

An aerial photograph of a coastal town and beach. The town is built on a peninsula, with a long, narrow beach extending from the tip of the peninsula towards the foreground. The water is a vibrant blue-green color, and the sky is clear and blue. The beach is wide and sandy, with some greenery and buildings visible along its edge. The town is densely packed with houses and buildings, and there are some trees and green spaces interspersed among them. The overall scene is a beautiful coastal landscape.

Our future on the coast

**An overview of coastal
management in NSW**



Heritage boatsheds at Forsters Bay, Narooma
(Photo: J Spencer/OEH)

Contents

Introduction.....	1
The coastal management framework.....	2
Coastal Management Act 2016	2
State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018	3
NSW Coastal Council.....	4
NSW Coastal Management Manual.....	5
Preparing a coastal management program.....	6
Stage 1: Identify the scope of a coastal management program	7
Stage 2: Determine risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities	8
Stage 3: Identify and evaluate options	8
Stage 4: Prepare, exhibit, finalise, certify and adopt the coastal management program	9
Stage 5: Implement, monitor, evaluate and report	10
Coastal Management Toolkit.....	11
List of figures	
Figure 1 Parts of the coastal management manual	5
Figure 2 Stages in preparing and implementing a coastal management program	6
Figure 3 Contents of a coastal management program	10



Kiama aerial view (Photo: J Lugg/OEH)

Introduction

The NSW coast is one of our greatest assets. It is a dynamic and diverse landscape with unique natural features, values and resources that support our way of life.

The NSW Government's vision is for thriving and resilient communities living and working on a healthy coast, now and into the future.

The interaction of coastal processes and hazards, population growth, coastal lifestyles and sensitive natural environments creates complex challenges in managing the open coast and estuaries.

In response to these challenges, the NSW Government has established a new coastal management framework. This framework provides an opportunity to improve the way we manage the coast. It comprises the:

- *Coastal Management Act 2016* (CM Act)
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018 (CM SEPP)
- NSW Coastal Management Manual (the manual)
- NSW Coastal Council
- Coastal and Estuary Grants Program

The NSW Government is assisting councils by providing guidance, technical advice and grant funding to support the preparation and implementation of coastal management programs.

Under the new framework, local councils will prepare coastal management programs (CMPs) that set the long-term strategy for the coordinated management of the coast, consistent with the objectives of the *Coastal Management Act 2016*.

These programs will be prepared using a staged risk management process described in the NSW Coastal Management Manual (the manual).

This document outlines the new framework and the process for preparing and implementing coastal management programs.



Newcastle coast aerial view (Photo: J Spencer /OEH)

The coastal management framework



Jervis Bay (Photo: M Van Ewijk/OEH)

Coastal Management Act 2016

The *Coastal Management Act 2016* (CM Act) sets out the objectives for coastal management in NSW.

The CM Act establishes the NSW Coastal Council, provides for a coastal management manual and requires councils to prepare coastal management programs in accordance with the manual.

The CM Act defines the coastal zone which is made up of four coastal management areas:

- 1. Coastal wetlands and littoral rainforest area** - defined as areas with particular hydrologic and ecological characteristics.
- 2. Coastal vulnerability area** - defined as the area subject to any of the seven coastal hazards. The vulnerability area will be identified and mapped by each council based on local conditions.
- 3. Coastal environment area** - defined as coastal waters, estuaries, coastal lakes and lagoons, and surrounding land including beaches, dunes, headlands and rock platforms.
- 4. Coastal use area** - defined as land adjacent to the coast where development is or may be carried out.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018

State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018 (CM SEPP) promotes an integrated and coordinated approach to land-use planning in the coastal zone.

The CM SEPP includes maps of the coastal management areas which define the coastal zone as four distinct areas. This approach enables more targeted management of the diversity of environments, hazards, pressures and interests in the coast.

The CM SEPP establishes development controls to be applied by consent authorities under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* in each coastal management area to achieve the objectives of the CM Act.

These development controls will help protect the environmental assets of the coast, maintain public access to beaches and foreshore areas and help to reduce future coastal risks.

The CM SEPP also establishes the approval pathway for coastal protection works.

Some land will be mapped within more than one coastal management area. In these cases, the development controls for each of the relevant management areas will apply. If there is any inconsistency, the CM SEPP sets out the priority order for the controls.

Councils will be able to seek amendments to any of the coastal management area maps via a planning proposal, including adding a coastal vulnerability area map developed as part of their coastal management program.



Environmentally friendly seawall at Kogarah Bay, Georges River (Photo: D.Wiecek/OEH)

NSW Coastal Council

The NSW Coastal Council is a group of coastal experts appointed by the NSW Government to provide advice on coastal issues to the Minister administering the CM Act. The NSW Coastal Council will provide advice in relation to the preparation and implementation of coastal management programs by local councils.

The NSW Coastal Council, at the request of the Minister, also conducts a performance audit of the implementation of a coastal management program of a local council.

Unlike the previous NSW Coastal Panel, it does not have a development consent role.



