

Together we will create our...



BOLD FUTURE – Trends and issues



Our beaches future

Gold Coast beaches are many things to many people. What is it that makes them so important to you? Have you ever thought about what type of beaches you would like to have in the future?

There are many things that can be done to enhance our beach future. Activities that already occur at the beach include life saving, swimming, surfing, sun bathing, fishing, diving, major events, beach cinema, beach volleyball and family picnics.

Think about the things that you do at the beach. Does this list cover your activities? Are there things you would like to do at the beach but currently can't do? Are there activities occurring at the beach that you think should not be happening? What would you change if you could?

Trends and issues

- A recent trend in coastal areas has seen a shift in focus from improving the condition of the coast, towards improving the 'quality of life' in coastal areas – where coastal communities are often directly or indirectly affected by, and impact upon, beach health.
- People all over the world are shifting to coastal areas, and this is clearly seen in Australia through the 'sea change' phenomenon.
- This population growth has changed the way people use the beach and how our beaches are managed.
- Climate change will also have an impact on our beaches through increased storm activity and higher sea levels leading to more erosion.

"Arguably, beaches underpin coastal economies and support commercial developments, tourism, and population shifts to coastal areas."

Yehuda Kliem – Journal of Coastal Research

Gold Coast beaches are facing increasing pressures. The sea change phenomenon has seen our city grow to accommodate more than half a million residents. Tourism numbers also are swelling. On any given day there will be approximately 80,000 tourists in the city. High numbers of locals and tourists mean our beaches risk being loved to death.

Our changing climate due to global warming is another pressure on our beaches. Experts tell us to expect more frequent and stronger cyclones and storms as well as increases in the sea level, which will lead to more beach erosion. We can also expect warmer water temperatures that could lead to a big change in our marine environment and more marine pests. Some tropical jelly fish have already been observed as far south as Fraser Island.



"This generation of Australians has gravitated towards the beach like no previous generation."

Bernard Salt, author of 'The Big Shift'.

We have built our city as close to the water's edge as possible. While this allows for high property values, easy access to the beach and a unique lifestyle, it also makes reacting to the ever changing shoreline a great challenge.



Innovative beach protection methods

Major events such as the Schoolies, Wintersun and Swell festivals, the Quicksilver Pro surfing competition, Surf Life Saving carnivals and regular markets give extra life and vitality to specific beaches.

They also place additional pressures on Gold Coast beaches, which require intensive and active management to keep them at their best and support the environmental, recreational, social and economic bounty they provide.

As one of Australia's largest coastal cities, the Gold Coast is taking a leadership role in a number of beach-related areas.

Council's professional lifeguard service is the largest in Australia, providing training for other professional lifeguards from places like Hawaii, Japan and South America. We also have led the way in beach protection, with pioneering work into beach nourishment in the 1970s and 80s and more recent strategies that include artificial reefs.

Council currently provides many services to beach users such as beach cleaning, dune vegetation maintenance, access ways, viewing decks, dune fencing and foreshore park upgrades along the Oceanway.

Two major projects are underway to help guide the future of our beaches.

The Shoreline Management Plan looks at the beach as a holistic environment to gain a better understanding of the physical and ecological processes that occur on our beaches. Incorporating this knowledge into our beach management practices allows us to build upon current knowledge, plan for the future, implement improvements and learn from the experience.

The Ocean Beaches and Foreshores Strategy provides a platform to discuss what the beach means to our city. It focuses on how people interact with the beach, what values we place on it and how we can protect those values. It is an opportunity for the community to develop an agreed future for our coastline and to commit the resources needed to bring the vision to reality.



Make sure your voice is heard. Think deeply about your ideal beach.

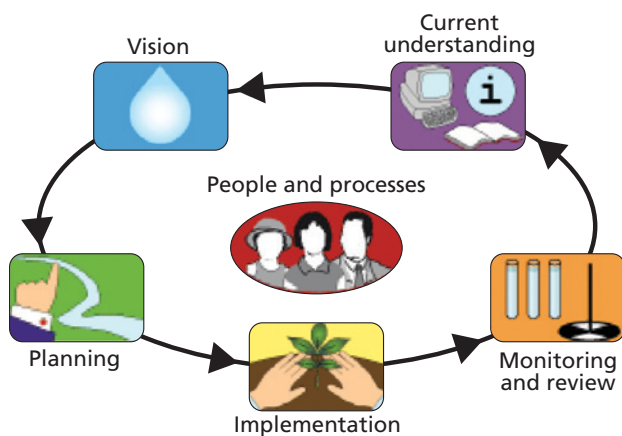
What beaches do you use? What do you do when you get there? Will you and your children still be able to do the same things in the future?

What should our beaches look like? Would there be dunes and trees? Would there be tall buildings near your beaches?

What activities should occur on the beach?

How much risk from storm erosion are you prepared to accept?

Make the most of this opportunity to help create our Beaches Future.



Environmental Management Framework (Source: Coastal CRC, 2007)