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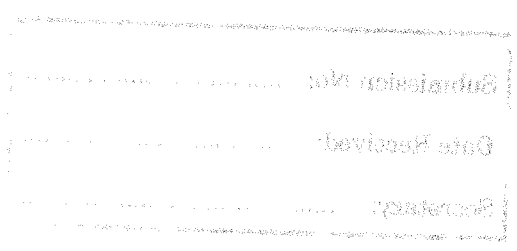
THE CHALLENGE OF COASTAL GROWTH

SUBMISSION

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE
ON CLIMATE CHANGE, WATER, ENVIRONMENT AND THE ARTS**

**Inquiry into climate change and environmental impacts on
Australian coastal communities**

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CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Introduction.....	6
Key challenges facing coastal communities	9
REFERENCE POINT ONE: Existing policies and programs related to coastal zone management, taking in the catchment-coast-ocean continuum	12
Best practice models for planning, infrastructure provision and management	12
Enhanced Collaboration and Coordination	13
Impact of non-resident population	14
REFERENCE POINT TWO: The environmental impacts of coastal population growth and mechanisms to promote sustainable use of coastal resources	16
REFERENCE POINT THREE: the impact of climate change on coastal areas and strategies to deal with climate change adaptation, particularly in response to projected sea level rise.....	19
Planning for the Impact of Climate Change.....	19
Recommendations – planning for climate change research	22
REFERENCE POINT FOUR: Mechanisms to promote sustainable coastal communities.....	25
Social, environmental and economic issues.....	25
Policy response to ageing communities	26
Community Infrastructure Fund	28
REFERENCE POINT FIVE: Governance and institutional arrangements for the coastal zone.....	29
Review of Institutional Arrangements	29
Establishment of National Coastal Alliance	31
Conclusion	32
References.....	33
Contact details.....	34
Appendix 1- Terms of Reference.....	35
Appendix 2 - About the National Sea Change Taskforce	36
Appendix 3 - <i>Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia</i>	39
Appendix 4 – <i>Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Best practice Models of Local & Regional Planning for Sea Change Communities</i>	39
Appendix 5 – Draft report <i>Planning for Climate Change: Leading Practice for Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia</i>	39

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This submission to the inquiry into climate change and environmental impacts on Australian coastal communities has been made by the National Sea Change Taskforce in response to an invitation from the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts. The Taskforce welcomes the inquiry and believes it can make a significant contribution to the development of a national policy framework for coastal Australia.

The migration of population to the Australia's coastal areas, which has become known as the 'sea change' phenomenon, has reached significant proportions. Settlements that 50 years ago were little more than small coastal townships and fishing villages have grown to become rapidly expanding urbanised regions experiencing some of the highest growth rates in Australia. Increasing numbers of Australians have been attracted to the coast in search of a better way of life away from the capital cities and a better environment in which to raise their children. Coastal growth has been particularly strong over the past ten years resulting in an increase of 1.27 million people since June 1997 which is equivalent to about 6% of Australia's population. Coastal population outside the capital cities now represents 30% of Australia's national population. A further one million people are estimated to start moving to the coast from 2010 as the 'baby boomer' generation starts to reach retirement age. Apart from growth in resident populations, coastal communities face the added impact of increasing levels of tourism.

This growth and attendant intensification of land use along the coast is inevitably placing increased pressure on the high biodiversity and scenic values of the coastal zone. The rate of growth currently being experienced in coastal Australia is not sustainable. Research conducted for the Taskforce has shown that coastal councils do not have the resources necessary to keep pace with this demand.

The National Sea Change Taskforce believes there is a need for an integrated, whole of government approach to addressing the impact of coastal growth and development. Currently, there is no single Commonwealth Government agency with coordinating, integrative responsibility for matters relating to coastal planning and management. Instead, this is shared between Departments including Climate Change, Environment, Heritage and the Arts, and Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, with the result that no one department or agency has overriding responsibility for addressing these issues.

This whole of government approach needs to be based on a national coastal policy framework that enjoys the political support and commitment of all three tiers of government. In October 2003, the National Resource Management Ministerial Council endorsed a framework for a National Cooperative Approach to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). The framework was prepared by the Intergovernmental Coastal Advisory Group (ICAG), which has representatives of Commonwealth, State and Northern Territory governments, as well as local government. This framework is a useful step towards development of the required policy framework, but a much broader approach is required which includes the social and economic issues related to the coastal zone.

The Taskforce is mindful of the commitment in its *Caring for our Coasts* policy that a Rudd Labor Government 'will provide national leadership and work with local communities to address the challenges of coastal growth and climate change'. We see this commitment as essential to gaining the collaboration of all three spheres of government to the task of achieving an integrated, coordinated response to the impact of population growth on the Australian coast and the long-term sustainability of the coastal zone. The commitment can only be given effect, however, if responsibility for integrating and coordinating policy related to coastal planning and management is vested in one Commonwealth agency.

Research commissioned by the Taskforce and undertaken by The University of Sydney reveals the key challenges facing non-metro coastal communities are diverse across five key areas – infrastructure, environment and heritage, community wellbeing, economy especially tourism and governance.

Existing policies and programs related to coastal zone management

The Taskforce recognises the need for enhanced understanding and use of best practice models for planning, infrastructure provision and management in coastal areas. These are seen as integral factors that can address the challenge that growth poses to coastal areas. The Taskforce notes that current methods of planning, funding and managing population and tourism growth in coastal areas are inconsistent and inadequate. The Taskforce promotes the adoption of a coordinated national approach to managing growth in coastal areas that would be based on a commitment by all three levels of government to work collaboratively to ensure that coastal growth is managed with a focus on sustainability of coastal communities and the coastal environment. In addition current demographic data for the Australian coast does not include people such as holidaymakers, workers in the area who live elsewhere and other temporary residents. This inevitably impacts on the capacity of coastal councils to finance the shortfalls in infrastructure and services through existing sources, such as grants, rates and developer contributions.

Environmental impacts of coastal population growth and mechanisms to promote sustainable use of coastal resources

The Taskforce is concerned about the impact of urban growth and development on the environment in coastal areas. The level of development is placing many coastal environments at risk of serious degradation. Another issue of concern is the future of agricultural land in coastal areas.

Impact of climate change on coastal areas and strategies to deal with climate change adaptation including responses to projected sea level rise

The potential impact of climate change is of particular concern to coastal communities. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change identifies coastal areas of Australia as the most exposed to potential climate change impacts, from sea level rise to increased frequency and velocity of extreme weather events. The social profile of non-metropolitan coastal communities compounds their susceptibility to the environmental and economic consequences of climate change. Characterised by lower household incomes, higher proportions of older people and rapid population growth and change, non-metropolitan coastal areas are exposed to the cumulative effects of physical exposure, higher levels of social disadvantage and reduced capacity to adapt to climate risk.