Coastal saltmarsh threatened ecological community (Photo: S Ruming/OEH)

NSW Coastal Management Manual

The manual has been prepared by the Office of Environment and Heritage.

It establishes mandatory requirements and provides guidance to help councils to prepare, develop, adopt, implement, amend and review coastal management programs.

The manual has two parts as outlined in Figure 1.

Part A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction and mandatory requirements for a coastal management program
Part B	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guidance for preparing and implementing a coastal management program

Figure 1 Parts of the coastal management manual

The manual includes a five-stage risk management process that helps councils and their communities to identify and manage risks to the environmental, social and economic values of the coast (Figure 2).

The manual provides information to help councils to evaluate and select management actions that are feasible and effective ways to manage the coastal environment.

These actions are incorporated into councils' integrated planning and reporting framework and land-use planning instruments.

The manual outlines the community engagement and consultation with public authorities that is required when preparing a coastal management program.



Pretty Beach, Murramarang National Park (Photo: J Yurasek)

Preparing a coastal management program

A coastal management program (CMP) sets the long-term strategy for the coordinated management of the coast. It identifies:

- key coastal management issues
- actions to be implemented by council and other public authorities to address those issues
- how and when actions will be implemented
- the costs and cost-sharing arrangements to enable implementation.

A CMP may be prepared for the whole, or any part of the coast within a local government area, or for adjoining local government areas that are within a coastal sediment compartment or estuary.

A coastal management program may be prepared for adjoining council areas working together, where important physical or ecological features cross local government boundaries.

A CMP is prepared in five stages (Figure 2).

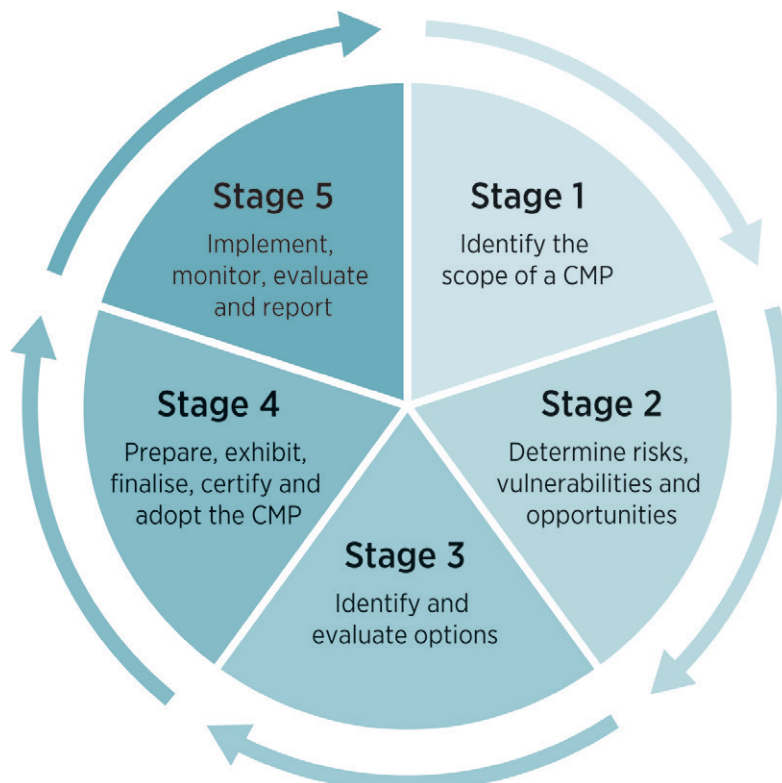


Figure 2 Stages in preparing and implementing a coastal management program

Stage 1: Identify the scope of a coastal management program

The scoping study is the first stage in the process of preparing a CMP. The scoping study will assist councils to:

- identify the community and stakeholders and prepare an engagement strategy
- determine the context of coastal management in the local area
- establish the purpose, vision and objectives of a coastal management program
- determine the key coastal management issues and the spatial extent of management areas
- review current coastal management arrangements
- establish roles, responsibilities and governance arrangements
- identify knowledge gaps and information needs
- determine where action is required through a first-pass risk assessment
- prepare a preliminary business case
- determine whether a planning proposal will be prepared to amend the coastal management area maps and the Local Environmental Plan
- develop a forward program for subsequent stages of the coastal management program, including a fast-tracking pathway

The Office of Environment and Heritage provides technical assistance to councils in developing the scope of the CMP.

Councils can choose to fast-track stages 2 to 3 (or parts of those stages). Fast-tracking is only recommended where the management approach is performing well and key drivers of change have not passed thresholds for introducing a new approach.



Stage 2: Determine risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities

Stage 2 involves undertaking detailed studies that help councils to identify, analyse and evaluate risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities.

This includes:

- engage with the community and stakeholders
- refine understanding of key management issues
- fill knowledge gaps by undertaking technical studies
- identify threats to coastal values and areas exposed to coastal hazards
- analyse and evaluate current and future risks (detailed risk assessment)
- identify scenarios for environmental, social and economic change and related opportunities for coastal communities
- prepare a planning proposal to amend maps of coastal management areas, to commence the Gateway process
- identify timing and priorities for responses, thresholds and lead times.



