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The Importance of Coastal Management for Queensland and the State Government's Role

Climate change and the “sea change” of population shift to the coast are converging, and present significant challenges to coastal managers at all levels of Government. The Queensland Government, through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has played a critical role in coastal management in the past and continues to do this through the development and implementation of the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995. The State Coastal Management Plan – Queensland’s Coastal Policy and Regional Coastal Management Plans developed under the Act guide decision-making and investment within an integrated coastal zone management framework.

Significant coastal programs and projects arisen from policies contained in state and regional coastal management plans. Many of these have been undertaken in collaboration with key stakeholders, including local governments, industry and the broader community. Examples of key initiatives include:

- The shoreline erosion management planning – taking a proactive approach to coastal erosion
- Ongoing management of erosion prone areas through the surrender of vulnerable land to the State
- Development of storm tide hazard management guidelines for local government to manage this threat
- Capacity building programs in coastal processes and management
- Wetlands classification and mapping along the Queensland coast
- Biodiversity Planning Assessments to assist decision-making by resource managers.

These initiatives provide a framework to manage both climate change threats and the “sea change” pressure on coastal resources. However, the development of policy and the science underpinning need ongoing refinement to ensure best practice coastal management outcomes for Queensland. Within the next year, the EPA will commence a review of the State Coastal Management Plan which will provide the opportunity for us all to reflect on the effectiveness of the current plan in addressing current and future challenges in coastal management.