

Summary of Deputy Premier's Stockton Task Force Meeting, March 24, 2020

This task force meeting was chaired by Acting Premier Paul Toole and attended by a range of NSW government, City of Newcastle and community representatives. The meeting lasted only 40 minutes due to time commitments by the Acting Premier. The main agenda items consisted of:

- 1) A presentation by Ron Boyd (SCG) on the causes of Stockton Beach erosion, and the impact of the early March East Coast Low. It was also stated that we know what the causes of the erosion are and we know what the preferred solution is (beach renourishment). What the community wanted to know was who was going to be responsible for delivering the solution and who was going to pay for it.
- 2) Phil Watson from DPIE presented an update on the coastal management framework, the South Arm Sand Source Feasibility Study and the Commonwealth Coastal and Estuarine Risk Mitigation Program. Of most interest here was the likely completion and submission by NCCDC of the South Arm study in April, 2022 with the likely outcome the presence of up to 4 M cubic metres of sand suitable for beach nourishment being available and a further 300,000 cubic metres available in the harbour entrance Area E. The Commonwealth program has \$50 M for coastal resilience, up to \$10 M for state-wide projects over a 3 year program, 75% provided by Commonwealth.
- 3) Joanne Rigby from CN reported that Stockton Beach had already reached the 2025 threshold recession rates. The problem was related to harbour causes and 2.4 M cubic metres of sand were needed for renourishment. A detailed timeline, a design for sand placement, dredging quality management plan. and placement approvals were still needed. Assistance was required by CN to extract harbour sand from PoN and a capital project was the best option. GHD had prepared a report on the planning pathways needed to implement renourishment. However, decisions needed to be made regarding State Significance and the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder (NSW, CN, PoN). \$27.5 M needed for mass sand nourishment, \$21 M for 2020 CMP extra. Plan is for CMP drafting in Q1 2022, actions and responsibilities determined through 2022 and certification by end 2022.
- 4) Grant McLatchie from NSW Mining, Exploration and Geoscience reported that the exploration report for offshore sand mining was complete and submitted with copy to CN. Three sand sources were located and determined to be suitable for Stockton Beach nourishment from size and composition. MEG holds the current exploration licence and its suitable for further work, approvals and interim actions up to 5 years. A mining licence is required for longer term mining up to 21 years and can be renewed.
- 5) Comments came from Nuatali Nelmes suggesting that NSW government apply for up to \$10 M in collaboration with CN and other stakeholders to access Commonwealth funding and add matching NSW and CN funding for sand replenishment at Stockton. Barbara Whitcher strongly suggested that the current process was taking too long and that there would be serious community impact if there was not a speedy solution, especially considering the profit made from the harbour compared to the cost of fixing the problem it caused.
- 6) The Acting Premier committed to assisting solving the erosion problem. He felt more clarification was needed on the process, identifying if this was a State Significant Development, who should apply for the licence and if Commonwealth funding should be applied for. However, no concrete commitments were provided. He later added that "My department would work with CN, as the proponent, in the granting of a mining licence under the Offshore Minerals Act. I will continue to forge ahead with Council to restore suitable sand to the beach.