Mechanisms to promote sustainable coastal communities

Rapid population and tourism growth is having a significant social impact on existing coastal communities. Researchers have identified that non-metropolitan coastal communities are often characterised by lower incomes, higher unemployment levels and a higher level of socio-economic disadvantage than the Australian population as a whole. Non metropolitan coastal areas also have a higher proportion of families receiving income support benefits. Coastal councils and their communities are at the forefront of Australia's ageing population and its impacts. The effects of this continuing increase in the percentage of ageing people in coastal communities are profound. Local Government Authorities in coastal areas do not have the resources necessary to meet the increase in demand for community infrastructure and services required to meet the needs of an ageing population. The Taskforce considers that further research is required to assess the social implications of sea change growth. The focus of such research should include socio-economic disadvantage, health, ageing, housing and the process of gentrification in non metropolitan settings. All coastal councils report a lack of resources to meet the on-going increase in demand for community infrastructure such as cultural, sporting, recreation and other community facilities and to catch up with the significant backlog of demand for these facilities. The National Sea Change Taskforce proposes that a Community Infrastructure Fund be established to assist local government authorities (LGAs) in coastal areas that are experiencing growth pressures to meet this increasing demand. The rapid rates of growth, population characteristics and extensive scale of greenfield development in rapidly-growing coastal areas means that the resource base of LGAs in these areas is inadequate to fund much-needed infrastructure.

Governance and institutional arrangements for the coastal zone

The Taskforce believes it is timely and important to undertake a broad scale review of governance and institutional settings for the Australian coast. Such a review would describe the current situation, identify areas where improvements are needed and possible, and develop options for improvement for consideration by governments and stakeholders. The Taskforce also proposes that an effective interface between key stakeholder groups with a role in coastal planning and management be created through the establishment of a National Coastal Alliance. This concept has been explored by a working group representing the National Sea Change Taskforce, NRM groups, CSIRO and the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies at the Australian National University. Such a body would provide a much-needed interface between key stakeholder groups such as coastal councils, NRM groups, research organisations and others with a role in coastal planning and management. It could also provide informed input into Australian, State and Territory coastal policy development. It is proposed that the National Coastal Alliance be supported by the Australian Government.

In conclusion, the sea change phenomenon is a national issue that is impacting on coastal communities in Australia. To effectively manage population growth in Australia's coastal zone requires a coordinated and integrated approach to addressing the social, environmental and economic impact of growth within an agreed National Coastal Policy Framework. This needs to incorporate infrastructure planning. Only then can the range of issues impacting on the coastal environment and communities be adequately considered and addressed. What is at stake is the future of the nation's most highly valued natural asset – the Australian coastline. Action is urgently needed to protect this asset for the benefit of future generations.

Recommendations

The Taskforce proposes a national policy framework that incorporates the following key elements:

- That a coordinated national approach to managing coastal growth be adopted based on a commitment by all three levels of government to work collaboratively to ensure the sustainability of coastal communities and the coastal environment
- That accurate and consistent methods of measuring the impact of tourists and other non-residents in coastal areas be implemented to enable resources to be better matched with demand associated with population growth.
- That best practice principles and strategic responses to managing the environmental impacts of rapid growth be adopted
- That high level planning policy be enacted by State and Territory planning authorities to 'mainstream' climate change mitigation and adaptation considerations in all coastal planning decisions to ensure long term liveability and adaptability for coastal communities
- That further research be conducted to assess the social implications of coastal growth, including socio-economic disadvantage, health and housing
- That a considered policy response to the ageing of non-metropolitan coastal populations be developed
- That a coastal community infrastructure fund that is tied to the adoption of policy by developed
- That a review of governance and institutional arrangements for the coastal zone be undertaken
- That an effective interface between key stakeholder groups with a role in coastal planning and management be created through the establishment of a National Coastal Alliance.

INTRODUCTION

'Coastal communities around Australia and around the world are struggling to plan for rapid population growth driven by internal migration from metropolitan cities and inland areas'
(Gurran, Squires and Blakely 2005, p.1)

The National Sea Change Taskforce (the Taskforce) welcomes this current Parliamentary Inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts (see Appendix 1 for the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry and Appendix 2 for background information on the Taskforce). The Taskforce notes comments by the Committee Chair, Jennie George MP, that the inquiry will have particular regard to issues including the environmental impacts of coastal population growth, mechanisms to promote sustainable use of coastal resources, and strategies to deal with climate change adaptation, particularly in response to projected sea level rise.

This submission has been prepared to highlight important issues facing Australian coastal areas and has been structured to respond to the specific terms of reference.

The migration of population to the Australia's coastal areas, which has become known as the 'sea change' phenomenon, has reached significant proportions. Settlements that 50 years ago were little more than small coastal townships and fishing villages have grown to become rapidly expanding urbanised regions experiencing some of the highest growth rates in Australia. Increasing numbers of Australians have been attracted to the coast in search of a better way of life away from the capital cities and a better environment in which to raise their children. Coastal growth has been particularly strong over the past ten years. Analysis of the latest population data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that at the end of June 2007 there were 6.26 million people living in Australia's non-metro coastal areas, an increase of 1.27 million people since June 1997. This increase is equivalent to approx 6% of Australia's total population.

Coastal population outside the capital cities now represents 30% of Australia's national population and 82% of the nation's regional population. In 2006-07 the number of people migrating to non-metro coastal communities exceeded the total

number of people moving to all of Australia's capital cities. It is estimated a further one million people will commence moving to the coast from 2010 as the 'baby boomer' generation starts to reach retirement age. Apart from growth in resident populations, coastal communities face the added impact of increasing levels of tourism.

This growth and attendant intensification of land use along the coast is inevitably placing increased pressure on the high biodiversity and scenic values of the coastal zone. The rate of growth currently being experienced in coastal Australia is not sustainable. Coastal communities are attempting to deal with extraordinary growth pressures but research conducted for the Taskforce has shown that coastal councils do not have the resources necessary to keep pace with this demand. The first research project conducted by the Planning Research Centre at The University of Sydney, observes that coastal communities in Australia are struggling to keep pace with the social, environmental and economic impacts associated with growth. The report finds that coastal councils report infrastructure shortfalls and lack the capacity to finance these shortfalls through existing sources (grants, rates and development contributions). The report notes there is a clear need and substantial pressure from new residents for services and infrastructure comparable to that of metropolitan areas. The first phase of research conducted for the Taskforce, which identifies the key challenges facing Australia's coastal communities, was released in March 2005. The report, titled *Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia*, forms part of this submission as Appendix 3.

Average annual growth in Australia's non-metro coastal areas is approximately 2%, which tends to be 50% or 60% above the national average. Growth rates in individual Local Government Areas (LGAs) are often much higher. The Gold Coast City Council, in Queensland, experienced the biggest population increase of any local government authority (LGA) in Australia in 2006-07, with a population increase of more than 17,000 people and a growth rate of 3.4%. Other high growth LGAs included Capel in Western Australia (5.8%), Cairns in Queensland (3.2%), Mandurah in Western Australia (3.6%) and Surf Coast in Victoria (3.2%). These growth rates are based on estimated resident population figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics each year. This data is limited to an estimate of the number of permanent residents within statistical and local government areas. It does not include people such as holidaymakers, workers in the area who live elsewhere and other temporary residents.

