

werri beach community land



Plan of Management



adopted 19 june 2001

kiama municipal council

Plan of Management

Werri Beach Reserve

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The land covered by this plan is located at Werri Beach Gerringong. (See *Figure 1*). It is public land owned by the Kiama Municipal Council and has been classified “Community” land under the provision of the Local Government Act 1993.

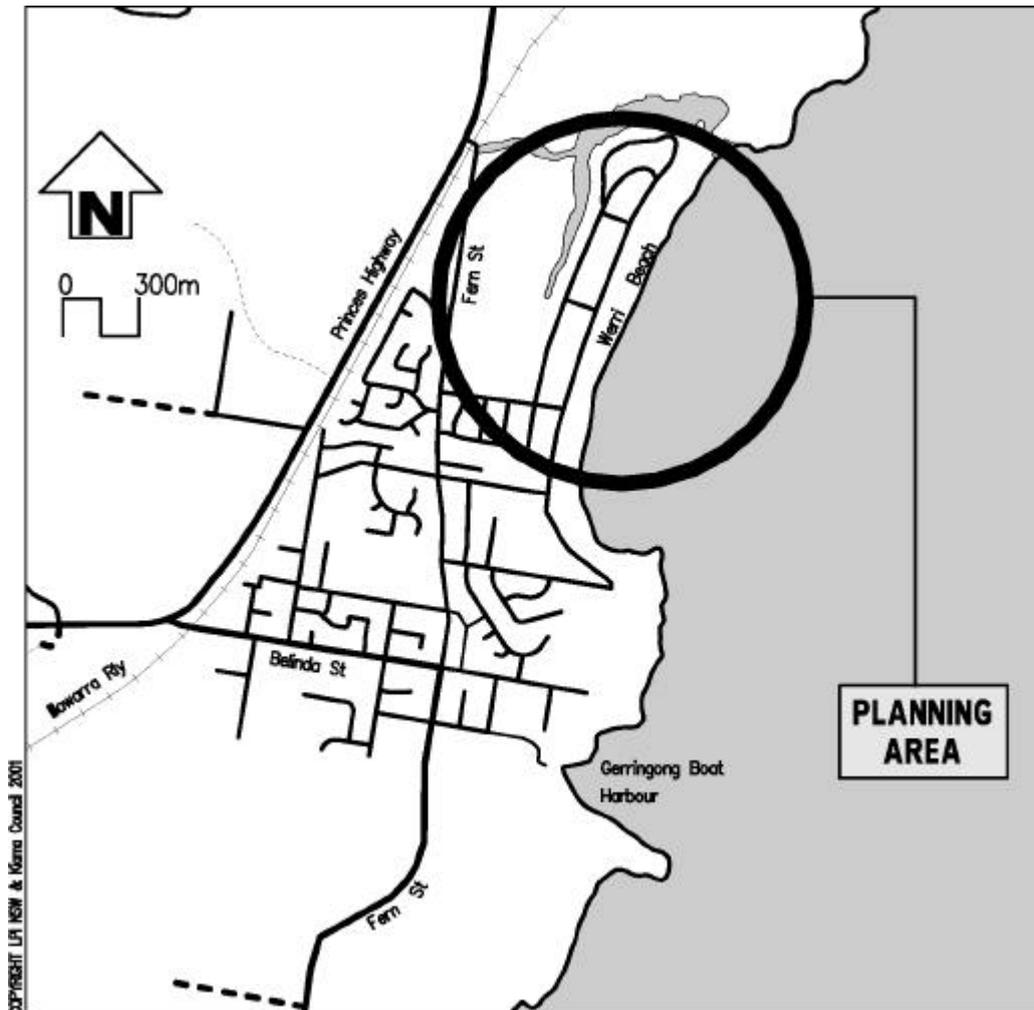


Figure 1

The Local Government Act also requires that Council prepare a Plan of Management in conjunction with the community to identify the important features of the land, clarify how Council will manage the land and how the land may be used or developed.

