



ACS

Australian Coastal Society Ltd

PO Box 65, Flinders University, Bedford Park SA 5041

15 September 2010

The Hon Paul Caica, MP
Minister for Environment and Conservation, Government of South Australia

Dear Minister Caica

Re: Re-organisation of the Coast Protection Branch, South Australia

The Australian Coastal Society (ACS) is concerned about the recent proposal for the internal re-organisation of the South Australian Coast Protection Branch, which the ACS believes will prevent it from operating in an integrated manner on issues of coastal management. The concept of integrated coastal management (ICM) is accepted worldwide and the ACS would be happy to provide you with documentary evidence of this fact. The ACS is also concerned that the timing of the re-organisation will coincide with the National Coastal Conference 'Coast to Coast' being hosted by South Australia next week, 20-24 September. This national conference will be attended by representatives of Commonwealth, State and local governments along with senior coastal managers, engineers and scientists.

The current planners, engineers scientists, surveyors and the marine biologist within the Coast Protection Branch appear to work in an interdisciplinary and integrated manner in one location, where appropriate records are kept and maintained. If these staff are to report to different managers, with different priorities and timelines, the ACS believes this will mitigate against the globally accepted practice of ICM and could be further exacerbated if the staff are spread across different locations. In addition there will be a gradual loss of corporate knowledge and possible loss of records.

In 2007 the State government's own ERD Committee produced a report on 'Coastal Development', noting that;
problems in Queensland and NSW after the removal of the Queensland Beach Protection Authority and the NSW Coastal Council respectively, ... left a significant void in coastal management in both states. There is no longer an agency that sees one of its specific roles being to provide advice to local governments. In the absence of any direct involvement from the state government local councils have joined together to discuss common coastal issues but lack the critical mass or dedicated resources to fully address them (ERD Committee 2007, p 16).

Recommendation 8 of the ERD Committee report was that;

the Government ensures that a suitably empowered state authority whose primary focus is the coast is retained in any review of the Coast Protection Act.

Given recent (2009) national reports on the need for integrated coastal management in the context of climate change and coastal population pressure, the ACS believes it is critical that whatever arrangements are made when the current *Coast Protection Act* is revised, that South Australia continues to have an agency with a primary focus on the coast.

Yours sincerely

Nick Harvey (on behalf of)

Professor Bruce Thom* and Professor Nick Harvey**

President and Vice-President, Australian Coastal Society Ltd

*(*Member of Wentworth Group of Scientists, ** University of Adelaide and author of 'Coastal Management in Australia')*

copies: Michelle Lensink MLC and Mark Parnell MLC (Members of the 2007 ERD Committee on Coastal Development)