

## Notes from Joint Meeting with Shoalhaven City Council and Conjola CCB

**Meeting Date :-** 30 June 2016 at Jervis Bay Conf Room, SCC Offices, Nowra

**Purpose:-** To obtain an update on status of Dredging Project, and discuss proposal to expand Dredging Project to support beach replenishment with Shoalhaven General Manager

**Present:** **Shoalhaven City Council (SCC)** – Russ Pigg (RP), Patricia White (PW), Ben Stewart (BS), Isabelle Ghetti (IG), Kellie Lowe (KL), Matthew Apolo (MA)  
**Conjola CCB** – Robyn Kerves (RK), Mike Brungs (MB), Bill Hackett (BH)

**Apologies** Dirk Treloar, Kristen Bird

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### **General Discussion Points**

#### Variation to current scope of dredging works

***Seek an update on Council's application to OEH to modify/vary approved scope of dredging works and grant application to rectify/remediate post flood scoured state of northern navigation channel, southern channel and entrance opening.***

- MA informed the meeting that the Sandpiper Dredge at Conjola is scheduled to leave Conjola on 8 Jul 2016 (ie it will be on site for only one more week).
- The remaining in-scope work is to link the channel to the Cunjurong boat ramp and to dredge a small "swirl basin" adjacent to the ramp and to ensure the channel is linked to the ebb channel
- MA stated that any variation to the original scope must be approved before 8 Jul 16.
- IG informed the meeting that she forwarded the CCB request to vary the approved scope of dredging works to all agencies involved in issuing approval. Advice from various "agencies" (not specific) is that the CCB request to modify/increase the scope of dredging works to dredge the entrance is beyond the scope of the current REF. This is despite SCC passing a motion to increase the scope, and advice from the Office of the Minister of Water and Lands that approval to increase the scope only requires a request for the variation from SCC.
- IG advised that she believed that the variation request by the CCB related to the eastern end (or entrance end) of the current dredged channel and is the main cause of concerns for agencies. The CCB pointed out that the western end of the channel is not only difficult to traverse in a kayak, but is almost inaccessible in a motorised dinghy. The depth at the western entrance to the channel is approximately half the length of the blade on a kayak paddle (about 300mm). The current status of the channel does not achieve one of the 3 primary objectives of the project which was to develop a navigable channel from the Currajong boat ramp to the "main body of the lake"
- MA estimated the cost to dredge an additional 100 metres of channel to connect it with the main channel adjacent to Chinaman's Island would be in the order of \$40-\$50,000; money that was not budgeted. He also stated that the current REF only has approval to relocate 6,000 cu metres of sand from Conjola, and that has been completed (to Mollymook and Huskisson). If the requested variation is approved it will have to include approval to relocate the additional sand to another location because it is not required at Conjola (cannot be placed on the northern shore, or beyond the sand bar on the beach), MB suggested the sand

be relocated to Cunjurong beach, which is acceptable to OEH, but SCC regarded this as unacceptable in terms of cost and works/equipment capability to do so.

- MA also stated that when the dredge backs out of the current channel, it will need to dredge its way across the shoaling at the western end of the channel in order to get to the boat ramp. He stated that the sand that is dredged will be placed onto the delta (which presumably will then be washed back into the channel by tidal movements)
- CCB reps emphasised the current situation has the potential of not achieving the primary objective of creating a navigable channel from the Cunjurong boat ramp to the main body of the lake
- BS informed the meeting that this work is on Crown Lands and Crown Lands have a role to play in dredging policy.
- RK commented that Narrabeen Lakes was dredged within 3 days of the recent East Coast Low, and similar actions occurred on the northern NSW coast, and questioned why it could not be done at Conjola. IG stated that those Councils have a dredging policy. In response to a question regarding developing a dredging policy for Lake Conjola, IG advised that such a policy is very unlikely in the future
- SCC agreed to consider the request to link the channel to the main channel adjacent to Chinaman's Island, and noted it would have to be approved before 8 Jul, the date the dredge will be leaving Conjola (see following image)



Current status of the dredged channel and discussion on rationale for its location

- The impact to the channel from the recent East Coast Low and flood was also discussed, specifically the instability of the dredged channel. All parties agreed that the channel was severely impacted with depth significantly reduced and bank collapsed. The sand deposited

along the southern bank on the eastern side of the boat ramp was also impacted with sand washed into the delta

- MB provided photographic images of the entrance in the mid 1980's and a proposal at the time by Manly Hydraulics Laboratory (MHL) to dredge the southern (ebb) channel (which was subsequently undertaken in the 1990's, and which resulted in an open entrance for a significant number of years). The images showed a healthy delta and entrance with the channel running along the southern shoreline off Holiday Haven Caravan Park. MB questioned how the current project chose the location of the dredged channel. BS commented that the project could have given more consideration and focus to dredging on the southern channel
- The meeting was presented with several images taken by drone on 29 June 16 which clearly showed that the southern channel (ebb channel) has very severe shoaling between Chinaman's Island and the eastern boat ramp beyond Holiday Haven
- BS stated several times that there is hundreds of thousands of cubic metres of sand on the Conjola delta, and the current scope of removing 12,000 cu m would never have a significant impact on the tidal flows. IG stated that SCC regard it as a "pilot" project to assess sand movement from a dredged tidal flood channel on the northern side. (The term "pilot" was the implication, but was not specifically used). CCB pointed out that according to the Royal Haskoning Report the net increase of sand in the delta is approximately 10,000-20,000 cu m/pa which suggests an ongoing project is required otherwise the delta will close permanently. BS stated an ongoing project is cost prohibitive.

#### Replenishing Shoalhaven Beaches with Conjola Sand

**Consider expanding the scope application to include ongoing dredging of the entrance delta as a means to address renourishment of Shoalhaven beaches adversely affected by recent East Coast Low(s).**

- The CCB proposed a "win-win" situation for both Conjola and the SCC if Conjola sand was used to replenish sand at the beaches that were eroded in the June ECL. BS rejected the proposal on the basis of cost and the unlikely possibility of approvals from the relevant "agencies"
- To justify his cost assessment, BS commented that the sand required was well in excess of 12,000 cubic metres – the current cost of dredging Conjola was around \$500,000
- IG and BS stated that replenishment of beaches is usually undertaken by an excavator on the beach relocating sand at low tide from the shoreline to the dunes as it is a low cost option. When sand is transported from one system to another there are complex environmental impacts that need to be carefully considered. The cost is also higher. Dredging is rarely considered as a source of sand.

#### Agreed Actions

- **KL/IG** – By 8 Jul, investigate and seek approval for the variation to connect the dredged channel to the channel at Chinaman's Island.
- **MA** – Provide an update on the status of the Dredging Project