Until a Plan of Management for community land is adopted, the nature and use of the land cannot be changed and Council cannot carry out new development or improvements to the land.

This Plan of Management has been prepared in order to achieve a balanced, responsible and ecologically sustainable use of the land and to ensure that it addresses the needs of both local neighbourhood groups and the broader community. It identifies appropriate outcomes for the quarry and provides a way for achieving these outcomes through a series of clear strategies and detailed actions.

1.2 Community Land Covered by the Plan

The community land covered by this plan is shown in *Figure 2*. It consists of the following parcel of land:

- Lot 281 DP14188

The area covered by this plan covers approximately 14.5 hectares.

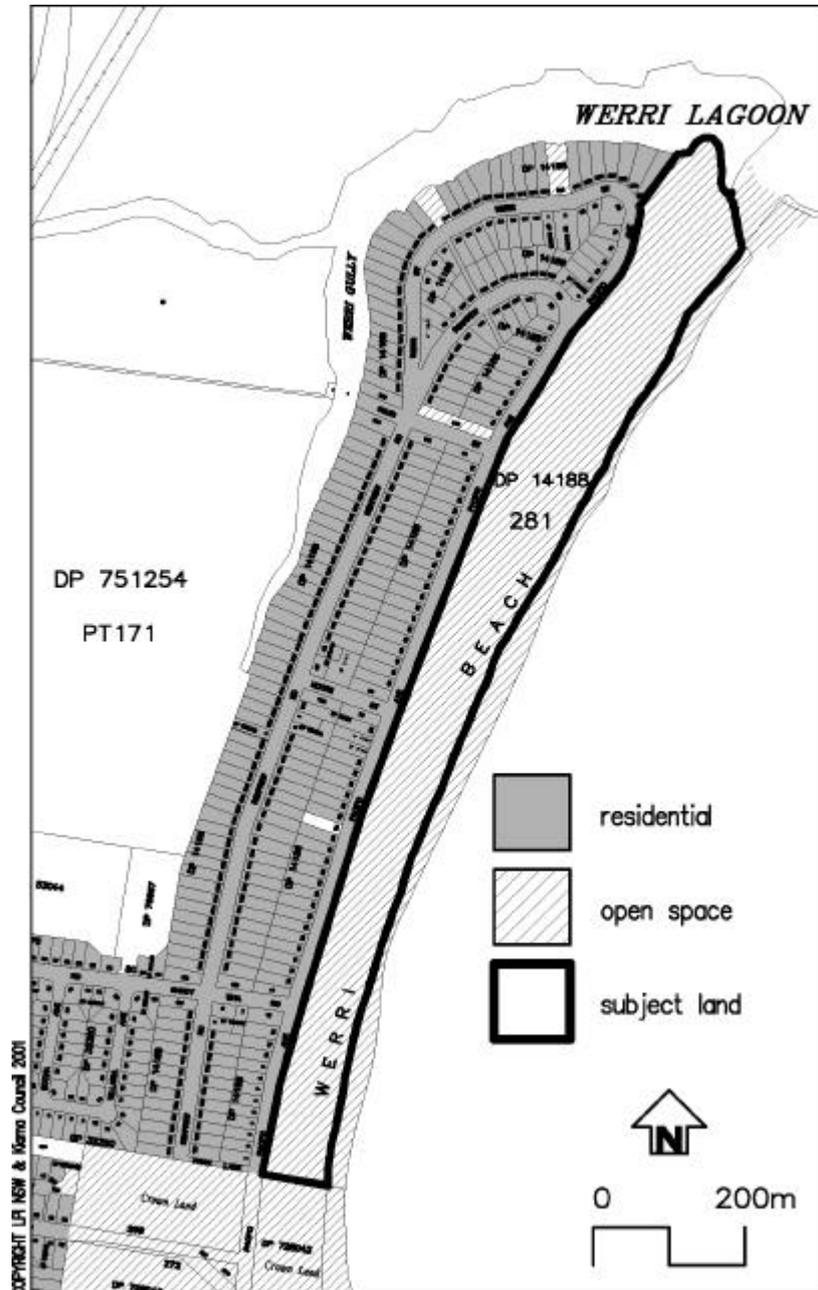


Figure 2

The land is zoned as Open Space Existing Recreation 6(a) under the Kiama Council's Local Environmental Plan 1996. The community land in this plan covers approximately two-thirds of the public reserve on Werri Beach. The remainder towards the south end is a Crown reserve (CR 80816). The reserve is bordered on the west by Pacific Avenue and adjoins the Crown reserve to the south zoned 6(a) Existing Recreation. At the northern end it forms the outlet of the Werri Lagoon. It includes Lloyd Rees Reserve and Kurrawarra Reserve.

1.3 Category and Class of Land

As noted earlier, all the land included in this plan is classified as Community land under the Local Government Amendment Act 1998.

Under Section 36(4) of the Local Government Amendment Act 1998 all community land must be categorised as one of the following categories:

- Natural area
- Sportsground
- Park
- Area of cultural significance
- General community use

In accordance with the guidelines set out in the Local Government (General) Regulation 1999, the reserve included in this plan is categorised as “General Community Use”.

1.4 Function and Value

The beach has significant recreational values for visitors and especially for the local community due to the proximity to the surrounding residential areas. The area is utilised by the public for swimming, surfing, walking, cycling, picnicking and recreational fishing. There are picnic facilities, public amenities and a public carpark adjacent to the beach.

The adoption of the draft plan will form an integral component of efforts to protect and conserve the reserve and shoreline.

1.5 Preparation of a Plan of Management

The process undertaken in the preparation of a Plan of Management for Council owned community land must follow the steps and requirements set down under the Local Government Act 1993. These steps are:

- Prepare the draft plan.
- Council must give public notice of the existence of the draft plan.
- The draft plan is to be exhibited for at least twenty-eight (28) days and a submission period of at least 42 days during which submissions may be made to Council.
- Hold a public hearing in respect of the plan if the proposed plan categorises community land under Section 36(4) or (5) of the Local Government Amendment Act 1998.
- Consider all submissions made to the public hearing and any written submissions made to Council on the draft plan during the exhibition period. Council may then decide to amend the draft plan or to adopt the plan without amendment.
- Should the draft plan require amendment then the public consultation process (exhibition and submission period) must be re-held. Another public hearing is not required.
- Subject to no further amendments being required, the Plan of Management is then formally adopted by Council.

1.6 Community Participation

Community consultation is a fundamental source of information necessary to provide the most efficient and effective Plan of Management for community land.

Such participation creates the opportunity for interested parties to become actively involved in the development of a plan which reflects the needs, opinions and priorities of the people most affected by the plan itself.

Community participation will also result in an increased general awareness of Council's responsibilities, activities, policies and plans for land management.

2.0 PHYSICAL FEATURES AND CONDITION OF THE LAND AND STRUCTURE

The land included in this plan includes the run up area of the beach above the mean high water mark, the restored sand dune and the grassed reserve between the dune and the road

The beach faces almost directly east and is subject to storms from the north–east through to the south–east. Major dune stabilisation works were undertaken on this beach in the 1990’s. These works have been successful in rehabilitating the dune and hence in providing better protection to the public and private assets along Pacific Avenue as well as improving the amenity of the beach. Continued maintenance is required to ensure the native vegetation cover is maintained as this is vital in maintaining the stability of the dune.



Photo 1 – Pacific Avenue “grassed reserve”

The area at the north end of Pacific Avenue includes a carpark, amenities and picnic facilities and is named in memory of Lloyd Rees, the Australian landscape painter who resided at Werri Beach. A timber viewing platform was constructed on the dune adjacent to the car park in 1997; these facilities are in good condition.