The provision of infrastructure to meet demand associated with growth pressures is an issue facing coastal councils throughout Australia. The Queensland State Government was one of the first jurisdictions to recognise the special needs of rapidly growing coastal regions. In 2004 it announced a whole of government approach to dealing with projected growth in the south-east corner of the State – from Noosa to the NSW border. The Beattie Government created the Office of Urban Management to coordinate plans by all state agencies to meet the needs of an additional million people in the south-east corner of the state over the next 20 years. What distinguishes the SE Queensland Regional Plan from most other regional planning schemes is an accompanying infrastructure plan, which allocated \$55 billion to meet the cost of infrastructure and services that would be required by the expanded population in the region. The plan included funding for infrastructure and services such as roads and public transport, social and community infrastructure, energy networks, water infrastructure and health facilities. The Queensland Government recently reviewed and updated the plan, and has now budgeted for infrastructure expenditure of \$82 billion up to the year 2026.

The National Sea Change Taskforce believes there is a need for a similar integrated, whole of government approach to addressing the impact of coastal growth and development at a Commonwealth Government level and in other States and Territories. Currently, there is no single Commonwealth Government agency with coordinating, integrative responsibility for matters relating to coastal planning and management. Instead, this is shared between Departments including Climate Change, Environment, Heritage and the Arts, and Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, with the result that no one department or agency has overriding responsibility for addressing these issues.

Similarly, there is a need for a national coastal policy framework that enjoys the political support and commitment of all three tiers of government. In October 2003, the National Resource Management Ministerial Council endorsed a framework for a National Cooperative Approach to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). The framework was prepared by the Intergovernmental Coastal Advisory Group (ICAG), which has representatives of Commonwealth, State and Northern Territory governments, as well as local government. This framework is a useful step towards development of the required policy framework, but a much broader approach is required to the social and economic issues related to the coastal zone. As Barbara

Norman of the Global Cities Institute at RMIT has pointed out, it lacks 'climate change adaptation plans for managing rapid urban growth on the coast. It also lacks a risk management plan, particularly where significant urban development or key installations are located in low-lying coastal areas, and a set of agreed COAG principles that outline the responsibilities of Federal, State and Local government'.

The Taskforce welcomes the policy commitment contained in the Caring For Our Coasts Plan that:

A Rudd Labor Government will provide national leadership and work with local communities to address the challenges of coastal growth and climate change.

This commitment is essential to gaining the collaboration of all three spheres of government to the task of achieving an integrated, coordinated response to the impact of population growth on the Australian coast and the long-term sustainability of the coastal zone. The commitment can only be given effect, however, if responsibility for integrating and coordinating policy related to coastal planning and management is vested in one Commonwealth agency. It is our view that this should be vested with the Department of Climate Change or the Department of Environment, Heritage and The Arts.

Key challenges facing coastal communities

The research project, titled *Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia*, identified the following key challenges facing Australia's coastal LGAs and communities:

Infrastructure

All coastal councils report a shortfall in infrastructure and lack the capacity to finance these shortfalls through existing sources, such as grants, rates and developer contributions. There is a clear need to expand and upgrade services and infrastructure so that they are comparable to those in metropolitan areas. Gaps include insufficient physical infrastructure for existing and future population and visitor needs, including roads, sewer, water services and public transport.

Environment and heritage

Coastal environments are under significant pressure. Major environmental problems include habitat loss and fragmentation due to urban development and tourism, loss and degradation of coastal wetlands, change in hydrological systems and marine habitats, the introduction of exotic species, and erosion. Global climate change, particularly sea level rise, is likely to impact coastal environments in the near future.

Community wellbeing

Many non-metropolitan coastal communities are characterised by high levels of unemployment, lower than average household incomes, greater levels of socio-economic disadvantage and higher numbers of seniors than other parts of Australia. Demand for new housing and holiday accommodation reduces affordable housing opportunities. There is a risk of social polarisation within many sea change communities.

Economy/Tourism

Increasing population growth and development activity in coastal areas is not translating to long term economic gains usually associated with population expansion. Many coastal communities are experiencing a decline in traditional resourced-based industries such as agriculture, fisheries and forestry. Coastal councils require assistance to manage this process of transition and its impact on environmental quality and character of their communities.

Governance

Sea change localities are subject to complicated, cross jurisdictional planning and management processes relating to coastal management and protection, natural resource management and heritage conservation, in addition to core land use planning and development responsibilities.

The research report reviewed Australian and State government policies, strategies and legislation relating to the planning and management of Australia's coastal areas and found that:

- Commonwealth, State and local policy and planning instruments addressing the sea change phenomenon focus on biophysical aspects, particularly environmental protection and to a lesser degree, settlement structure and urban design. Social issues, such as building community cohesion, catering to the needs of aging populations, or housing affordability, are not well addressed within the scope of current policy or planning instruments.

- Similarly, although some planning instruments aim to preserve agricultural land or to provide for tourism development, economic goals are not well-articulated or integrated within coastal policy and planning frameworks (though some of the local plans examined do contain economic objectives and strategies).
- This failure to integrate social and economic objectives and strategies within coastal policies and the land use plans applying to coastal areas reflects broader difficulties associated with achieving the spectrum of sustainability goals. Given the evidence of social and economic disadvantage in sea change localities, and the likelihood that such disadvantage will continue without effective interventions, broadening coastal policy and planning processes to properly include social and economic dimensions is a priority.
- Effective regional planning is widely regarded by representatives of sea change communities to be critical to the management of growth and change in these areas. Many sea change communities report that existing regional plans lack weight, are not consistently applied, or are out of date.

REFERENCE POINT ONE: EXISTING POLICIES AND PROGRAMS RELATED TO COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT, TAKING IN THE CATCHMENT-COAST-OCEAN CONTINUUM

Best practice models for planning, infrastructure provision and management

The Taskforce recognises the need for enhanced understanding and use of best practice models for planning, infrastructure provision and management in coastal areas. These are seen as integral factors that can address the challenge that growth poses to coastal areas. Recent research has indicated that there are planning models in the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Commission worthy of consideration in the Australian context.

To progress the development and sharing of this knowledge the Taskforce commissioned the Planning Research Centre at The University of Sydney to undertake a research project to identify the key challenges facing Australia's non-metropolitan communities and to outline the planning tools and strategies available to address the challenges. The research report, titled *Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Best Practice Models of Local and Regional Planning for Sea Change Communities*, was released in January 2006 (see Appendix 4 that accompanies this report for a copy).

