

2016 AUSTRALIAN COASTAL COUNCILS CONFERENCE

ROCKINGHAM 6 May 2016

COMMUNIQUÉ

Preamble

Representatives of Australian coastal councils and other coastal stakeholders attending the Australian Coastal Councils Conference at Rockingham, Western Australia, from 4 to 6 May, 2016, agreed to issue the following communiqué in relation to these issues having considered the risks facing Australia's coastal environment and communities.

Communiqué

We call on the Australian Government to establish a national collaborative effort to secure a sustainable future for the Australian coastal zone.

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.

While the coastal zone plays a pivotal role in the life of the nation, however, 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. These threats are impacting on coastal councils and communities in every state and placing at risk the high biodiversity and scenic values of the coastal zone.

Coastal councils and their communities call on the Australian Government to play a leadership role in developing a coordinated national approach to coastal management by adopting a set of policy initiatives based on the recommendations of the bi-partisan Australian Parliamentary Coastal inquiry. The inquiry, conducted by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts, was acknowledged as the most comprehensive examination of coastal pressures ever conducted in Australia.¹

We propose that the following recommendations of the coastal inquiry be adopted:

That the Australian Government, in cooperation with state, territory and local governments, and in consultation with coastal stakeholders, develop an Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone to be endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments. Inquiry Recommendation 44)

And that:

¹ House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts (2009), *Managing our coastal zone in a changing climate: The time to Act is now*, Canberra www.aph.gov.au/parliamentary_business/committees/house_of_representatives_committees?url=ccwea/coastalzone/report.htm

The Australian Government ensure that the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone forms the basis for a National Coastal Zone Policy and Strategy, which should set out the principles, objectives and actions that must be taken to address the challenges of integrated coastal zone management for Australia. (Inquiry Recommendation 45)

We call on the Australian Government to adopt these recommendations to address the lack of an effective decision-making framework which is essential to achieving a collaborative national approach to coastal management. Implementing the recommendations would also address the lack of effective institutional arrangements in relation to the coastal zone.

Friday, 6 May 2016