

Strategic policy

Coastal Management Policy (Public Lands)

Corporate Plan reference:	<p>Robust Economy</p> <p>1.3.1 Facilitate the delivery of key infrastructure projects for our preferred economic growth</p> <p>Ecological Sustainability</p> <p>2.4.2 Maintain and improve the quality of beaches, waterways, lakes, rivers, canals and wetlands</p> <p>Social Cohesion</p> <p>5.3.1 Support community programs and infrastructure that encourage interaction, contribute to placemaking and a sense of community</p>
Endorsed by Council on:	24 April 2014
Manager responsible for policy:	Director, Regional Strategy and Planning

1 Introduction

The Sunshine Coast's *coastal public lands*¹ include attractive sandy beaches, rocky headlands, river mouths and coastal lagoons and are central to the Coast's relaxed lifestyle and natural advantage. Visitors and residents enjoy an abundance of recreational opportunities such as walking, surfing, fishing, sailing and swimming and the popularity of our beaches and parks help support coastal businesses.

The coast is a dynamic environment, with sandy beaches constantly eroding and accreting, under the influence of wind, waves and tides. In some circumstances these natural coastal processes have the potential to threaten public infrastructure.

The challenge for Council is to balance the competing needs of providing safe access, visual and recreational amenity, and allowing natural coastal processes to occur, unless there is a significant overriding benefit to the public, such as protecting public assets and/or infrastructure. Council has developed the Coastal Management Policy (Public Lands) to assist in the decision making process.

¹ Terms in italics are defined in Part 11 Definitions.

2 Policy purpose

The purpose of the Coastal Management Policy (Public Lands) is to state Council's position and guide and inform Council's coastal management activities including capital works, operational works, emergency works and development assessment with the objective of achieving the long term protection, sustainable use and enjoyment of coastal public lands.

3 Policy outcome

This policy seeks to achieve the following outcomes through Council's coastal management activities by:

- preserving and enhancing coastal public lands;
- protecting natural and cultural values;
- supporting recreational and social opportunities;
- maintaining the economic value of beaches and parks.

4 Policy scope

This policy applies to coastal public lands that occur on or are adjacent to *coastal foreshores* and are under the management and control of Council. Coastal public lands include a diverse range of landscapes including beaches, dunes, rocky headlands, coastal lagoons, lower estuaries and river mouths.

Specific land parcels relevant to this policy occur along the oceanic coastline and within 1 km upstream from river mouths and entrances to coastal creeks and include:

- State tidal land under Council management (beaches and foreshores);
- State land under Council trusteeship for community purposes (e.g. parks and gardens, beach access, camping and recreation, surf lifesaving, environmental reserves, community purposes);
- Council freehold lands (e.g. parks and environment reserves);
- Council lands under nomination of trust (e.g. parks and environmental reserves);
- Road reserves and esplanades under Council management.

This policy does not apply to lands that are outside Council's control:

- State or Federally managed lands;
- Private lands.

5 Policy context

The Coastal Management Policy (Public Lands) sits within a strategic policy framework under the Corporate Plan and the Waterways and Coastal Management Strategy 2011-2021. It is guided by the principles of Queensland's Coastal Management Plan (2014) and the State Planning Policy 2013.

