

# Eastern Beaches Protection Association

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## **‘Reckless’ Noosa Council Draft Hazard Plan dodges beach protection responsibility**

A newly formed Noosa residents group is fighting to fix Noosa Shire Council’s draft Coastal Hazard Adaption Plan (CHAP), demanding more work tackling coastal erosion not buck passing to residents.

The Eastern Beaches Protection Association (EBPA) has lodged a scathing submission to Council, with spokesperson Minna Knight warning the plan, as drafted, did nothing to protect the local environment but would adversely impact a number of communities at significant economic cost.

“There’s also a growing awareness that these planning changes won’t just affect the eastern beaches but will ultimately have to extend to homeowners in low lying areas in the future,” Ms Knight said.

“A growing number of locals are incensed that the plan, as drafted, proposes draconian measures on property owners but does nothing to save our coastline and waterways – that Council is trustee for.

“There’s a groundswell happening. More people are learning that the draft plan does absolutely nothing to protect our beaches, waterways and public land, but can still have a significant economic cost caused by Council proposing planning changes stopping people improving their homes.

“It’s ironic that Council has admitted the dunes are mostly stable, and in some areas they are growing. There is a less than 1% probability of erosion significantly affecting private land by 2070. Exposing ratepayers to a massive financial cost now for nothing that actually protects beaches and a less than 1% probability of a significant risk happening in 50-80 years is economically reckless.”

Major flaws in the draft CHAP include:

- Technical studies and reports from which the CHAP is derived not included in the document
- Dunes growing where the CHAP states they are eroding
- Overstating possible erosion by ignoring existing vegetation
- A number of CHAP-identified erosion areas not aligning with Council’s hazard mapping

Ms Knight said Council had taken years to create the document but residents had only been allowed a number of weeks to read, analyse and respond to 130-pages and the documents that informed it.

“Meanwhile, Council secretly wrote to the State Government last July pre-empting adverse planning changes for coastal homeowners, seven months before releasing the ‘consultation draft’. It looks like Council is trying to ram a bad plan through and this “tick a box” consultation is a front for doing absolutely nothing about protecting the beaches and waterways they are trustee for,” she said.

“Blatantly pre-empting unnecessary and costly planning changes, Council itself is doing economic damage to the community now, exposing ratepayers to many hundreds of millions of dollars of compensation and economic risk for a less than 1% risk of significant erosion in 50-80 years.”

Ms Knight said the EBPA’s submission, supported by a range of professionals, identified significant technical shortfalls which show the draft plan wasn’t strong enough to support planning changes yet – if ever.

“Even on this flawed draft, we have plenty of time to monitor what might happen to private assets without being reckless right now. Council should now get on with actually protecting the public beaches and creeklines it is responsible for rather than passing the buck,” she said.

The Association is writing to locals, and meeting with the Mayor, Councillors and MPs at State and Federal level. A meeting with Deputy Premier and State Planning Minister Steven Miles has been requested.

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