The research identified best practice planning principles for responding to the governance, environmental, community, economic and infrastructure needs of non-metropolitan coastal communities and provided more than 140 examples of best practice for managing the effects of rapid growth drawn from Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Canada, the UK and the European Union.

The report, which has been used extensively by policy makers, coastal councils and others with responsibility for managing the impact of coastal growth, points out that several factors suggest that population growth in Australian coastal areas, will continue for the foreseeable future. These include:

- the imminent retirement of the 'baby boomer' generation, which will produce a sizeable new market for high amenity retirement destinations;
- the global shift away from manufacturing based economies towards information, service and consumption based industries which are less dependent on a metropolitan location; and

- the growing flexibility of work practices associated with new telecommunications technology, which enables some workers to relocate to small coastal centres or the rural hinterland.

The full text of the Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Best Practice Models of Local and Regional Planning for Sea Change Communities research report is appended to this submission as Appendix 4.

Enhanced Collaboration and Coordination

The Taskforce notes that current methods of planning, funding and managing population and tourism growth in coastal areas are inconsistent and inadequate. The Taskforce promotes the adoption of a coordinated national approach to managing growth in coastal areas that would be based on a commitment by all three levels of government to work collaboratively to ensure that coastal growth is managed with a focus on sustainability of coastal communities and the coastal environment.

Australia does not have an agreed national policy or framework for planning and managing coastal areas. There is a clear need for enhanced coordination of planning and management of coastal growth at a local, regional, state and Commonwealth level. There is also a greater need for cross-jurisdictional coordination between all levels of government in relation to coastal planning and management.

Gurran, Squires and Blakely (2005: 59) point out that 'there is a need for a national framework to lead coastal policy, establish strategy responses to population growth in coastal regions, and to support and resource regional and local coastal planning initiatives. Suitable models for emulation exist in the UK, US and European Union'.

The need for greater cross jurisdictional coordination is also evident. The researchers state that in 'comparison to many other nations, Australia's national responses to coastal urbanisation are limited. This is partly due to a historic devolution of environmental responsibility to the States under the Australian Constitution. However, the Commonwealth has an important indirect influence on environmental policy and planning through its funding, taxation, and international trade powers. It can play an important role in national policy making, by setting policies directly and through national government councils (such as the Council of Australian Government and the Natural Resource Ministerial Council) (p. 41).

Since its formation in 2004 the Taskforce has had as one of its key platforms in planning for sustainability the establishment of a collaborative working relationship with all State Governments to develop coordinated regional plans that provide:

- a focus on sustainability of social capital, the environment and economic activity
- greater certainty about the extent and rate of growth in sea change communities
- joint planning of infrastructure and services
- employment opportunities to match population growth

The 'sea change' phenomenon is a national issue that is impacting on coastal communities in every Australian state and territory. The Taskforce believes it can only be addressed effectively through the commitment of local, State, Territory and Federal governments to work collaboratively to ensure that coastal development occurs in a sustainable way. It is for this reason that the Taskforce seeks the endorsement and cooperation of all State, Territory and Federal governments to development of a national policy framework for coastal Australia in the interests of safeguarding the Australian coast and coastal communities. Without this commitment there is a risk that the current lack of effective measures for planning, funding and managing rapid growth and development in coastal areas will lead to long-term degradation of the coastal environment and the eventual loss of identity, character and lifestyle values of many coastal communities.

RECOMMENDATION

That a coordinated national approach to managing coastal growth be adopted based on a commitment by all three levels of government to work collaboratively to ensure the sustainability of coastal communities and the coastal environment.

Impact of non-resident population

Current demographic data for the Australian coast is based on information from the census and from the annual Estimated Resident Population data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This data does not reflect non-resident population peaks or the impact of part-time residents or other visitors. It is limited to an estimate of the number of usual residents within statistical and local government areas. It does

not include people such as holidaymakers, workers in the area who live elsewhere and other temporary residents. This inevitably impacts on the capacity of coastal councils to finance the shortfalls in infrastructure and services through existing sources, such as grants, rates and developer contributions.

There is a clear need to establish an accurate and consistent method of measuring the impact of tourists and other non-resident population groups in Australian coastal areas to enable planners and decision-makers to better match resources with demand associated with population growth.

The absence of accurate data on holidaymakers and other visitors to coastal areas means that demand for infrastructure and services in these communities is consistently understated. Most coastal LGAs experience regular influxes of population during holiday periods which place heavy demand on local infrastructure and services. At Byron Bay, for example, the permanent population of about 6,000 expands to more than 20,000 during the peak of the summer holiday season. These visitors place substantial demand on water, sewerage, waste collection and other community services. While tourism injects revenue into the local commercial economy, and helps to generate employment opportunities (mainly part time), it does not contribute to the cost of public infrastructure to meet the needs of visitors, such as roads, water, sewerage treatment, collection of waste and recreation facilities. The burden of maintaining and expanding infrastructure capacity to meet this demand inevitably falls on local ratepayers.

RECOMMENDATION

That accurate and consistent methods of measuring the impact of tourists and other non-residents in coastal areas be implemented to enable resources to be better matched with demand associated with population growth.

REFERENCE POINT TWO: THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF COASTAL POPULATION GROWTH AND MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF COASTAL RESOURCES

The Taskforce is concerned about the impact of urban growth and development on the environment in coastal areas. The level of development is placing many coastal environments at risk of serious degradation. As Gurran, Squires and Blakely (2005:55) observe 'coastal environments are under major pressure. Environmental problems include habitat loss and fragmentation due to urban development and tourism, loss and degradation of coastal wetlands, change in hydrological systems and marine habitats, the introduction of exotic species and erosion' .

Another issue of concern is the future of agricultural land in coastal areas. It has been noted that 'innovative planning mechanisms to offset the financial impacts of conservation on private lands are urgently needed in Australia's coastal communities. Examples include tradeable development rights; incentives; and flexible application of development controls. State governments should assist local councils in developing such approaches and recognise those that do so by both monetary and public awards programs' (Appendix 3 p. 55).

The second research project conducted for the Taskforce by the Planning Research Centre, titled *Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Best Practice Models of Local & Regional Planning for Sea Change Communities*, was released in January 2006. This report was commissioned to document the range of governance, environmental, community, economic, and infrastructure challenges affecting "sea change" councils in Australia and internationally, and to identify best practice in addressing these issues. Section three of the report summarised the key challenges associated with managing the environmental impacts of rapid growth and change within non metropolitan contexts, and outlined best practice responses for addressing these challenges, as follows:

Within the context of an overall sustainable planning framework, local and regional land use plans should integrate urban settlement with environmental conservation, and coastal and catchment protection strategies. In line with the principles for a sustainable coastal community outlined above, land use plans must:

- Recognize fundamental ecological limits by minimising urban footprints and impacts on natural systems;
- Limit the use of non renewable resources and the production of waste;
- Explicitly prevent further urban exposure to coastal hazards (including potential sea level rise) or select hazard mitigation strategies that limit environmental disturbance;
- Minimize potential land use conflict between conservation, tourism, residential, and agricultural / fishing industries (in rural contexts), and manufacturing / other industries in coastal cities, by recognizing the significance of existing activities and promoting transition to appropriate new uses, particularly of underutilized or redundant “brownfield” sites; and,
- Reflect and promote indigenous input to coastal planning and management decisions, including ongoing fulfillment of custodian obligations and protection of traditional resource access rights.

