



## **Towards a National Approach to Managing Coastal Hazards**

25 November 2021

This is an organisation which was formed back in 2004 to represent the interests of coastal councils and their communities. It was known back then as the National Sea Change Taskforce.

Part of our role is to advocate on behalf of our member councils and to highlight the issues facing their coastal.

We are about to commence the process of updating our current policy proposals, and we would welcome your input into this tomorrow morning – in our final conference session.

But for the moment I would like you to consider for a moment the vital role the coast plays in the life of Australia.

## Port Beach Fremantle WA image - ABC News



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The big question, of course, is how this going to happen.

Managing and caring for the nation's 36,000 kms of coastline is an enormous task which at the moment it is largely left to local councils.



## National Initiative by WA Premier

- At COAG in August 2019 WA Premier Mark McGowan proposed national approach to managing coastal erosion
- Stated it is national issue needing national response
- Prime Minister referred matter to Meeting of Environment Ministers

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- A National Coastal Zone Policy
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- Measures to minimise the legal risks for coastal councils

Now, looking at these in a bit more detail -



## Coastal Hazards Working Group

- Coastal Hazards Working Group appointed at Meeting of Environment Ministers in November 2019 to:

Our first proposal is that the Australian Government develop an Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone in cooperation with state, territory and local governments.

This was a recommendation of the bi-partisan House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment back in 2009.

The inquiry was the most comprehensive ever conducted into the coastal zone. In our view the recommendations by the committee members, who represented both major parties, are as relevant now as they were back then.

The reason we support this recommendation is that current methods of planning, funding and managing Australia's coastal zone are inconsistent and inadequate. Each jurisdiction has developed a different approach to coastal policy, planning and management.

Coastlines all around Australia are under threat from widespread erosion, rising sea levels, and more frequent and extreme weather events. Members of the House of Representatives Committee who conducted the coastal inquiry, were aware of this. They heard it expressed time and again during the course of the inquiry from councils, scientists, volunteer groups, and residents in coastal communities. And that is why they made this particular recommendation.

This policy proposal was adopted unanimously at last year's ALGA National General Assembly, and was subsequently endorsed by the ALGA Board.



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- *“collate existing information on coastal erosion and inundation hazard risk management, and propose a collaborative approach to coastal erosion for consideration at a future meeting of the environment ministers.”*

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- National Survey on Coastal Hazards conducted in July 2020

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## National Survey on Coastal Hazards

Responses from 94 coastal Councils:

- Queensland 11
- New South Wales 17
- Northern Territory 1
- South Australia 22
- Tasmania 8
- Victoria 14
- Western Australia 24

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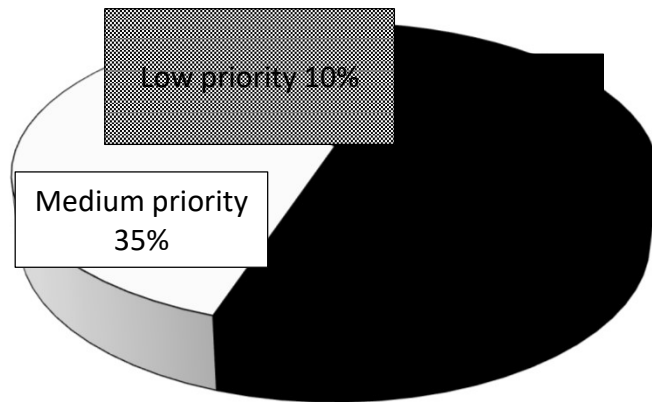
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## SECTION 1 - Impacts of coastal hazards