Stage 3: Identify and evaluate options

Stage 3 involves the identification and evaluation of management options.

This includes:

- identify and collate information on management options
- evaluate management actions, considering their feasibility, viability and acceptability to stakeholders
- select preferred management actions and determine priorities
- engage public authorities about implications for their assets or responsibilities
- evaluate mapping options and implications if a planning proposal is being prepared
- identify pathways and timing of management actions
- prepare a business plan for implementation.





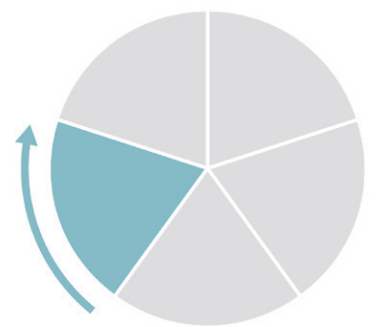
Coastal protection works, Belongil Beach (Photo: P Davies/OEH)

Stage 4: Prepare, exhibit, finalise, certify and adopt the coastal management program

Stage 4 includes:

- preparing a draft CMP (see Figure 3 for contents)
- exhibiting the draft CMP and any related planning proposal
- reviewing and adopt the draft CMP
- submitting the draft CMP to the Minister administering the Act, for certification
- publishing the certified CMP in the Gazette
- making the CMP available to the community.

Prior to exhibition, councils may seek advice from the Office of Environment and Heritage on the draft CMP.



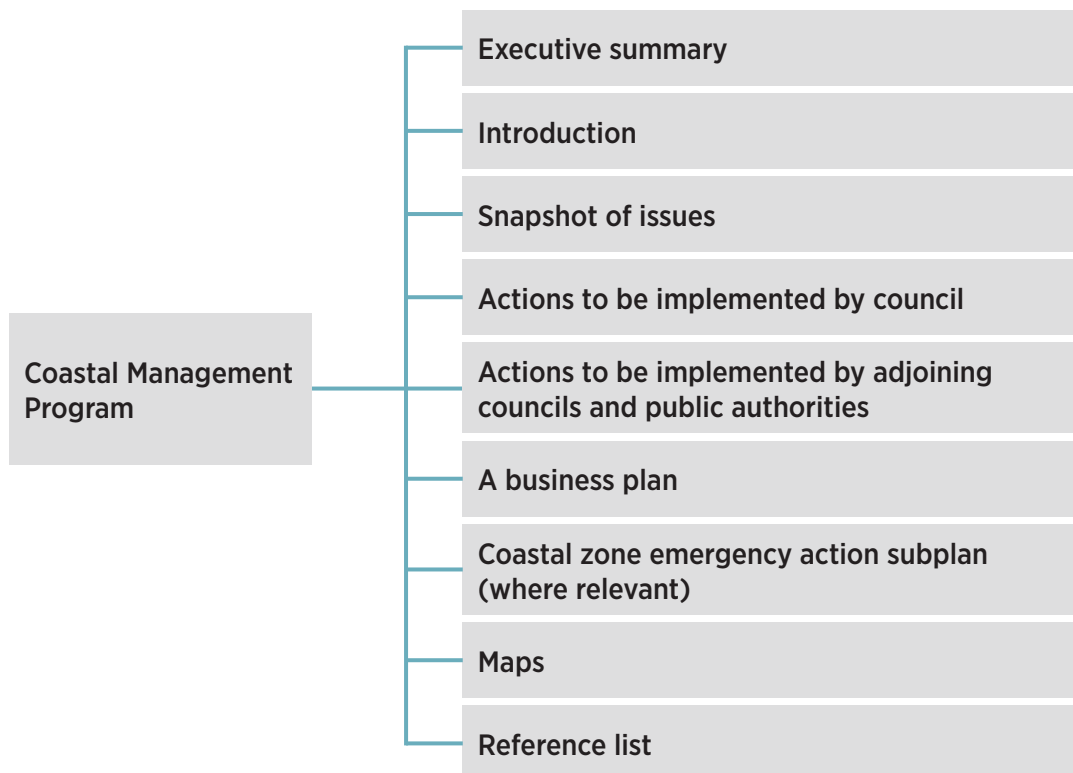


Figure 3 Contents of a coastal management program



Stage 5: Implement, monitor, evaluate and report

Stage 5 involves:

- implementing actions in the published CMP through the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework and land-use planning system
- implementing actions in partnership with adjoining councils and public authorities where relevant
- implementing an effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) program
- monitoring indicators, trigger points and thresholds
- reporting to stakeholders and the community on progress and outcomes through the IP&R framework
- reviewing and update the CMP at least every 10 years.

The evaluation of program outcomes will contribute to council's review of its Community Strategic Plan.

Coastal Management Toolkit

The coastal management toolkit contains technical information and further guidance to assist local councils to manage the NSW coast and develop their coastal management programs.

The toolkit will be updated as new information becomes available.



Community engagement is essential in CMP preparation (Photo: D Wiecek/OEH)

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