

WACRA expresses concerns with the Semaphore to West Beach sand pipeline

At the many Coastal Reference Group (CRG) meetings we have attended and in our correspondence and meetings with the Coast Protect Board/Branch (CPB) and Department for Environment and Water (DEW), we have made it very clear that we are not opposed to the mass fill of sand to West Beach nor the sand pumping pipeline, with certain conditions and undertakings. We have conceded that a pipeline may be part of the best solution to the beaches problem. However, the process for arriving at the replenishment pipeline was flawed.

The plan has failed to properly consider all of the available technical solutions and was never based on a full Environmental Impact Study (EIS). The CPB/DEW have consistently refused to even consider those shortcomings.

It was unanimously agreed by all parties to engage an internationally recognised coastal engineering and science company, Danish Hydraulic Institute (DHI), to conduct a comprehensive report of the project. The Development Application (DA) discusses the DHI report, and their findings informed the CPB of recommendations for a long term solution to the problem at West Beach of a mass sand fill of 500,000 cubic metres, adding that it did not consider in detail the economic, social and environmental consequences of its recommendations. 'Further analysis of the long-term mass nourishment and large scale back passing options is undertaken to evaluate all options to provide a long-term solution.'

After significant disquiet and concern, led by WACRA and supported by a majority of members of the Community Reference Group, DEW commissioned an independent assessment by two interstate coastal experts, claiming that the assessment included a review of previous assessments of shoreline changes and estimates of net sand movement from West Beach through to Largs Bay. The assessment report also advised of any risks associated with the construction and operation of the then proposed pumping system. The same report also identified locations of sand accretion and significant erosion, and advised which beaches would represent the best locations for sand collection.

WACRA advised DEW and CPB, pointing out the numerous shortcomings of that report, and noted it would be wrong, now and in the future, for the report to be put forward as a proper response to the scope of the study, nor should it be a representation or fulfillment of the DHI recommendation. The DA references to the report justify WACRA's concerns about the credibility of the report and its misuse by DEW to support a pipeline strategy.

WACRA understands the many concerns expressed by individuals and groups about the DA and strongly supports the need for a greater period of time to consult with the community to allow them to understand the intricacies and implications of the application.

WACRA has requested an extension of time to 31.1.22 to make a submission.