

Frequently Asked Questions

Inverloch Coastal Protection – November 2019

Q. What are you doing to fix the immediate erosion issues along the Inverloch foreshore?

- A. Trial wet-sand fencing was installed in March 2019 at a relatively low cost to collect sand and provide a buffer from further erosion at the Bunurong Road and Surf Life Saving Club (SLSC) areas. Unfortunately, the timing of installation of the trial wet-sand fencing was too late in the season to accumulate adequate sand for protection during the storm season, leaving it exposed to wave action causing significant damage. With the fencing now repaired, the agencies involved are confident that if given a full spring and summer season to accrete sand, the wet-sand fencing will be able to effectively assist in the reduction of further erosion.

However, following recent storm events the eroding edges at the two areas have experienced further recession, with the distance from key assets breaching set thresholds for emergency protection works to occur.

DELWP commissioned a consultant in October 2019 to investigate and design a number of stabilising options to protect the foreshore in front of Bunurong Road and the SLSC.

With the \$450,000 of funding provided by the Victorian Government, the preferred option is to install a 70-metre Sand-filled Geotextile Container Wall to help protect the SLSC area and complement the trial wet-sand fencing works. Options for additional works at the Bunurong Road area are still being investigated.

We will continue to actively monitor both areas.

Q. Why did you choose to use Sand-filled Geotextile Containers and not rock?

- A. Following an options evaluation on recommended stabilising options, a wall constructed from sand-filled geotextile containers rated highest and was agreed by the working group to be the most appropriate for current protection measures required at Inverloch Surf Beach that has a period of longevity.

A few of the key benefits of sand-filled geotextile containers are: a design life of over 20 years; relatively low cost; wave reflection due to sloped design; much safer to have on a popular beach than rock; aesthetically more attractive compared to rock or seawalls and easy to remove in the future if sand builds back up.

The installation of a hard-engineered structure, such as a rock wall, could have a severe impact on the beach along the foreshore, so it is very important that this type of protection be investigated further by coastal marine experts during the development of a Local Coastal Hazard Assessment.

Q. When will works commence at the Surf Life Saving Club area?

- A. A contract has been awarded to Maw Civil Marine. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of available materials Australia-wide which means that works are unable to commence until the end of January 2020.

Q. Why is a pilot Regional and Strategic Partnership (RaSP) needed for the Inverloch area and surrounds?

- A. Multiple sections of the foreshore at Inverloch are being impacted by significant erosion, including the coastline adjacent to the SLSC and Bunurong Road and this is expected to extend to other locations in the future. These areas, among others, are managed by different government agencies, requiring a coordinated approach to ensure issues are addressed consistently.

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Work is already being undertaken by the multi-agency Inverloch Coastal Protection Working Group involving DELWP, Bass Coast Shire Council, Parks Victoria, Regional Roads Victoria and the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority. The group has been working on a number of on-ground short-term options to manage the erosion and protect the built public assets.

The RaSP will go much further than this by developing a Local Coastal Hazard Assessment and Community Resilience planning, to better understand the reasons behind why coastal erosion is occurring at Inverloch and the wider coastal area, and to establish longer-term solutions to assist in planning how to respond to changes in the coastline.

The RaSP project will also include extensive conversations with the community in order to better understand community values, what people think is happening and what a future coastal environment might look like.

The announcement of a pilot RaSP is a key step in achieving the community's vision for a better understanding of coastal processes operating in this area and how they can adapt to a changing climate.

Q. What will be involved in developing the Local Coastal Hazard Assessment and Community Resilience planning?

A. This initiative will investigate the coastal processes of Inverloch and the surrounding coastal environment through data collection, analysis and modelling, in conjunction with community engagement and risk analyses. The work will also support the volunteer efforts of the South Gippsland Conservation Society and their *Inverloch Coastal Resilience Project*, as well as the work already undertaken by the Inverloch Coastal Protection Working Group and the broader community. A Project Officer will be employed to provide support services to the RaSP.

Q. What area will be covered by the RaSP?

A. It will include land and waters managed by Bass Coast Shire Council, South Gippsland Shire Council, Parks Victoria, Regional Roads Victoria and Gippsland Ports, with the boundaries still to be established.

Q. Who will form the RaSP?

A. Agencies collaborating to form the RaSP include the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Bass Coast Shire Council, South Gippsland Shire Council, Parks Victoria, Regional Roads Victoria, Gippsland Ports, as well as others.

Q. How far away from public assets is the erosion?

A. The foreshore adjacent to the Inverloch SLSC has seen 45-metres of coastline retreat since 2012. The building is currently located ten metres from the face of the dune, having seen considerable loss during winter 2019.

The foreshore adjacent to Bunurong Road, particularly near the Surf Parade intersection, has experienced over 35 metres of coastline retreat since 2012. The road is currently within six metres of the eroding edge.

Q. What's next?

A. Works are anticipated to commence on installation of the sand-filled Geotextile Container Wall by the end of January 2020. This is to ensure protection is in place before the next storm season in March 2020.

The current project is designed primarily to provide immediate protection to the SLSC building area. Following the end of winter 2020, the working group will evaluate the performance of the wet-sand fencing and the geotextile containers and determine the viability of extending either structure at that time.

Meetings are already underway to initiate the RaSP, establish governance and form a technical reference group. Community consultation will occur throughout key milestones of the project.

For further information, contact DELWP Traralgon on 03 5172 2111