The research report then set out strategic responses and tools for better environmental planning in high amenity and coastal settings including:

- Growth management approaches such as: the use of Urban Growth Boundaries (limiting the urban footprint of a community); and Population Caps (defining the maximum number of people, or households, that can be accommodated within a specific spatial area). Examples include the *Surf Coast Planning Scheme*, and the *Noosa Planning Scheme*.
- Environmental protection and conservation mechanisms such as: Habitat Protection Plans (allowing some development within strictly determined parameters designed to protect the habitat of a particular species under threat); Tradable / Transferable Development Rights (preserving significant landscapes or areas of high biodiversity value by allowing landholders to sell theoretical development rights forfeited by the restrictive designation of their land); Voluntary Conservation Schemes (formally enabling a landholder to voluntarily protect the conservation values of their property); and, Green Offsets (actions undertaken to mitigate the environmental impact of a particular development, ensuring a “net environmental improvement” from development). Examples of these approaches have been developed by Port Stephens Shire, Wollongong City Council, and Johnstone Shire.
- Coastline Management Plans, to provide an integrated basis for addressing coastal hazards and protecting and enhancing the amenity of beaches (for example Newcastle City Council Coastline Management Plan).
- Local plans for the management of natural water systems, such as estuary and river management plans, which operate within a supportive whole-of-catchment management framework (e.g., Tweed Shire Estuary Management Plan).

- Indigenous Land Use Agreements / Joint Management arrangements, to provide a way of sharing the management of lands or waters (typically environmentally significant areas such as national parks, reserves, and marine protected areas) with traditional indigenous owners. A key example is the Arkawal Agreement developed in Byron Shire.

The complete research report, titled *Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Best Practice Models of Local & Regional Planning for Sea Change Communities*, forms part of this submission as Appendix 4.

RECOMMENDATION

That best practice principles and strategic responses to managing the environmental impacts of rapid growth be adopted.

REFERENCE POINT THREE: THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON COASTAL AREAS AND STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION, PARTICULARLY IN RESPONSE TO PROJECTED SEA LEVEL RISE

Planning for the Impact of Climate Change

The potential impact of climate change is of particular concern to coastal communities. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) identifies coastal areas of Australia as the most exposed to potential climate change impacts, from sea level rise to increased frequency and velocity of extreme weather events (Christensen et al. 2007).

The social profile of non-metropolitan coastal communities compounds their susceptibility to the environmental and economic consequences of climate change. Characterised by lower household incomes, higher proportions of older people and rapid population growth and change, non-metropolitan coastal areas are exposed to the cumulative effects of physical exposure, higher levels of social disadvantage and reduced capacity to adapt to climate risk.

How then should local government in coastal areas respond to this heightened vulnerability? The Taskforce commissioned the Planning Research Centre at The University of Sydney to undertake a special research project to assist coastal LGAs address this issue. This research report, titled *Planning for Climate Change: Leading Practice for Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia*, is now in final draft form and is due to be released on 28 July, 2008. The aims of the research project, as outlined in the draft report, are to:

- Scope the potential environmental, social, and economic implications of climate change for Australia's coastal amenity communities, including a social vulnerability model to indicate communities which need the most assistance in adapting to these impacts;
- Define leading practice in planning for climate change mitigation and adaptation, with a focus on non metropolitan communities in coastal Australia;

- Establish the broader context of current policy and practice in planning for climate change mitigation and adaptation within Australian local government areas, and particularly within non metropolitan coastal areas; and,
- Identify opportunities to extend and enhance this practice at local, state, territorial, and or national levels.

The key findings of the research report are outlined as follows:

Implications of climate change for Australia's coastal amenity communities

- Coastal areas are exposed to climate change risks associated with sea level rise, increased frequency and or velocity of storm events, shoreline erosion, flooding, and changed rainfall and temperature patterns, threatening marine and terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystems (Hennessey et al. 2007).
- These environmental risks represent a number of social and economic consequences for coastal amenity communities, exacerbated by existing socio-economic disadvantage and an aging population profile.
- Those in temporary housing like caravans and manufactured homes are at particular risk in the event of a major natural disaster. These housing forms are an important source of housing for low income Australians and retirees, particularly along the coast. Without proper insurance or ownership of land there is a high likelihood that tenants will face long term displacement in the event of a disaster.
- Other social and amenity impacts for coastal communities include damage to beaches, recreational areas, and landscapes or items of cultural significance. Increased temperatures may make some forms of outdoor recreation – bushwalking, cycling, or golf, less appealing, particularly during summer. Beach and cliff top trails and paths may be subject to more frequent damage and increased exposure to landslip.
- Changed rainfall patterns and increased likelihood of major storm events represent both long term and abrupt unpredictable risks to agricultural and tourism industries, with major flow on implications for non metropolitan coastal economies.
- Over the next 20-30 years extreme weather events are likely to overwhelm existing infrastructure constructed to current design standards. Buildings, roads, railways, ports and airports, bridges and tunnels, will all experience

increased pressures and require additional repair, maintenance and upgrading works.

Leading practice in planning for climate change mitigation and adaptation in coastal amenity communities

- The following overarching principles for leading practice emerge from the literature on climate change mitigation and adaptation planning.
 - The need to uphold the principles of ecologically sustainable development in designing adaptation and mitigation approaches, including environmental integrity, social equity and participation, economic viability and the precautionary principle. This is critical for coastal amenity communities whose populations include higher proportions of lower income and socially disadvantaged groups.
 - The need to prioritise actions worth doing anyway, which for coastal amenity communities mean actions that have multiple benefits for the environment, for managing coastal processes, for the affordable and efficient provision of infrastructure, for nature based amenity and tourism and for more socially cohesive settlements;
 - The importance of a sound evidence base, for identifying and justifying planning responses to climate change. Many smaller coastal councils will need assistance in accessing, interpreting, and applying consistent and reliable sources of scientific information about climate change scenarios.
 - The need to plan now, to prevent further risks associated with climate change. Coastal amenity communities experiencing rapid population growth will experience pressure for rapid development approval, before climate change considerations have been factored into planning and assessment frameworks.
- In Australia there is a particular need to review current planning controls to ensure that they 'enable' new adaptive responses in planning for climate, as well as new technology for climate change mitigation.

