

2017 AUSTRALIAN COASTAL COUNCILS CONFERENCE

MON KOMO HOTEL, REDCLIFFE, 3-5 May 2017

COMMUNIQUÉ

Preamble

Representatives of Australian coastal councils attending the Australian Coastal Councils Conference at Redcliffe, Queensland, from 3 to 5 May, 2017, considered the need for a coordinated national effort to deal more effectively with the coastal hazards facing coastal councils and their communities. They agreed to issue the following communiqué concerning this matter.

Communiqué

We call on the Australian Government to play a lead role in developing a coordinated national approach to dealing with coastal hazards including more frequent and severe extreme weather events, widespread coastal erosion, and the growing pressures of climate change. We note that the latest *State of the Environment* report, released in March 2017, indicates that coastal areas are at particular risk because of simultaneous pressures, including growing populations, widely variable visitor numbers, habitat loss, invasive species and the growing pressures of climate change. As the report points out:

'Australia is beginning to see the impact of the pressures of climate change on our coasts, and pressures are expected to grow substantially in coming decades. These will add stress to systems that are already stressed by a range of human activities¹.'

Further, we add our support to the following motion which was adopted at the 2016 National General Assembly of the Australian Local Government Association:

That the National General Assembly call on the Australian Government to develop an Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone in consultation with the state, territory and local governments as a means of defining the roles and responsibilities of each tier of government in relation to coastal zone management.

Currently, the task of dealing with coastal hazards along Australia's vast coastline is left predominantly to coastal councils. This enormous task is beyond the capacity of local councils and the states and territories. The scale of the challenge 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, 5 May 2017

¹ Clark GF & Johnston EL (2017). *Australia state of the environment 2016: coasts*, independent report to the Australian Government Minister for Environment and Energy, Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy, Canberra.