## How important is managing coastal hazards in your Council area?

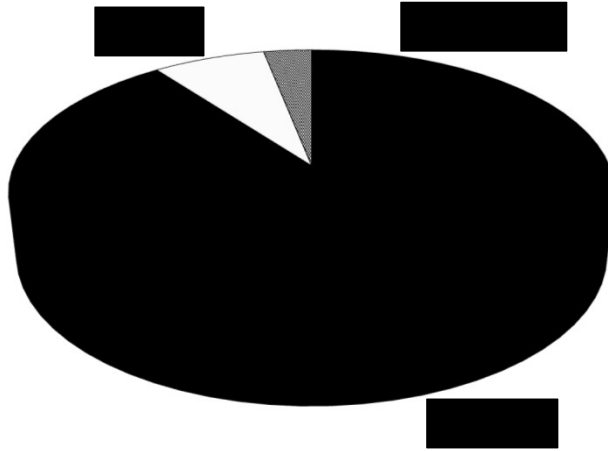


The Australian Government has estimated that around 247,000 existing residential properties in coastal areas are at risk of inundation from sea level rise over the next century. This does not include assets such as roads, schools, hospitals, power stations, and commercial properties.

Coastal councils are at the forefront of responding to these risks, but as the level of government with the least resources available, it simply doesn't have the capacity to deal with the challenges involved. In our view the only way these huge challenges can be dealt with effectively is for the three levels of government to work together through a coordinated national approach.

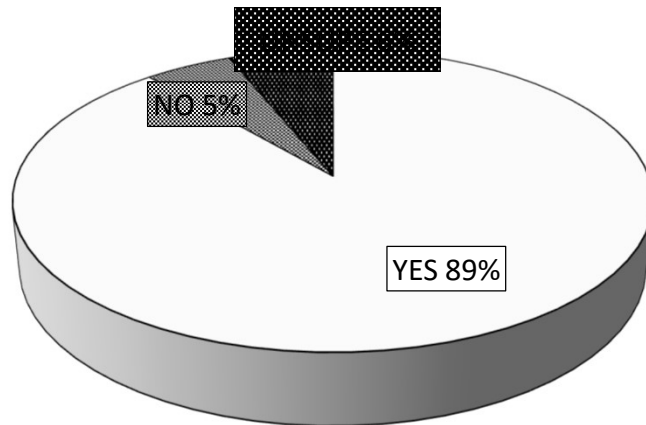
That is at the core of the policy proposals we are updating at the moment to guide our future advocacy efforts.

Has your Council had areas that have been impacted  
by coastal hazards in the past 5 years?





## Does Council expect impacts in the next 5 years?



The coast is one of our most highly valued social, economic and environmental assets.

It is home to our state capitals and to more than 85% of our population. Most of our commercial assets are located in coastal areas and many coastal communities face the pressures of keeping pace with some of the highest rates of population growth in the nation.

And then there is the contribution the coast makes to the Australian economy.

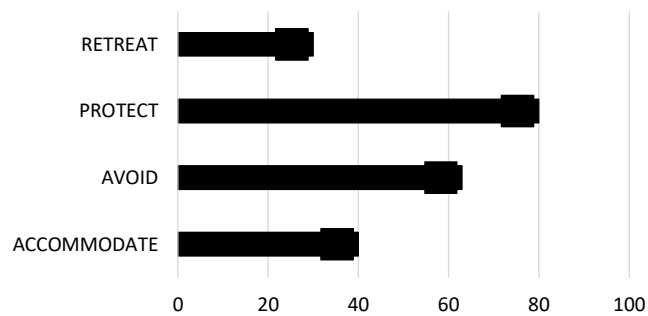
Each year it is estimated that coastal tourism alone, taking into account both international and domestic tourists, contributes about \$60 billion to the national economy, and that figure continues to rise year by year.



