 250 houses at the Rifle Range Fern Bay
- ii). 500 houses at the Stockton Hospital Site
- iii). 100 houses at Fort Wallace.

5. Stockton Beach Masterplan (p64 DECMP)

Protecting existing funding sources and community amenity is important. Community consultation on the masterplan for Stockton Beach Caravan Park must occur and include how changes would impact the income projections from the park and use on beach works by CN.

6. Adequate sand buffer(p86 DECMP)

Adequate sand buffer to achieve CMP objectives is critical. A volume of 2.4 million m3 of sand has been identified as the preferred sand renourishment quantity. However, this is inadequate and must be reassessed and increased as this figure is based on 2018 surveys.

Conclusions

The DECMP reports that Stockton's erosion issue and related impacts arises from the NSW government's state significant port asset. This has drastically altered the identity of the suburb. The DECMP shows:

- There is an inequitable distribution of benefits and costs between the NSW government and its people – the residents of Stockton.
- The NSW government derives the lion's share of the benefits.
- The residents of Stockton bear significant, and increasing, erosion impacts and disaster risks.
- CN and its residents have borne the burden of erosion and under the current draft, will continue to bear significant costs – in time, resource allocation, and dollars.
- The NSW government is the lead agency and the one stakeholder with the power to implement initiatives to reduce the costs of the sand top-up program and/or raise a levy on port movements to off-set any residual costs.

We require the NSW Government, PoN and CN to...

1. Un-orphan the ongoing sand top-ups program elements – ensuring they are allocated and fully funded by the NSW government or its agencies. **Action: NSW Government/PoN**
2. Instruct its agencies to expeditiously release the Phase 3 timeline and work to fast-track it. **Action: NSW Government**
3. Reconnect the Harbour source of sand supply from maintenance dredging by extracting from the current lease agreement the dredging licence and renewing it expeditiously. **Action: NSW Government**
4. Require major sand producing projects, if they meet the sand source requirements, to include gaining approval to dump the sand at Stockton as part of their project planning. **Action: NSW Government/PoN**
5. Require NSW government agencies to work constructively and collaboratively with CN to renew public access across their lands, in recognition of the benefit they derive from the MSN that is the core of the DECMP at Stockton. **Action: NSW Government**
6. Ensure the Master Plan for the Stockton Beach Holiday Park engages in open and transparent community consultation on the objectives of the re-design, and the alternatives considered. **Action: CN**
7. Align the Stockton Beach Management Governance Framework with the risk reduction principles that underpin other natural hazards, such as riverine flooding – or explain why they should not be applied. **Action: NSW Government & CN**

Finally, CN needs to reconsider the “drop in” process for the DECMP & any other consultation. There were 4 opportunities for interested citizens to attend. Only one of the sessions was scheduled in Stockton . It is noted that non-residents of Stockton had greater opportunities to seek clarification and information on this very complex topic. It would seem logical & reasonable to have more than one opportunity in a suburb that is impacted by a masterplan upon on which community consultation is sought.

Thank you for your consideration of the community’s views on the DECMP.

Sincerely

Alison Rigby & Lindy Nisbett
Co-Presidents
SCG Inc.