

MEDIA RELEASE



Go offshore if the price is right for your beach

8 December 2010

The Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG) is pleased to announce the release of the report “Beach Sand Nourishment Scoping Study: Maintaining Sydney’s Beach Amenity Against Climate Change Sea Level Rise”.

SCCG Executive Officer Geoff Withycombe said “the report identifies the potential benefits and impacts of a nourishment programme associated with physical, environmental social economic considerations”. “Importantly, it also looks at the impacts of doing nothing”, said Mr Withycombe.

Shoreline erosion will be a significant and ongoing issue for coastal communities as a result of climate change and beach nourishment is a response that needs to be considered. “The report represents a significant step forward for coastal councils and their residents in Sydney in understanding the benefits of beach nourishment and long term management activities required”, said Emeritus Professor Bruce Thom of Sydney University.

While the study scoped the volumes of sand required to nourish all beaches in Sydney, three case study sites were investigated in detail. These were Collaroy- Narrabeen, Manly and Bate Bay in Sutherland. The principal investigator, Lex Nielsen of AECOM, said “the environmental, economic and social evaluations of the nourishment campaign demonstrated substantial positive benefits”.

“At each site the economic benefits of undertaking such an activity are quite significant. For example, at Manly Beach, every dollar spent on sand nourishment would yield an economic benefit of \$2.4”, continued Mr Nielsen.

Importantly for councils and their residents, the losses that can be avoided through beach nourishment include the loss of residential properties and expenditure by beach visitors. “Of course it’s much harder to place a value of having the beach existing for future generation to enjoy, but that’s the outcome we’re aiming for”, said Mr Withycombe

The SCCG is conscious of the concerns surrounding the environmental impacts of beach nourishment and believes further investigation and consultation will be required. “It is the intent of the SCCG that this study provide a rational basis to inform all spheres of government and coastal communities of the pros and cons of utilising off shore marine sand sources to facilitate immediate and longer term sand nourishment of Sydney’s beaches”, concluded SCCG Executive Officer Geoff Withycombe.

Media Contacts:

Geoff Withycombe
Sydney Coastal Councils Group
0425 325 148

Mr Lex Nielsen
AECOM
0437 668 280

Emeritus Professor Bruce Thom
Sydney Uni / Wentworth Group
(02) 9337 1465