Clarence River proposed management actions information session

NSW Boating Wash and Riverbank Erosion Management Strategy

Grafton  10 July 2015
Welcome
Session overview

Today we would like to:

• tell you about the work Maritime Management Centre (MMC) has done to date
• talk to you about the draft Management Plan and answer your questions
• receive feedback and understand your views.
# Agenda

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Housekeeping

• We value what you have to say

• Please help by making sure only one person speaks at a time

• Please hold your questions until directed
Who looks after our waterways?

The Maritime Management Centre (MMC) directs initiatives that support the Government’s objectives for boating safety, maritime property and waterways management.

Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) is responsible for policy implementation and delivery.

*Both agencies play an important role in developing project plans for policy implementation and in developing related procedures and business rules.*
Who does MMC work with?

- Roads and Maritime Services (incl. Boating Safety Officers - BSOs, Boating Education Officers - BEOs)
- Local Land Services
- Department of Primary Industries
- Local government
- Land owners
- Boaters
Background

- **Regional Boating Plan (RBP)** Consultation in early 2014, across 11 river regions in NSW
- **Riverbank Erosion** identified as a key issue during RBP consultation
- **Pilot project** launched to improve the management of boating in areas that may be subject to significant riverbank erosion issues, particularly on the Tweed, Clarence and Williams Rivers
- **Consultation on riverbank erosion management** to seek feedback on potential mitigation measures (October and November 2014)
- **UNSW Water Research Laboratory (WRL) Report** for Clarence River
  - Scientific Riverbank Vulnerability Assessment
  - Published December 2014
Need case

• **Riverbank erosion** is a significant issue for the future health and stability of our river systems.

• Causes include *flooding, high wash boating activities, resource extraction, wind waves, loss of vegetation, sea level rise, stock access* and *natural environmental changes*.

• The **draft Management Plan** seeks to ensure the river can continue to be enjoyed by everyone for **environmental, recreation and commercial benefit**.
Consultation so far

- Key **stakeholder forum** & community drop in session
- Informal **conversations and briefings**
- Information published **online**
- Consultation with **local councils and authorities** that have a role in looking after, managing or caretaking in and around the Clarence River

We asked:
- what you **value** about the Clarence River
- local knowledge and input on **boating and recreation activities**
- local knowledge and input on **riverbank issues** including erosion causes and contributing factors
- feedback on **erosion management options**

*We are now seeking further comment from the community on the draft Management Plan.*
What we heard – a variety of views

Clarence River is enjoyed for wakeboarding, kayaking, boating, swimming and picnicking, horse training, and fishing and is home to yacht clubs, rowing clubs and businesses.

An example of some of the comments we received:

• “Erosion is a major problem”
• “The length of the river brings out different people and different problems”
• “We do not want to see no boating areas”
• “High wash activities shouldn't be allowed in sensitive areas if damage is happening”
• “Agree with case by case, mix of solutions approach”
• “Great to see MMC making use of the local knowledge”
• “The river is there to be shared”
• “Riverbank resilience should be our major focus”
• “Investigate no slow tow zoning above Moleville rocks to address severe erosion problems”
• “Educating river users on the consequences of their own boat wash and to be responsible for their boating activities”
Draft Management Plan - overview

• Informed by scientific evidence (WRL report), expert RMS knowledge, MMC advice, community and stakeholder consultation
• Contains a set of 12 proposed actions to be implemented over a period of 2 years (September 2015 – September 2017)
• Ongoing monitoring and review to assess effectiveness
• Aims to balance the environmental needs of the river, with the needs of community, boaters and local businesses who use the river for recreation and commercial benefit.
PROPOSED ACTIONS
Action 1

No new speed or wash restrictions between Moleville Rocks and Ulmarra

Reason:
The WRL Report confirms the majority of this stretch of river is suitable for wake generating activity under assumed tolerances, provided activities occur towards the middle of the river and riverbank remediation occurs at key sites

- Approx. 35km of uninterrupted river with no new restrictions.
- Recognises importance of the river for all users.
- Notes key findings from WRL report.
- Some remediation work required at key sites.
- Takes into account social and economic values of the river amongst boating enthusiasts.
- Behaviour issues will be addressed through education, compliance in this area.
- Boating encouraged towards middle of river or appropriate shoreline.
The WRL Report confirms the majority of this stretch of river is suitable for wake generating activity under assumed tolerances, provided activities occur towards the middle of the river and riverbank remediation occurs at key sites.
Reason: To minimise erosion, boating activities should be encouraged towards the centre of the river. Distance off buoys and land based signage are most appropriate to convey the message. The centre line of the river may not always be the most appropriate course in all locations - RMS will explore mapping options to provide advice to users on the most suitable areas to undertake activities that generate substantial wake.
Action 3

New no slow-tow zone for northern channel between Susan Island and Grafton

Reason: The banks of the northern channel are subject to substantial erosion, the area is popular with rowers and small powered boats, and the outside channel is more suitable for wake generating activity. This should reduce user conflict while maintaining unrestricted usage of the southern channel.
Reason: The WRL Report identifies this section as highly eroded and too narrow to focus wake-generating activities into the middle of the river to effectively limit erosion.