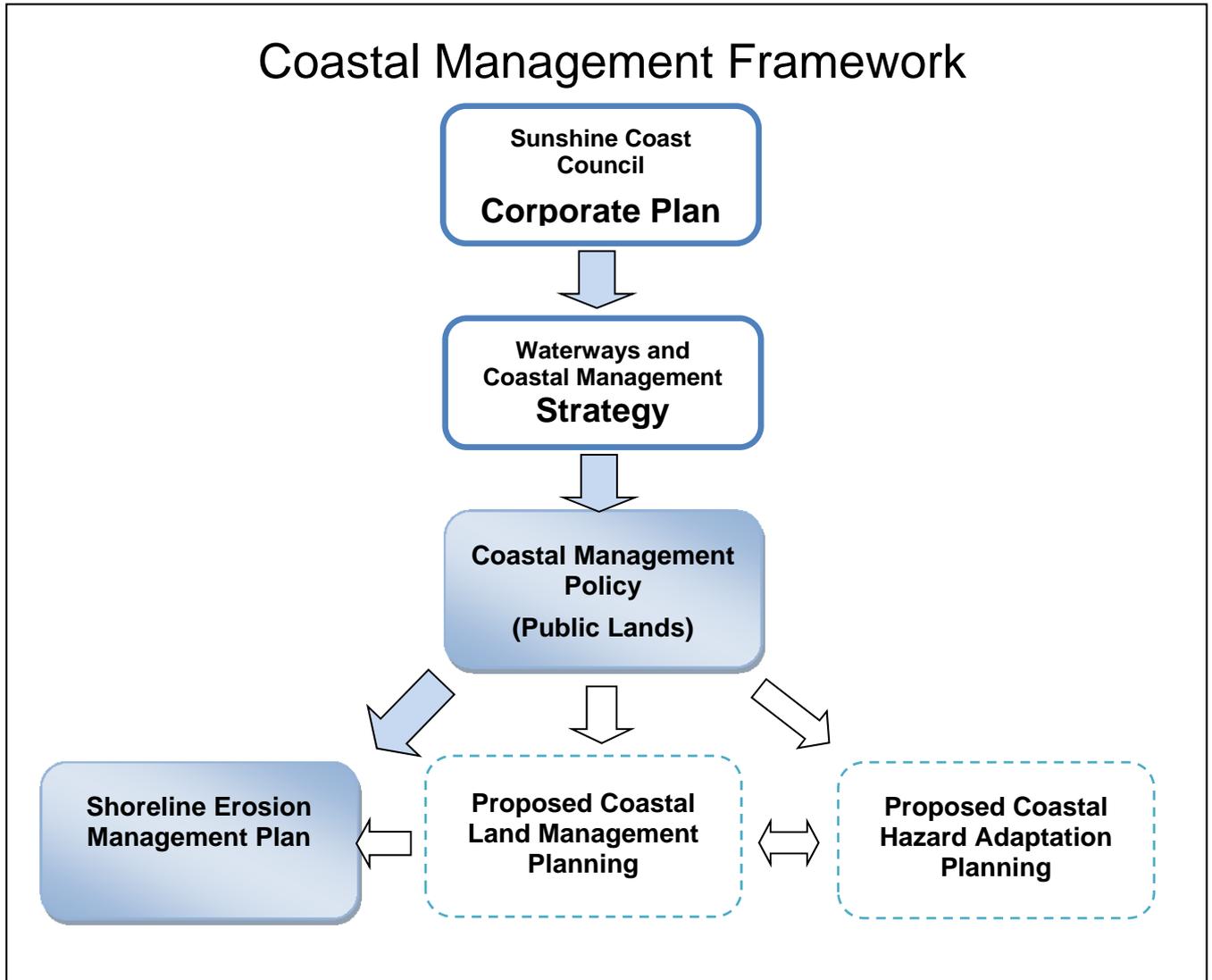


Figure 1: Coastal Policy and Planning Framework

6 Policy Statement

Council recognises the importance of coastal public lands to the Sunshine Coast community and visitors and is committed to:

- avoiding interference with natural coastal processes, where possible;
- minimising interference with natural coastal processes where interference is unavoidable;
- preserving and enhancing the natural values of coastal public lands;
- sustaining the economic value of beaches and parks;
- implementing shoreline erosion management measures
 - where there is significant overriding benefit to the public to do so, and
 - in consideration of community values (economic, social, cultural and environmental);
- being responsive to new information on coastal hazards and modifying coastal management measures as required;
- maintaining and enhancing recreational and community infrastructure while protecting coastal natural resource values;
- recognising the importance of cultural heritage and social values of the coastline;

- engaging with the community on coastal management activities;
- ensuring investment in community infrastructure is cost effective.

7 Coastal Management Policy (Public Lands)

The Coastal Management Policy (Public Lands) provides a Council position in relation to:

- coastal processes and location of infrastructure;
- shoreline erosion management measures and adaptive management;
- economic, social and recreational values;
- cultural and natural values;
- community engagement.

7.1 Coastal processes and location of infrastructure

Erosion and accretion of sandy beaches and dunes are natural coastal processes. It is preferable to allow coastal processes to occur without intervention. Locating infrastructure in *erosion prone areas* can disrupt natural coastal processes and increase the risk of damage to the infrastructure during storm events. A decision-making hierarchy has been developed to guide Council’s management of infrastructure in erosion prone areas (see Figure 2).

