

2019 AUSTRALIAN COASTAL COUNCILS CONFERENCE

THE PAVILION, KIAMA 6-8 March 2019

COMMUNIQUÉ

Preamble

In January and February 2019, the Australian Coastal Councils Association Inc. conducted a survey of coastal councils to collect information on the major issues of current concern to councils in Australia's coastal areas. After considering the findings of the survey, which were presented to delegates attending the Australian Coastal Councils Conference at Kiama, NSW, from 6 to 8 March 2019, representatives of the coastal councils in attendance endorsed the need for five key policy initiatives, which are outlined in the following communiqué. The representatives also endorsed the need for effective actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Communiqué

We call on the Australian Government to adopt the following key policy initiatives with the aim of developing a coordinated national response to deal with coastal hazards including rising sea levels, more severe extreme weather events and widespread coastal erosion:

1. Resources to Manage the Coast on behalf of all Australians

Introduce a national funding formula to provide the resources necessary to manage and maintain the coast effectively on behalf of all Australians, including the funds needed to increase the adaptive capacity of councils to address climate impacts.

2. Allocate Financial Assistance Grants to address coastal hazards

Broaden the range of 'disabilities' listed under Financial Assistance Grants to include factors such as the vulnerability of coastal areas and communities to coastal hazards.

3. Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone

Develop a co-ordinated national approach to coastal governance through an Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone in cooperation with Australian, state, territory and local governments. This would clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each tier of government in relation to coastal zone management.

4. National Coastal Policy

Ensure that the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone forms the basis for a National Coastal Policy which outlines the principles, objectives and actions to be taken to address the challenges of integrated coastal zone management for Australia.

5. Increase funding for Australian climate research programs

Allocate increased levels of funding for Australia's climate science research programs conducted by CSIRO and other research bodies, including the restoration of funding for the National Climate Change Research Facility or establishment of a similar body and continuing support for *CoastAdapt*. This is essential to ensure appropriate guidance in relation to responding to coastal hazards is accessible to Australia's coastal councils so that coastal communities and assets are adequately prepared to address the adverse effects of climate change impacts.

The scale of dealing effectively with coastal hazards along Australia's vast coastline requires a national approach, national leadership and national funding. We therefore call on the Australian Government to play a lead role in addressing these challenges in consultation with local government authorities, which are knowledgeable in relation to these matters and connected to their communities.

Friday, 8 March 2019