## SECTION 2 – Adaptation planning and implementation



## Approaches used by your Council to manage coastal hazards (N=93 responses)



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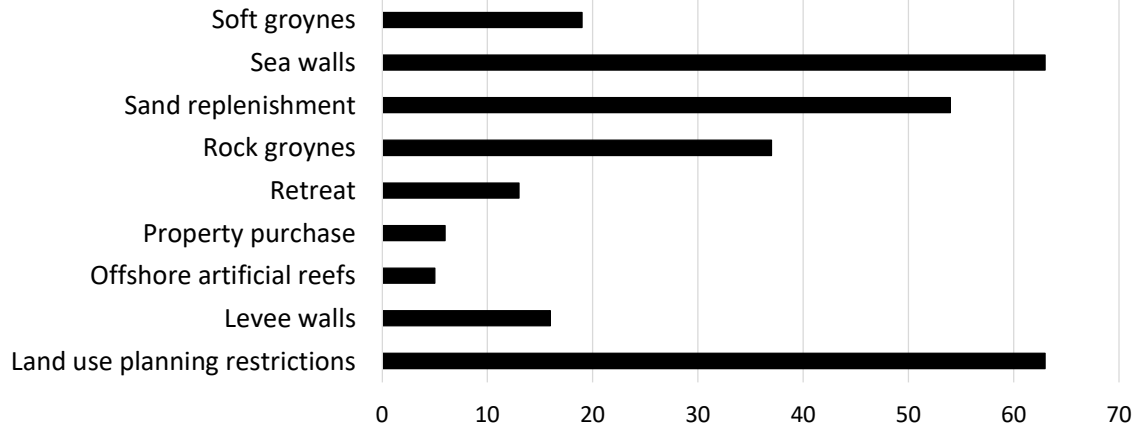
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## Specific measures to manage coastal impacts

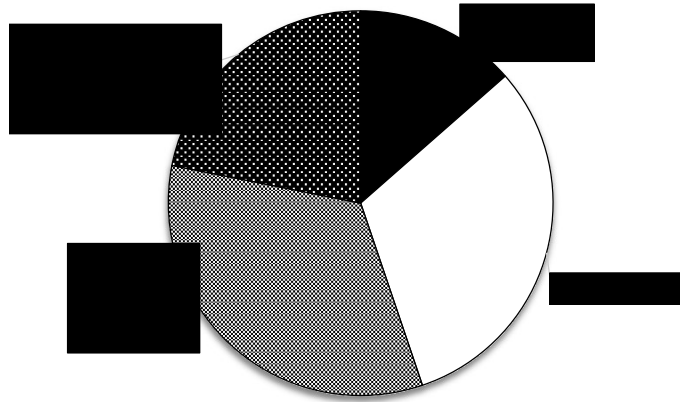
(N=93 responses)





## SECTION 3 – Barriers to addressing coastal hazards

## Adequacy of technical expertise available to Council

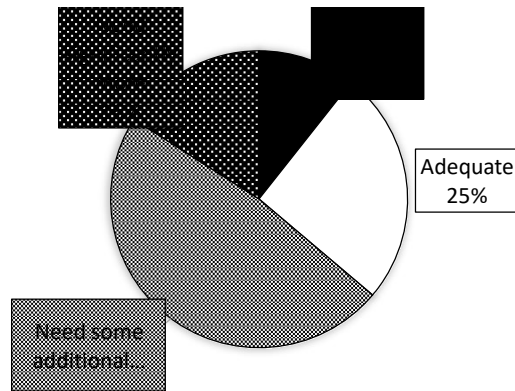


The other important point to remember, is that the coast is not just a local asset for local communities. It is a national asset that is enjoyed by all Australians.

But while the coastal zone plays a pivotal role in the life of the nation, it is under increasing threat from a complex range of pressures.

These pressures include widespread coastal erosion, more frequent and severe extreme weather events, projected sea level rise and other climate impacts. They are impacting on coastal councils and communities in every state.

## Adequacy of technical data available to Council

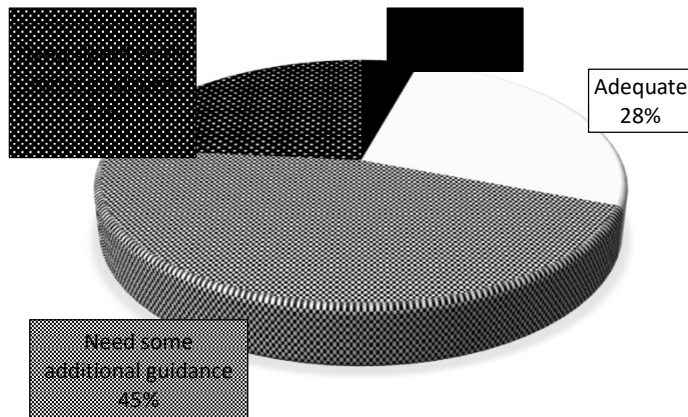


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That is at the core of the policy proposals we are updating at the moment to guide our future advocacy efforts.