Current state of policy and practice in planning for climate change mitigation and adaptation within Australian coastal amenity communities

- While climate change is increasingly recognised by Commonwealth and State governments in Australia as a critical issue for coastal communities, few local planning schemes include specific provisions for climate change adaptation or mitigation, aside for controls relating to sea level rise in Western Australia and South Australia.
- However, a growing number of councils have planning provisions that may provide indirect protection from climate change impacts. For instance, 21 of 79 coastal councils responding to a national survey of planning schemes (the Australian Land Use Planning Policy Monitor) report that they include specific coastal protection zones in their planning instrument or equivalent. Other mechanisms that may contribute to the adaptive capacity of local communities under future climate scenarios include bushfire protection zones, overlays or equivalent (41 councils); and provisions to protect wetlands (43 councils); native vegetation (55 councils) and wildlife habitat (48 councils).
- This information suggests that many Australian local councils already have the basis for incorporating climate change considerations within their legislative decision making and development assessment framework but that work needs to be revised in relation to specific climate change scenarios.
- Similarly, many councils have well established approaches to promote more sustainable urban forms, providing a sound basis for reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions and for settlements that are more resilient to some of the impacts of climate change (particularly increased temperatures and drought). There is an urgent need to build on and extend this work more widely.

Recommendations – planning for climate change research

Drawing on the findings outlined above, the authors of the research report made the following recommendations to enhance practice in planning for climate change across sea change communities in coastal Australia:

1. That all State and territorial planning authorities enact high level planning policy to 'mainstream' climate change mitigation and adaptation considerations in all coastal planning decisions, to ensure long term liveability and adaptability for coastal communities;

2. That in response to climate change, local councils undertake an initial vulnerability assessment incorporating:
 - Existing information and potential risks of climate change;
 - The capacity of existing systems or processes to adapt to these impacts; and,
 - The potential to introduce new adaptation strategies.
3. That a formal climate change vulnerability assessment be undertaken at regional or local scales to support strategic land use planning decisions and significant development assessment in coastal amenity areas, including:
 - the existing and potential exposure of particular locations / infrastructure to risks associated with climate change and the potential to reduce this vulnerability through specific building standards, development controls, or direct works;
 - the potential impact of the settlement or infrastructure, including the location and configuration of development, on the vulnerability of existing settlements, natural habitat or biodiversity, including 'downstream' impacts;
 - the location of existing and planned settlements / developments in relation to access routes, services, and infrastructure, and the likelihood of continued access to these facilities in the event of an emergency, and;
 - the potential to reduce risks and the potential to further adapt the development / activity if climate impacts accelerate or increase.
4. That carbon impact of future land use or development forms must become an explicit consideration in all strategic land use planning and development assessment processes in coastal areas, including:
 - The ability to service locations with alternative transportation, like public transport, walking, and biking, and the general contribution of the location to reductions in auto trip numbers and length, to assure that the location works toward climate change mitigation;
 - the scale and duration of the impact, both of the primary development itself (and associated construction), and potentially, any 'downstream' impacts.

- ways to avoid, negate, or offset the impact of the development on greenhouse gas emissions and any existing or potential legal duty of care to consider direct or indirect carbon impacts of the development.
5. That in any adaptive response to climate change, consideration be given to the possible 'equity' issues that may arise as a result of financial (eg pricing policy) or regulatory (eg building codes), and the differential impacts for particular members of coastal communities that may be particularly vulnerable to pricing or regulatory changes.
 6. That a mechanism be established to encourage and enable collaboration between neighbouring local councils in responding to climate change.
 7. That Federal and State governments support local councils in building expertise and in undertaking the necessary vulnerability assessments and adaptation planning work with dedicated funding and data resources.
 8. That further research on understanding and responding to social vulnerability to climate change impacts be undertaken, with priority assistance given to coastal areas where physical exposure, socio-economic disadvantage, and population instability coincide.
 9. That an intergovernmental agreement involving all three levels of government be developed to clearly state the commitments and responsibilities of Federal, State and Local Government in 'Planning for Climate Change'.

The full text of the draft *Planning for Climate Change: Leading Practice for Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia* research report is appended to this submission as Appendix 5.

RECOMMENDATION

That high level planning policy be enacted by State and Territory planning authorities to 'mainstream' climate change mitigation and adaptation considerations in all coastal planning decisions to ensure long term liveability and adaptability for coastal communities.

REFERENCE POINT FOUR: MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE COASTAL COMMUNITIES

Social, environmental and economic issues

Rapid population and tourism growth is having a significant social impact on existing coastal communities. Researchers have identified that 'socio-economic disadvantage and polarisation is apparent within and between non-metropolitan coastal communities. Lower incomes and higher unemployment levels characterise most of these areas, including localities with the highest levels of population growth and development activity' (Appendix 3 p. 56).

Some existing residents in coastal areas have benefited from rapid population growth. Local property owners in high growth areas have reaped windfall profits from the sale of their land for development. State and Federal Governments have also benefited from the collection of taxes associated with these transactions, such as capital gains tax, GST and stamp duty. Some industry sectors have also benefited, including the construction industry and commercial operators such as retailers, resort owners and food and beverage outlets.

The influx of so many people into a coastal community impacts in many different ways. Affluent sea changers tend to drive up property prices while low-income earners find they are priced out of the local property market. As Gurrán, Squires and Blakely (2005) point out 'there are two issues of concern here; firstly, newcomers increase demand for housing, thus increasing land values. At the same time, environmental conservation policies limit the supply of developable land, also increasing values. There is a need to design environmentally sensitive growth management strategies that do not result in the displacement of lower income residents' (p. 60).

Unemployment rates in sea change areas are noticeably higher than in metropolitan areas and youth unemployment is particular high in coastal growth areas. Apart from high unemployment, research indicates that people living in coastal areas have a higher level of socio-economic disadvantage than the Australian population as a whole (Haberkorn 2004, Hugo 2004). Non metropolitan coastal areas also have a higher proportion of families receiving income support benefits. Eight per cent are receiving labour market benefits compared to 5.9% in Australia overall (Hugo p. 17).

The Taskforce considers that further research is required to assess the social implications of sea change growth. The focus of such research should include socio-economic disadvantage, health, ageing, housing and the process of gentrification in non metropolitan settings.

RECOMMENDATION

That further research be conducted to assess the social implications of coastal growth, including socio-economic disadvantage, health and housing

Policy response to ageing communities

Coastal councils and their communities are at the forefront of Australia's ageing population and its impacts. The effects of this continuing increase in the percentage of ageing people in coastal communities are profound. Local Government Authorities in coastal areas do not have the resources necessary to meet the increase in demand for community infrastructure and services required to meet the needs of an ageing population.

There is an urgent need for development of national policy initiatives to meet the current and future needs of ageing populations in coastal communities, including programs to meet the current shortfall in aged care facilities, home care and support, advocacy services, support groups, respite care, appropriate housing, nursing homes, retirement accommodation and learning and education services.