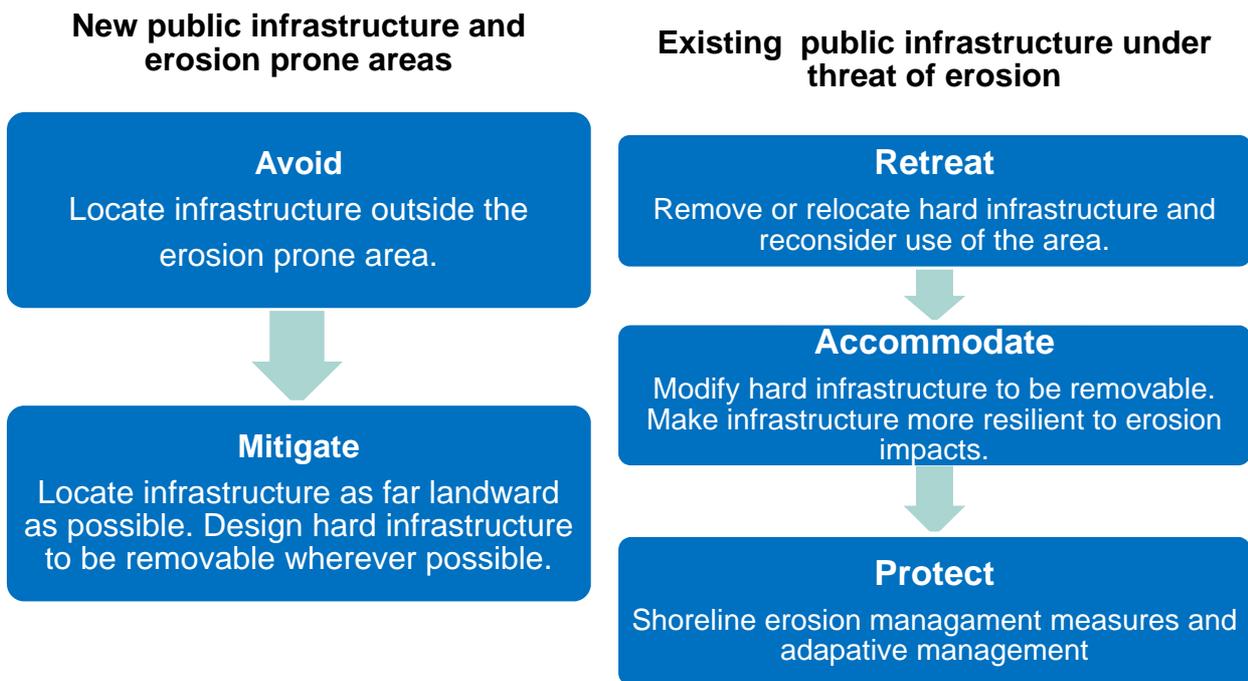


Figure 2. Decision making hierarchy for managing coastal infrastructure.²

² Note: Figure 2 does not include infrastructure for Shoreline Erosion Management Measures. This is addressed in 7.2.

Policy position

- 7.1.1 Avoid: Locate new public infrastructure outside the erosion prone area. Unless there is a *significant public benefit* there should be no net increase in *permanent infrastructure* in erosion prone areas.
- 7.1.2 Mitigate: If locating new public infrastructure within the erosion prone area cannot be avoided, risks from erosion are mitigated by: locating infrastructure as far landward as feasible; and/ or enhancing resilience to erosion; and/ or designing hard infrastructure to be removable, if possible.
- 7.1.3 Retreat: Where existing public infrastructure is at risk from erosion, consideration is given to permanently removing or relocating hard infrastructure outside the erosion prone area and the public usage of the site is reconsidered.
- 7.1.4 Accommodate: Where removal or relocation is not feasible, consideration is given to accommodating public infrastructure within the erosion prone area by modifying hard infrastructure to be removable and/ or making infrastructure more resilient.
- 7.1.5 Protect: Where removal, relocation or making public infrastructure more resilient is not feasible, protect the infrastructure with shoreline protection measures in accordance with adaptive management principles and the hierarchy of preferred options shown in Figure 3.

7.2 Shoreline erosion management measures and adaptive management

Council may implement *shoreline erosion management measures* if major public assets and/ or infrastructure is under threat from erosion and there is a significant public benefit to protecting those assets and/ or infrastructure. In these cases a site specific *Shoreline Erosion Management Plan (SEMP)* is developed based on a decision making hierarchy of preferred options (see Figure 3).