## Adequacy of policy guidance available to Council



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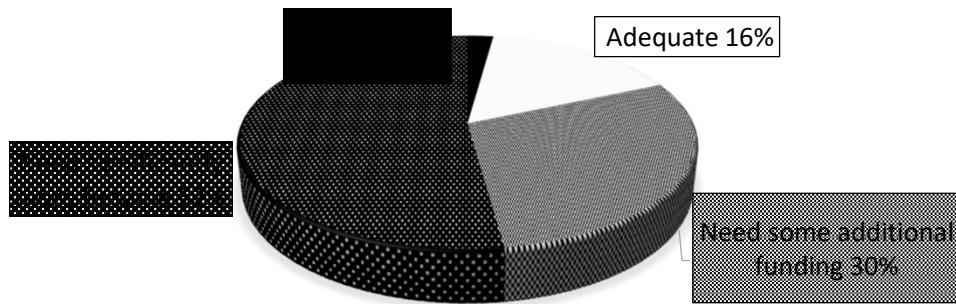
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## Adequacy of funding available



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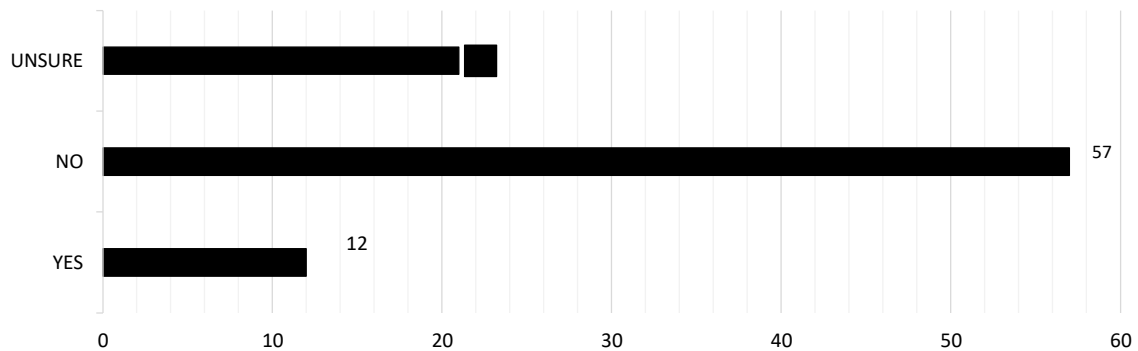
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## SECTION 4 – Funding to address coastal hazards