In addition, ageing demographic trends present challenges to coastal communities in terms of stimulating inclusiveness, participation and accessibility among older people. There is a need for policy initiatives, to be administered by the Australian Department of Health & Ageing, to foster greater opportunities for older people to play an active and valued role within their communities.

RECOMMENDATION

That a considered policy response to the ageing of non-metropolitan coastal populations be developed.

Community Infrastructure Fund

All coastal councils report a lack of resources to meet the on-going increase in demand for community infrastructure such as cultural, sporting, recreation and other community facilities and to catch up with the significant backlog of demand for these facilities. The National Sea Change Taskforce proposes that a Community Infrastructure Fund be established to assist local government authorities (LGAs) in coastal areas that are experiencing growth pressures to meet this increasing demand.

The rapid rates of growth, population characteristics and extensive scale of greenfield development in rapidly-growing coastal areas means that the resource base of LGAs in these areas is inadequate to fund much-needed infrastructure.

One particular need in sea change areas is additional funding for capital works to meet increasing tourism demand in coastal towns and cities. Coastal councils also struggle to find the recurrent funding necessary to maintain these facilities. The lack or poor state of these facilities reflects adversely on the ability of coastal communities to meet the needs of tourists. Coastal councils also require financial assistance to undertake significant coastal protection infrastructure to minimise foreshore erosion. This is particularly relevant given the potential impact of climate change. It is proposed that the Community Infrastructure Fund could be similar to the Australian Government's successful Roads to Recovery program and require funds to be spent on approved projects within a prescribed timeframe.

The primary purpose of the new Fund would be to ensure that rapid-growth LGAs are able to meet increasing demand for community infrastructure generated by population and tourism growth. Projects undertaken with Community Infrastructure Funding would publicly highlight the Australian's Government's role in supporting rapidly-growing coastal communities.

The National Sea Change Taskforce notes that the papers accompanying the 2008-09 Budget include an announcement by Anthony Albanese, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, that a new Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program will be introduced in 2009-10. The announcement indicated that the new program will be designed to fund major investments in regional communities and is in addition to the \$176 million Better

Regions Program. The Taskforce sincerely hopes that the new program is designed to assist local government authorities in coastal areas to meet the on-going growth pressures they are experiencing.

RECOMMENDATION

That a coastal community infrastructure fund that is tied to the adoption of policy be developed.

REFERENCE POINT FIVE: GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE COASTAL ZONE

Review of Institutional Arrangements

As identified in the Planning Research Centre research findings, the National Sea Change Taskforce believes it is timely and important to undertake a broad scale review of governance and institutional settings for the Australian coast. Such a review would describe the current situation, identify areas where improvements are needed and possible, and develop options for improvement for consideration by governments and stakeholder groups.

This matter was considered at a workshop on governance conducted by the National Sea Change Taskforce at Port Douglas in April 2006. The workshop participants, who included representatives of local government, NRM groups and coastal researchers, concluded that more than a decade since the Resource Assessment Commission's overview, and given the widely perceived and often demonstrable fragmentation, overlaps, complexity and lack of coordination in coastal policy and management, that such a review should engage all levels of government (including regional organizations), community stakeholder groups, industry, and relevant research organizations and experts, and draw on expertise both in coastal management and in institutional and policy coordination in federal systems.

Amongst other things, the review would have the following objectives:

- Map and describe current institutions, legislative frameworks, organizations and policy processes that define coastal policy and management, taking an integrated approach (that is, covering environmental, social and economic dimensions).
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of different levels of government, agencies across one level of government, and other organizations.
- Identify unnecessary duplication and redundancies (noting that some redundancy and overlap may be desirable to provide resilience and checks and balances).
- Consider the appropriateness and adequacy of current resources available for coastal policy and management (including human, information and financial resources) currently assigned to those roles and responsibilities.

- Identify conflicting processes, policy goals and processes that impede achievement of integrated coastal policy.
- Identify a range of reforms, options and best practice models for better integration, communication and achievement of synergies.

RECOMMENDATION

That a review of governance and institutional arrangements for the Australian coastal zone be undertaken.

Establishment of National Coastal Alliance

To provide for improved cross agency collaboration and a more effective interface between organizations with a common interest in the sustainability of the coastal environment and communities it is proposed that a national coastal advisory body be established.

The concept of establishing such a body, provisionally called the National Coastal Alliance, has been explored by a working group representing the National Sea Change Taskforce, NRM groups, CSIRO and the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies at the Australian National University.

Such a body would provide a much-needed interface between key stakeholder groups such as coastal councils, NRM groups, research organisations and others with a role in coastal planning and management. It could also provide informed input into Australian, State and Territory coastal policy development. It is proposed that the National Coastal Alliance be supported by the Australian Government, either through the Department of Climate Change and/or the Department of Environment, Heritage and The Arts.

The working group has proposed the following Vision and Mission statement for the Alliance:

VISION

To be the national information and communication interface between local government authorities, NRM groups and research organisations.

MISSION

The National Coastal Alliance will bring together stakeholders with a common interest in achieving sustainability of Australia's coastal zone through:

- acquisition of information and dissemination of knowledge required to achieve the sustainable use and management of coastal Australia;
- advising on the research needs of end-users, including communities, decision-makers and policy-makers responsible for coastal planning and management;
- seeking the adoption of knowledge through education, training and extension to provide managers, planners and other stakeholders with the information needed to respond appropriately to issues that pose a risk to the coastal environment, such as climate change;
- facilitating the use of multi-disciplinary, integrated science and the adoption of planning and management tools to achieve the environmental, social and economic sustainability of Australia's coastal zone;
- working collaboratively with relevant government agencies, researchers, non-government organisations, communities and industry to achieve these objectives.
- providing a primary point of contact by which partnerships and collaborations can be achieved between local and regional stakeholders and national and international agencies and research organisations.

RECOMMENDATION

That an effective interface between key stakeholder groups with a role in coastal planning and management be created through the establishment of a National Coastal Alliance.

CONCLUSION

The sea change phenomenon is a national issue that is impacting on coastal communities in Australia.

It can only be addressed through a commitment on the part of local, State and Federal governments to work collaboratively to ensure that coastal development occurs in a sustainable way.

There is a risk that the current lack of effective measures for planning, funding and managing rapid population and tourism growth in coastal areas will lead to long-term degradation of the coastal environment. It could also lead to the eventual loss of identity, character and lifestyle values of coastal communities.

This submission has attempted to identify key issues of concern to coastal councils and their communities. To effectively manage population and tourism growth in Australia's coastal zone requires a coordinated and integrated approach to addressing the social, environmental and economic impact of growth within an agreed National Coastal Policy Framework. This needs to incorporate infrastructure planning. Only then can the range of issues impacting on the coastal environment and communities be adequately considered and addressed.

What is at stake is the future of the nation's most highly valued natural asset – the Australian coastline. Action is urgently needed to protect this asset for the benefit of future generations.

