

8th June 2016

Australian Coastal Society Policy on:

National Coastal Planning and Policy Reform: time for national leadership in the face of climate change threats and a continuing coastal population surge.

Our coast is undergoing the twin accelerating pressures of climate change and population growth. Given that coastal planning and management crosses many institutional boundaries (e.g. planning and management, public and private land) at **all** three levels of government, it is now critical that the **only** level of government with the capacity, resources and breadth urgently assumes a leadership role. The incoming federal government must develop innovative approaches to stimulate, prioritise and coordinate the planning and management of the nation's greatest built and natural asset - our coast.

Whilst acknowledging federal constitutional limitations, reforms must take place progressively and cooperatively to address these challenges – this is the true mark of leadership and innovation. We cannot hope to address land use planning and infrastructure planning investments without linking these actions to environmental protection and catchment and coastal natural resource management – underpinned and reinforced by strong research infrastructure and development.

The following three steps must be introduced within the in-coming Government's first term to ensure these great challenges are met:

1. Formulate a **National Coastal Policy**, in consultation with the states and local government through COAG, formally supported by an **Intergovernmental Agreement on Coasts** that defines the national need for information and investment in public infrastructure that underpins the provision of those facilities vital to securing the services required for the economic and social well-being of Australia - against the backdrop of continuing environmental change.
2. Establish a **National Coastal Information System**, similar to that within NOAA in the USA, that will ensure sustained R&D and innovation in coastal biophysical and social sciences; in the development of user-oriented decision support systems; in the coordination of diverse state and local information on risk associated with the adverse impacts of climate change; and in communicating the national adaptation options to communities, the professions and businesses. Such data must be readily and widely available to the whole community.
3. In order to stimulate and facilitate these two critical proposals the in-coming Government should establish a **National Coastal Council**. This Council should in the first instance (1) conduct a national review of the effectiveness of those actions and investments in coastal planning and management that relate to the long term sustainability of natural and built assets across all levels of government; and (2) provide advice to all levels of government on initiatives and innovations needed to secure adaptation and improved management of coastal ecosystems, infrastructure, social welfare needs and the needs of regional economies.

For more information please email: admin@australiancoastalsociety.org

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