## Is current funding sufficient? (N=90 responses)



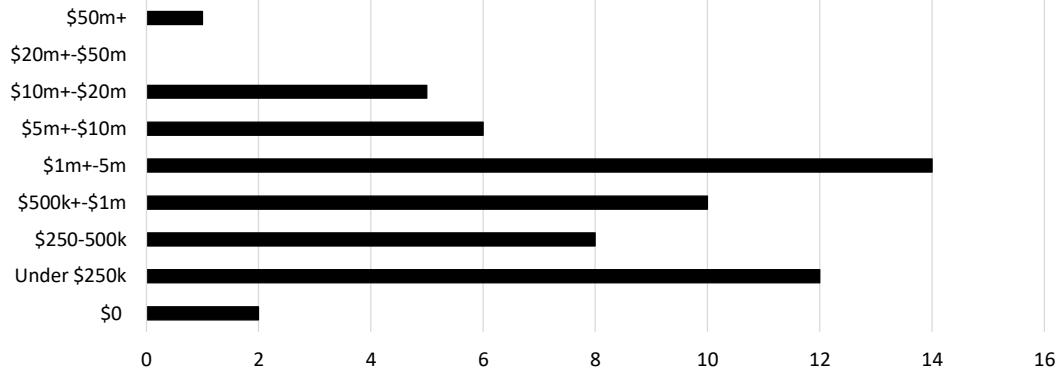
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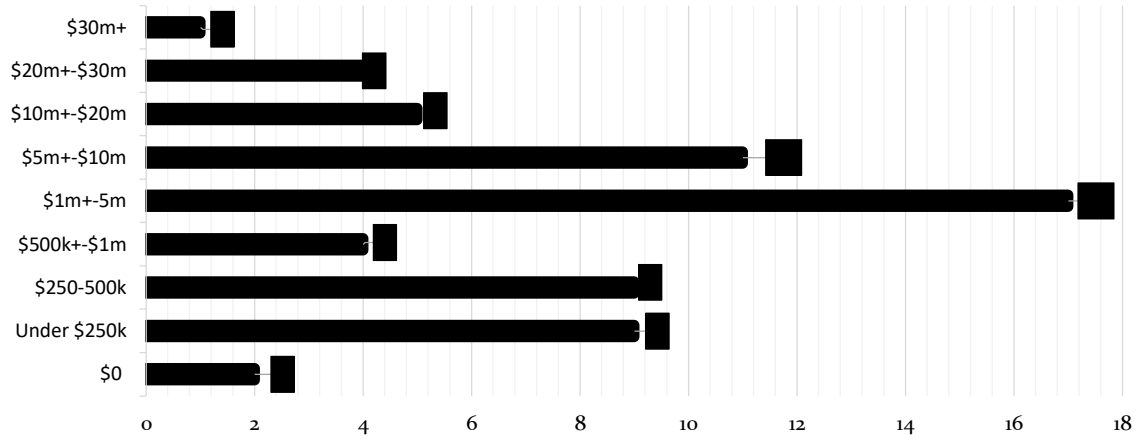
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## Cost to Council in last 5 years (N=56 responses)



## Expected cost to Council over the next 5 years?

(N=35 responses)





## Future Earth Australia

*10-year Sustainable Oceans and Coasts National Strategy*  
developed by Future Earth Australia, a division of the Australian Academy of Science.

What that change brought about is an imbalance in revenues which has been a major frustration to the states and local government ever since, as shown in these figures

Commonwealth Government receives 81% of tax revenues  
States and territories receive 15% of tax revenues  
Local government receives just over 3.0% of tax revenues



## Future Earth Australia

10-year Strategy includes a proposal to establish a *National Oceans and Coasts Coordinating Office*

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## A closing thought....



I would like to finish by noting another big challenge facing local councils – and as you can see it's to do with money.

It's called the vertical fiscal imbalance, which sounds confusing but is in fact very simple.

Back in 1942, when Australia was at war, the Federal Labor Government, under Prime Minister John Curtin, introduced legislation which has defined the relationship between the three tiers of government ever since. The Curtin Government introduced a piece of legislation called the Income Tax Act 1942, and the effect of that legislation was to consolidate the collection of all taxation revenue under the Commonwealth Government.

Up until that time taxation revenue had been collected by both the states and the Commonwealth.

The change in taxation arrangements was described at the time as a 'temporary wartime measure.' 74 years later, however, it is still in place.



## Australian Taxation System

- Vertical fiscal imbalance –
  - Commonwealth receives 81% of tax revenues
  - States and territories receive 15% of tax revenues
  - Local government receives only 3.4% of tax revenues

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## **Australian Coastal Councils Association contact details**

Web: [www.coastalcouncils.org.au](http://www.coastalcouncils.org.au)

Email: [info@coastalcouncils.org.au](mailto:info@coastalcouncils.org.au)

Tel: (03) 9399 8558

Thanks you for your attention.

If there is any further information you would like us to provide, here are our contact details. Just give us a call and we'd be happy to help.

In the meantime, I would be happy to take questions.