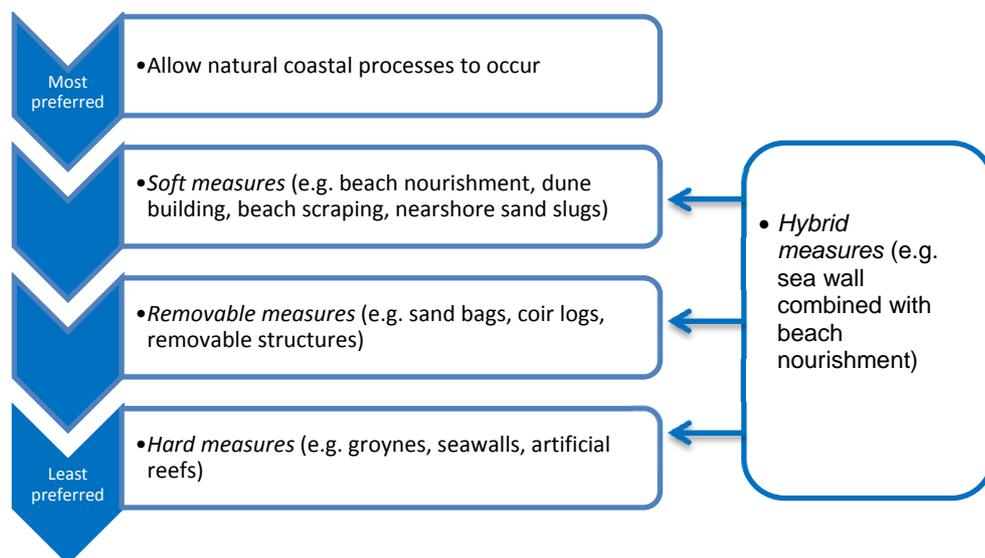


Figure 3: Hierarchy of preferred options for shoreline erosion management measures

Policy position

- 7.2.1 Shoreline erosion management measures are only initiated where there is a significant public benefit in protecting major public assets and/ or infrastructure from erosion.
- 7.2.2 If shoreline erosion management measures are required, a range of engineering solutions are considered on a site by site basis, with reference to the coastal protection hierarchy (see Figure 3). Soft measures such as beach scraping and beach nourishment are

generally preferred as they allow natural coastal processes to continue and beach recreational opportunities can be maintained.

- 7.2.3 Preference is given to using soft measures because they are more easily adapted than hard measures that can 'lock-in' a course of action that is difficult to change in the future.
- 7.2.4 The design and placement of shoreline erosion management infrastructure endeavours to maintain scenic amenity and blend with the natural character of coastal landscapes.
- 7.2.5 The effectiveness of shoreline erosion management measures is monitored seasonally to assess infrastructure vulnerabilities and resilience to coastal hazards and, if necessary, coastal management responses are modified by following the decision making hierarchies in Figures 2 and 3.

7.3 Economic, social and recreational values

Sunshine Coast coastal public lands are highly valued by residents and visitors and help support the local economy and lifestyle. It is essential that our coastal public lands continue to be accessible by the public while protecting coastal resources and values.

Policy position

- 7.3.1 Community infrastructure that supports social and recreational use is planned and developed to protect and enhance coastal values.
- 7.3.2 Esplanades are retained for public access and protected to conserve coastal habitat.
- 7.3.3 Private vehicle access over beaches and foreshores is not allowed unless by permit or for essential community purposes.
- 7.3.4 Where appropriate, shoreline erosion management measures maintain and enhance public access to the foreshore and support recreational use of the site.
- 7.3.5 Access pathways across coastal public lands are planned and designed to protect coastal habitat and support safe community access.
- 7.3.6 Access tracks to coastal foreshores are appropriately designed and aligned to minimise erosion and protect sand dunes. A minimum number of access tracks is preferred to reduce impacts to coastal foreshore areas. Private access to the foreshore is discouraged.
- 7.3.7 For the benefit of the community and economy, commercial use and events on coastal public land may occur in accordance with Council's events and commercial activity policies.

7.4 Cultural and natural values

Aboriginal Traditional Owners have a long history with strong connections to the coast. In addition non-Aboriginal cultural heritage and social history are of great importance to the community. The Sunshine Coast's coastal landscapes and biodiversity values are highly regarded and need to be protected, promoted and well managed.

Policy position

- 7.4.1 When undertaking shoreline erosion management measures, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage values are investigated and protected in accordance with legislative requirements.