The no slow tow restriction is a two year temporary restriction while riverbank remediation is undertaken and its effectiveness will be subject to review.

Action 4

New no slow-tow zone between Rogans Bridge and Moleville Rocks
Action 5

Prepare scope of works for riverbank remediation at sites identified in WRL Report

Reason: a number of sites have been identified for remediation in the short and medium term. MMC, Clarence Valley Council, Northern Local Land Services and the NSW Soil Conservation Service, are working together to identify the actions and costs of bank remediation at specific locations identified in the WRL Report.

The focus will be on implementing works at key priority sites during late 2015, with medium-priority works considered subject to feasibility.
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*Bold indicates priority sites
MMC, Local Land Services and Soil Conservation Service NSW currently working together on scope of works to cost and plan remediation works.

The focus will be on implementing works at key priority sites during 2015/16, with medium-priority works also be considered, subject to feasibility.
Action 6

Work with landowners to improve banks

Reason: Local landowners have a role to play in riverbank remediation. The Committee will work with local landowners to explore opportunities for bank remediation, revegetation, and stock access management.
Action 6 (cont’d)

Work with landowners to improve banks

We will be asking:
If you are a Landowner, would you be willing to discuss how Maritime Management Centre and/or Local Land Services can work with you to improve erosion on your property?
Action 7

Code of Conduct implementation and support for local businesses to educate operators

Reason: The Clarence River Awareness Group has developed a Code of Conduct for tow sports on the River.

MMC will support its implementation and distribution and will assist local boating clubs and business operators to provide boating education and training to users through its community grants program.
Action 8

Ongoing education & increased compliance during implementation

Reason: During implementation there will be a need for increased compliance operations from RMS as well as immediate and ongoing education, particularly during the boating season, for boaters and local residents to ensure that everyone understands the new restrictions and boating regulations more generally. This will include deployment of boating education officers during the boating season. MMC will also explore opportunities to educate QLD boaters on towing rules and codes of conduct.
Action 9

Establish a Clarence Riverbank Project Management Committee to implement the Plan, monitor river state, consult with stakeholders and community and recommend any changes

Reason: A number of agencies are responsible for various aspects of this Plan and an overarching committee with representatives from MMC, RMS, LLS and CVC is required to implement its Actions. The Committee will meet quarterly to discuss the status of the Plan, progress actions and discuss any emerging issues. In the event of a significant flood, the Committee will make recommendations to the General Manager, MMC on whether there is a need for any additional temporary restrictions. The Committee will brief stakeholders and the community twice a year on the status of the Plan.
Reason: Ongoing monitoring of riverbanks will be required, including the condition of banks, to assess the effectiveness of riverbank remediation works and boating restrictions.

Further research will also be undertaken to confirm boat pass numbers and activities on the river and to understand any effects of dredging in the region.
Reason: MMC is interested to hear from the tow sports community about locations that are well suited to tow sports and wake generating activities and would like to hear of any proposals for suitable locations to establish dedicated tow sport areas and facilities.

Action 11

Call for locations to undertake wake generating activity
Action 12

Temporary measures and ongoing review

Reason: the actions outlined are all temporary measures which will be in place for a period of two years.

At the end of this period the effectiveness of the Plan will be assessed by the Committee.
Notes

• **Aquatic events** – restrictions do not affect the conduct of events e.g. Grafton Bridge 2 Bridge race
• **New restrictions** – proposed Marine Safety Regulation 2015
• **Temporary implementation** – 1 September 2015 until September 2017, subject to review
• **Bank remediation works** – preliminary investigations underway
• **Comment** – until 24 July 2015
Questions and Comments?
Next steps

• Feedback forms – available at the end of the session *(please return to staff before leaving)*
• You can also comment on the draft Management Plan by emailing *martime@transport.nsw.gov.au* until 24 July
• Information from this session, including the draft Management Plan will be available online shortly
• MMC will consider all feedback and refine the draft where appropriate
• A final Plan for implementation will be shared with stakeholders
• We will continue to keep you informed
THANK YOU