



Snapshot

City of Joondalup engaging with its community on coastal vulnerability

Summary

The City of Joondalup, after conducting a coastal hazard assessment, began a comprehensive communication campaign to inform the community of the outcomes of the assessment. Through targeted, well-timed information — and by providing opportunity for further engagement — the City was able to minimise the level of concern within the community and ensure the community was well informed about the potential impacts.

The City of Joondalup (the City), located in the northern suburbs of the Perth Metropolitan Area, includes 17 km of coastline that is highly valued and utilised by the local community. The City's coastline contains beaches, dunes, native vegetation, community-owned buildings as well as areas of existing and planned residential development. There are also significant City-owned or managed assets along the coast (roads, car parks, dual-use paths, playgrounds, park infrastructure and buildings) that are used by the community. Future sea level rise has the potential to damage these natural and built assets and may alter the way these areas can be accessed and enjoyed in the future.

The *State Planning Policy 2.6: State Coastal Planning Policy* (SPP 2.6) provides guidance for land use and developmental decision-making within the coastal zone. Under SPP 2.6, when a subdivision or development application is received for an area at risk of being affected by coastal hazards over the planning timeframe (100 years), then current and/or future lot owners should be made aware of the risk. This should be done by providing a notification on the certificate of title as a condition of subdivision or development approval (Department of Planning, 2013). The methodology used for identifying coastal hazard areas is prescribed in SPP 2.6.

Keywords

Coastal vulnerability, engagement, stakeholders, community, communication



Figure 1: Rocky Coastline at Burns Beach, Joondalup © City of Joondalup.

In accordance with SPP 2.6, the City undertook an assessment to identify hazard areas along its coast. The assessment found that, in the short term, it is mostly minor infrastructure such as fencing, beach access ways and dual-use paths that is vulnerable to severe storm erosion. In the longer timeframes (50 years and 100 years) additional minor and major infrastructure will be vulnerable, including City-owned buildings, car parks, roads, public open space infrastructure and some residential properties.

To communicate the outcomes of the City's coastal hazard assessment, the implications of SPP 2.6 and the City's planned approach to coastal vulnerability, a comprehensive communication campaign was developed. See Table 1 for an overview.

It was anticipated that the coastal vulnerability communication campaign could create significant concern and interest within the community, around both the potential physical impacts of future sea level rise and the potential impact on property values and development opportunities in identified coastal hazard areas.

In developing the communication campaign there were three aspects the City believed would be crucial to minimising concern within the community:

- targeting the campaign for different stakeholders
- getting the timing right
- providing opportunities for follow-up engagement.

Table 1: Summary of the City of Joondalup's three stages of communication.

	Stakeholders	Communication methods
Stage 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Elected Members • Members of Parliament • Local Media 	Briefing presentations were provided to City of Joondalup local Elected Members, local Members of Parliament and the local media. Briefing packs with background information, coastal hazard maps and Frequently Asked Questions were also provided.
Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affected Property Owners • Affected City Lessees • Affected Developers • State Government • Industry Groups 	Affected property owners, affected City lessees and affected developers were sent letters, a coastal erosion map of their property and two sets of 'Frequently Asked Questions'. Affected property owners were invited to a community information session and affected City lessees and affected developers were offered opportunity to meet with the City. Relevant state government departments and industry groups (Western Australian Local Government Association, Local Government Insurance Scheme and Real Estate Institute of Western Australia) were sent briefing packs.
Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General community 	A broad scale information campaign was undertaken including information in the local community newspaper and City publications. Flyers were distributed in the City's libraries and community buildings. Information was made available on the City's website including coastal hazard mapping, technical reports and 'Frequently Asked Questions'.

Key stakeholders were targeted in the campaign, including private property owners in coastal hazard areas, lessees of affected City owned buildings, community groups, users of the City's coastline, the general community, state government departments, industry groups, local Members of Parliament and the local media.

The timing of the different stages of engagement was considered important. Confidential briefings for local Elected Members, Members of Parliament and the local media were undertaken first. This aimed to ensure they were informed of the issues and were able to respond to any queries they might receive from the community. Those directly affected (i.e. private property owners) were then informed prior to the general community as they were likely to have a higher level of concern and it was considered appropriate to advise them individually of how their property would be affected. Once those affected were informed, the City released the information to the broader public.

Opportunity for follow-up communication was provided in a number of ways. Affected property owners were invited to an information session and affected City lessees, developers and other stakeholders were invited to meet with the City. An online form, direct email address and contact phone number were provided to the public as part of the general information campaign. This enabled the community to source more information if they needed it and provided a forum to voice their concerns.

Although no formal evaluation was undertaken, it was considered to be a measure of success that the City received fewer queries and complaints than had been expected. As far as is known, no community members met with the media or with their Federal or State Member of Parliament to voice concerns or complaints.

The City's coastal vulnerability communication campaign was designed to alleviate concern in the community about future potential impacts and improve confidence in the City's approach and response. Through targeted and well-timed information, and by providing opportunity for residents to further discuss the topic, the City was able to minimise the level of concern and alarm in the community, and to ensure the community was well informed about potential impacts from coastal hazards.

References

Department of Planning, 2013: *State Planning Policy 2.6: State Coastal Planning Policy*. Government of Western Australia.

Further information

<http://www.joondalup.wa.gov.au/Live/Environment/CoastalVulnerability.aspx>

<http://www.joondalup.wa.gov.au/Develop/BuildingPlanningHealth/CoastalVulnerability.aspx>

This snapshot was prepared by Lucy Sheehy from the City of Joondalup. Please cite as: Sheehy, L., 2017: City of Joondalup engaging with its community on coastal vulnerability. Snapshot for CoastAdapt, National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, Gold Coast.



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Department of the Environment and Energy