- 7.4.2 *High Ecological Significance (HES)*³ areas are protected or enhanced. Where impacts from shoreline erosion management measures cannot be feasibly avoided, they are designed and located to ensure impacts on HES areas are minimised and residual impacts are mitigated through offsets.
- 7.4.3 Coastal dunes and supporting vegetation are protected from the impacts of development and recreational use. Where needed, revegetation works are undertaken to stabilise dunes.
- 7.4.4 Habitat for coastal fauna such as nesting turtles and migratory and resident shorebirds is protected from the impact of recreational activities and is considered in coastal management activities.

7.5 Community engagement

The Sunshine Coast community has a strong interest in our coastal public lands and Council aims for a close collaboration between government, business, non-government organisations and the community. Aspects of community engagement may incorporate consultation and sharing of information on coastal processes and management activities.

Policy position

- 7.5.1 Aboriginal Traditional Owners, government agencies, tourism operators, business organisations and community interest groups are consulted for coastal planning and management activities.
- 7.5.2 Coastal land managers share knowledge and information with the community on coastal processes and coastal management programs.
- 7.5.3 Coastal stakeholder groups are encouraged to participate in the management of coastal public lands.

7.6 Protection of private property from coastal erosion

Private property located in coastal areas may be subject to coastal hazards. While of interest and concern to Council, the protection of private property is not Council's responsibility.

On the Sunshine Coast, private land adjacent to the open beachfront is typically separated from the beach by public land such as bushland reserves, parklands, esplanades and road reserves. This public land provides an important coastal erosion buffer to landward assets and infrastructure while also providing many important services to the community and the environment, such as beach resilience, habitat, access and recreational opportunities. Such public land:

- should only be used for purposes that are for the greatest good of the community; and
- should not be used for locating coastal protection measures which are intended to protect private property.

Hard coastal protection measures such as sea walls can negatively impact beaches and adjacent updrift and downdrift areas. Where the owner of private property proposes to implement hard coastal protection measures to reduce the threat of coastal erosion:

- the protection measures are to be located as far landward as possible;
- the liability, as well as the cost for construction and maintenance of the protection measures is to be borne by the owner of the private property;
- negative impacts associated with the protection measures are to be avoided or mitigated.

³ draft *Coastal Protection State Planning Regulatory Provision 2012*

Policy position

- 7.6.1 Council is not responsible for the protection of private property.
- 7.6.2 Coastal public lands are for public purposes. Coastal protection measures for private property are to be located as far landward as practicable and on the lot containing the property.
- 7.6.3 Council will not take ownership, nor accept liability, nor accept responsibility for maintenance of coastal protection measures, that are for the purpose of protecting private property.
- 7.6.4 Coastal protection measures for private property should be designed, located and maintained so as to avoid negative impacts to other lands, assets and/ or infrastructure.
- 7.6.5 Where an area contains multiple instances of private property being threatened by coastal erosion, a coordinated approach to coastal protection should be adopted.

8 Council roles and responsibilities

Sunshine Coast Council's role is to manage Council controlled coastal public lands and Council is responsible for developing plans, policies and programs with the objective of protecting these lands in consultation with the public, community interest groups and government stakeholders. Coastal public lands are largely under Council trusteeship and as such Council has responsibilities for protecting and maintaining the land under the Land Act 1994. Council requires "owner's consent" from State Government for developments on State owned land and Council is also the assessment manager for certain developments on coastal public lands.

9 Implementation

The Coastal Management Policy (Public Lands) is implemented by Council through the development and implementation of Shoreline Erosion Management Plans (as required) and undertaking coastal land management planning for operational, capital and maintenance works. The policy is also to inform the considerations of coastal hazard adaptation planning for medium to long term issues including sea level rise, storm surge, coastal inundation and erosion associated with predicted climate change. All Council Departments have an interest in the management of coastal public lands.

10 Measurement of success

The success of the Sunshine Coast Council's Coastal Management Policy (Public Lands) is to be measured by determining that:

- There is no net increase of permanent infrastructure in erosion prone areas (apart from necessary shoreline erosion management measures);
- There is no net loss of coastal dunes or vegetation from development or the public use of coastal public lands;
- Recreational opportunities are maintained or enhanced on coastal public lands.

11 Definitions

Coastal foreshores

Tidal lands occurring between high water and low water mark, coastal foreshores are frequently changing under the influence of weather and tides. Includes coastal and estuary beaches and can occur on any coastal land tenure.

Coastal Land Management Plan

A management plan for coastal public lands that is developed by local government which identifies coastal values, threats and opportunities and management actions to protect and enhance coastal public lands.

Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy

A strategic land use plan, based on coastal hazard risk assessments, that enables the community to consider its response to coastal hazards such as erosion, storm tide and sea-level rise. The draft Queensland State Planning Policy (SPP) provides guidance to local government for assessing coastal hazard risks and the potential development of a CHAS.

Coastal public lands

Coastal public lands are State and Local Government lands occurring on or are adjacent to coastal foreshores and are under the control and management of Council.

Erosion prone area

As defined by the *Coastal Protection & Management Act 1995*, coastal erosion prone areas are declared by the State based upon calculations of short and long term erosion and sea level rise. Maps of erosion prone areas can be found on the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection

website: http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/coastal/development/assessment/erosion_prone_areas.html#erosion_prone_area_mapping

High Ecological Significance (HES) areas

Includes protected areas, wetlands, habitat for threatened species, endangered and of-concern regional ecosystems, nationally threatened ecological communities, remnant vegetation and significant coastal dunes. Maps of HES areas can be found on the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection website:

http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/coastal/management/coastal_plan_maps.php#viewing_the_maps

Infrastructure

Includes hard and soft infrastructure:

- *Hard infrastructure*

For example, buildings, toilet blocks, roads, car parks, pathways, shelter sheds, viewing platforms, lifeguard towers, playground equipment, barbeques, lighting and utility structures.

- *Soft infrastructure*

For example, beaches, parks and access corridors for recreation or community use.

Permanent Infrastructure

Infrastructure with a life of greater than 20 years, as opposed to temporary or expendable infrastructure that is easily sacrificed, removed or relocated if under threat of erosion.

Shoreline erosion management measures

Coastal works for the purpose of protecting coastal public lands from erosion and includes:

- *Hard measures*

The use of hard structures such as concrete and rock to protect coastal public lands from erosion.

- *Hybrid measures*

A combination of hard and soft coastal protection infrastructure.

- *Removable measures*

Temporary structures designed to be removed or that naturally dissipate over time.

- *Soft measures*

The use of sand to protect and buffer the shoreline and/or re-build sand dunes. Sand can be sourced locally by beach scraping or through dredging. Sand trapping and revegetation can stabilise and help re-build dunes.

Shoreline Erosion Management Plan (SEMP)

A management plan that is developed by local government to identify coastal erosion hot spots, and make recommendations for their management, in consideration of community values (economic, social, environmental).

Significant Public Benefit

Where locating and/ or protecting public infrastructure within the erosion prone area has significant economic, social, cultural and environment benefits to the broader community. Erosion risk and whole-of-life costs should be considered in the decision.

12 Related policies and legislation

Queensland State Government Legislation

Queensland's Coastal Management Plan 2014	Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995
SEQ Regional Plan 2009-2031	State Planning Policy 2013
Environment Protection Act 1994	Land Act 1994
Forestry Act 1959	Marine Parks Act 2004
Local Government Act 2009	Recreational Areas Management Act 2006
Nature Conservation Act 1992	Sustainable Planning Act 2009
Queensland Heritage Act 1992	Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994
Transport Infrastructure Act 1994	Historic Shipwrecks Act 1979
Vegetation Management Act 1999	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003

Sunshine Coast Council Policies and Plans

Sunshine Coast Council Corporate Plan 2009-2014	Climate Change and Peak Oil Strategy 2010-2020
Waterways and Coastal Management Strategy 2011-2021	Biodiversity Strategy 2010-2020
Open Space Strategy 2011	Social Infrastructure Strategy 2011
Active Transport Plan 2011-2031	Economic Development Strategy 2010-2014
Sport and Active Recreation Plan 2011-2026	Community Events and Celebration Strategy
Sustainable Transport Strategy 2011-2031	Sunshine Coast Council Planning Schemes and Policies
Community Land and Complementary Commercial Activity Policy	Events Policy

Sunshine Coast Council Local-Laws

01 Administration	02 Animal Management 2011
03 Community Health and Environment Management 2011	04 Local Government Controlled Areas, Facilities, Infrastructure and Roads 2011
05 Parking 2011	06 Bathing Reserves 2011

Version control:

Version	Reason/ Trigger	Change (Y/N)	Endorsed/ Reviewed by	Date
1.0	Create new			03/04/2014
1.1	Finalise			28/04/2014
1.2	Rebranding	N		05/08/2014

© Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2009-current. Sunshine Coast Council™ is a registered trademark of Sunshine Coast Regional Council.