Who looks after our waterways?

The Maritime Management Centre (MMC) – a branch of Transport for NSW (TfNSW) leads the strategic policy direction for maritime issues in NSW and 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, delivery and compliance on our waterways.

Who do we work with?

MMC and RMS have made a genuine commitment to consultation to help inform decisions regarding the management of boating in areas where the riverbanks are sensitive to erosion.

Other agencies and stakeholders play their part in contributing to the health of the rivers by addressing issues, including:

- Department of Primary Industries
- Local government
- Boaters
- Crown Lands
- Local Land Services
- Land owners
Regional Boating Plan feedback themes

When we talked to communities across NSW about the RBPs, we received feedback and submissions focused on some related themes:

- Health and environment
- Property location and length at residence
- Water and boating activities
- Contribution to local economy
- and riverbank erosion
What we’ve done already

Riverbank erosion management is a significant issue for the future health and stability of our river systems. A pilot program of engagement is taking place in the Clarence, Tweed and Williams river regions to inform a draft management plan.

The Regional Boating Plans

MMC recently spoke with communities across 11 river regions in NSW to inform Regional Boating Plans (RBPs). The purpose of the consultation was to identify priority safety, access and storage actions for improving the boating experience.

One of the key actions arising from the RBP process was the need to develop a state-wide policy for managing and mitigating boating-related erosion issues, including using infrastructure options where appropriate.

Local knowledge from communities in each of the river regions will be vital in helping us develop a state-wide policy for managing boating-related erosion issues.
The future health of our rivers

There are a range of reasons for riverbank erosion. We need to work together to find the right options to treat the problem so we can all continue to enjoy the river in the future.

Some things that can cause riverbank erosion are:

• High wash boating activities and wake boarding
• Stock access along the riverbank
• Wind waves
• Loss of vegetation
• Flooding
• Sea level rise
• Resource extraction
• Natural environment changes
Riverbank management

A state-wide policy for riverbank management is being developed to ensure riverbanks are managed consistently and maintained for future users.

The state-wide policy will provide a framework to consistently consider:

- the condition of riverbanks and any potential options that may be required to manage unwanted effects of erosion
- whether infrastructure spend such as armouring is needed to secure the riverbanks
- alternative locations where water activities could take place that are deemed less vulnerable and
- potential regulatory change requirements to manage the impacts of erosion.

What does the framework look like?

1. **Scientific Overview**
2. **Assess Current Boating Activity**
3. **Identify Management Options**
4. **Draft Management Plan**
5. **Public Consultation**
6. **Implement Management Plan**
7. **Monitor and Review**

The policy framework will be used to develop local management plans in the three pilot areas.
There are a few ways to secure a riverbank. The techniques we’ll use will depend on how severely the bank has eroded and what activities take place there. For example, something like concrete armouring would not be used where a riverbank is mildly degraded. We would look for other solutions that fit in better with the natural aesthetics and ecological factors of the river.

When we held key stakeholder workshops last month, we discussed six riverbank management options, and asked those in attendance for their thoughts and opinions on each of them. They are:

- rock armouring
- bio-engineering techniques
- restricting cattle access to riverbank
- natural revegetation
- concrete armouring
- restriction on boating
- natural erosion/no mitigation

As erosion can also be naturally occurring, management options would only be used in specific areas that require mitigation.
We want to hear from you!

If you would like to provide feedback on the information we have gathered so far, this will be considered when developing the draft management plans.

You can get involved by:

- Completing a feedback form
- Emailing us at maritime@transport.nsw.gov.au
We asked...

“What do you value about your river?”

“A healthy resource”

“Being able to use the river for water activities and leisure”

“Equity for the boating community”

“Tourism resource”

“Accessibility”

“The natural, clean environment, with minimal pollution”

“A sustainable waterway for all users”

“Social skiing and wakeboarding, fishing, general water sport and swimming”

“Valuable contribution to local economy”

“Cleanliness of the water”

“Ecology and bio-diversity”

“One of the best river rowing courses in Australia”

“It’s natural attributes”

“The river provides the elements we need to survive and enjoy life”

“Teaching new skills to my kids”

“Grandest of NSW Water Ways”

“A sustainable waterway for all users”