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Appendix 1- Terms of Reference

Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts Inquiry into climate change and environmental impacts on coastal communities

The committee will inquire into and report on issues related to climate change and environmental pressures experienced by Australian coastal areas, particularly in the context of coastal population growth. The inquiry will have particular regard to:

- existing policies and programs related to coastal zone management, taking in the catchment-coast-ocean continuum;
- the environmental impacts of coastal population growth and mechanisms to promote sustainable use of coastal resources;
- the impact of climate change on coastal areas and strategies to deal with climate change adaptation, particularly in response to projected sea level rise;
- mechanisms to promote sustainable coastal communities; and
- governance and institutional arrangements for the coastal zone.

The inquiry was referred to the committee by the Hon Peter Garrett AM MP, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, and Senator the Hon Penny Wong, the Minister for Climate Change and Water, on 20 March 2008.

Appendix 2 - About the National Sea Change Taskforce

The National Sea Change Taskforce was established in 2004 as a national body to represent the interests of coastal councils. The role of the Taskforce is to provide national leadership in addressing the impact of the 'sea change' phenomenon and to provide support and guidance to coastal councils experiencing the impact of rapid population and tourism growth. The first step towards establishment of the organisation took place in February 2004 when a group of 27 CEOs and General Managers of high growth coastal councils from around Australia met at Maroochydore, on Queensland's Sunshine Coast. Over two days of workshops, presentations and deliberations the CEOs identified the priority issues facing their coastal communities and agreed to establish a national taskforce to assist their councils to gain the support and cooperation of State and Federal Governments to address the challenge of growth in sea change areas. The number of coastal LGAs in the Taskforce has steadily increased since that first meeting. A Sea Change conference held in Melbourne in May 2004 was attended by CEOs, mayors and councilors representing 56 coastal councils from every State in Australia. By the time the organization was formally constituted, in November 2004, the Taskforce involved more than 60 participating councils. Funding for the Taskforce's activities is derived from membership fees paid by member councils.

One of the initial objectives of the Taskforce was to establish awareness of the impact of the sea change phenomenon and the role of the group with State and Commonwealth governments, media outlets and the wider public. The aim was to communicate the message that coastal councils are struggling to cope with the pressures of population and tourism growth and do not have the resources required to keep pace with demand for infrastructure and services. As a result of an awareness campaign conducted by the Taskforce, which resulted in more than 1,000 media articles over two years, the term 'sea change phenomenon' has become the accepted national expression for the large-scale movement of population to the coast. There is also national awareness of the social, environmental and economic impact that rapid growth is having on coastal LGAs and their communities.

Another initial objective of the organisation was to commission research to identify the key issues facing coastal councils in Australia. It was recognised at an early stage that an advocacy campaign could only be successful if it was supported by the findings of solid and credible research. The first phase of research, undertaken by the Planning Research Centre at The University of Sydney, was completed in March

2005 and the findings distributed to members and to key political figures. The second phase of research, titled *Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Best Practice Models of Local & Regional Planning for Sea Change Communities* was released in January 2006. This report documented the range of governance, environmental, community, economic, and infrastructure challenges affecting sea change councils in Australia and identified best practice in addressing these issues. It is attached to this submission as Appendix 4. A third phase of research, which identifies best practice measures for responding to the potential impact of climate change on coastal communities, forms part of this submission at Appendix 3.

Advocacy at State and Federal government level has also been a priority. The Taskforce has made representations to politicians, officials, planners and members of the wider community and has used the findings of the sea change research reports to document the key issues facing coastal communities. As a result of the advocacy program the issue of coastal growth and its impact on coastal communities has been addressed in several policy initiatives by both the former coalition government and the Rudd Labor government. In the period leading up to the November 2007 election the coalition released a policy initiative called the Growing Regions Plan, which was aimed at helping communities in sea change areas to meet the costs associated with growth. Shortly before the 24 November election the ALP announced a Caring For Our Coasts Plan, which committed a Federal Labor Government to providing national leadership on coastal management. The ALP plan stated that the challenge associated with coastal growth, compounded by the impacts of global warming, should be a national priority, with Federal Government leadership and cooperation between all levels of government. It further stated that Labor will work with the National Sea Change Taskforce and other stakeholders in developing broad, national principles for coastal management, consistent with its commitment to sustainable development.

National Sea Change Taskforce Member Councils, 2007-08:

Council	State	Population
Albany	WA	33,364
Alexandrina	SA	20,949
Augusta-Margaret R	WA	12,000
Ballina	NSW	40,090
Bass Coast	VIC	30,191
Bega Valley	NSW	32,637

Bellingen	NSW	12,810
Break O'Day	TAS	6,334
Bunbury	WA	32,499
Bundaberg	QLD	89,814
Busselton	WA	28,649
Byron	NSW	30,898
Cairns	QLD	132,765
Capel	WA	10,517
Circular Head	TAS	8,051
Clarence Valley	NSW	50,102
Coffs Harbour	NSW	68,315
Colac Otway	VIC	21,802
Copper Coast	SA	11,899
Denmark	WA	5,337
East Gippsland	VIC	42,075
Esperance	WA	13,089
Eurobodalla	NSW	36,613
Exmouth	WA	2,245
Fraser Coast	QLD	89,390
Gingin	WA	4,606
Gladstone	QLD	55,556
Glamorgan Spring Bay	TAS	4,356
Glenelg	VIC	20,337
Gold Coast	QLD	524,667
Gosford	NSW	163,469
Great Lakes	NSW	35,068
Greater Taree	NSW	47,110
Irwin	WA	3,350
Kempsey	NSW	28,763
Kiama	NSW	20,382
Kingborough	TAS	32,057
Mandurah	WA	65,273
Moreton Bay	QLD	343,553
Moyne	VIC	16,060
Onkaparinga	SA	156,037
Pt Macquarie-Hastings	NSW	71,084
Port Stephens	NSW	63,650
Richmond Valley	NSW	21,267
Rockhampton	QLD	103,297
Rockingham	WA	89,629
Shoalhaven	NSW	94,181

Sorell	TAS	11,758
South Gippsland	VIC	27,440
Streaky Bay	SA	2,072
Sunshine Coast	QLD	303,050
Surf Coast	VIC	24,195
Townsville	QLD	169,484
Victor Harbor	SA	12,528
Wanneroo	WA	115,136
Wellington	VIC	42,147
Whitsunday	QLD	31,980
Wollongong	NSW	192,131
Wyong	NSW	144,297
Yankalilla	SA	4,193

Appendix 3 - Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia

Authors: Gurrán, Squires and Blakely (2005)

Accompanies this report

Appendix 4 – Meeting the Sea Change Challenge: Best practice Models of Local & Regional Planning for Sea Change Communities

Authors: Gurrán, Squires and Blakely (2006)

Accompanies this report

Appendix 5 – Draft report Planning for Climate Change: Leading Practice for Sea Change Communities in Coastal Australia

Authors: Gurrán, Hamin and Norman (2008)

Accompanies this report