The grassed area between the road and the dune includes some Norfolk Island Pines and picnic tables. The tables are in fair condition and additional shade trees and covered picnic tables would be desirable. The Werri Beach Progress Hall is located on this grassed area opposite Sandy Wha Road. This is a timber building in fair condition.

At the extreme northern end of the beach, adjacent to the headland, an open concrete channel was constructed in 1975 and a drainage pipe was installed prior to this in an endeavour to control the outlet flows from the lagoon. These structures are generally filled with sand and do not serve any function. Residents have raised concerns that there appears to be some active erosion occurring to the headland and the material eroded from this area is being deposited in the lagoon. This requires further investigation.



Photo - Outlet of old drainage structure

3.0 COUNCIL'S OVERALL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Council has defined a number of fundamental or corporate goals that are to be addressed in any future development of their parks and recreation areas. These goals form an overarching framework for all the more detailed objectives and strategies in this plan.

3.1 Aim of this Plan of Management

- To develop a Plan of Management for the site to comply with the Local Government Act 1993 and the Local Government Amendment Act 1998 and which is consistent with Council's corporate goals and policies. The plan should also achieve a balanced, responsible and ecologically sustainable use of the land and ensure that it addresses the needs of both the local community groups and the broader community.

3.2 Corporate Goals

Parks and Recreation:

- To provide and maintain an open space system which meets the diverse needs of the community and enhances the quality of the natural environment and the quality of life.

Other:

- To provide an efficient and effective delivery of services which is responsive to the community's needs.
- To promote the principle of ecological sustainability in environmental planning through implementation of Council's environmental goals.
- To develop an organised culture which encourages innovation and flexibility and which strives for continual improvement.
- To exercise the regulatory functions of Council consistently and without bias.
- To encourage community participation in the processes of Council by consulting widely on its activities and policies.

4.0 COUNCIL POLICIES

Council has developed a number of general policies in the planning, management and maintenance of community land and Council reserves. Any proposed strategies and actions proposed in this plan must be consistent with these policies.

4.1 Planning

Council will:

- Consider and attempt to balance the need for community recreation facilities with the impact development of such sites will have on local residents;
- Attempt to balance the provision of active and passive recreational facilities;
- Consider access to recreational facilities for young families and disabled users;
- Integrate access for disabled users in plans for future developments;
- Limit facilities on the site to those facilities which are compatible with the objectives of the Plan of Management;
- Attempt to provide safe pedestrian links and corridors between components of the open space network; and
- Have regard to Council's Environmental Goals and Biodiversity Policy when approving works on the site.

4.2 Management

Council will:

- Reserve the right to control the use of, and access to, community land;
- Create opportunities for community consultation and participation in the planning and development of community land; and
- Facilitate a system whereby enquires and complaints from the public can be efficiently and promptly dealt with.

4.3 Development of New, and Improvement of Existing, Facilities

Council approval is required prior to any development or improvement made to community land.

All major developments and improvements to be funded (solely or partially) by Council will be approved through inclusion in Council's Capital Works Schedule.

Works included in Council's Capital Works Program will be funded from income generated from Council's entrepreneurial activities, general revenue, Section 94 contributions and external funds in the form of Government grants. If the anticipated yields from these sources are not achieved it will result in the proposed works being delayed to later dates.

Council will encourage community assistance in the development of new facilities, as well as maintenance of existing facilities, through the co-operation and assistance of local groups.

4.4 Weed Control

The control of noxious weeds in general shall remain with the Illawarra Noxious Weed Authority. Council will carry out the control of nuisance weeds or environmental weeds. This will involve the use of herbicides or mechanical methods as well as minimum disturbance methods where appropriate.

4.5 Maintenance

Council will:

- Carry out maintenance and inspection as detailed in the Strategic Asset Maintenance Program for Parks and Reserves, Recreational Facilities, Foreshores, Boat Ramps, Disused Quarries and Cemeteries;
- Review maintenance service levels outlined in the Strategic Asset Maintenance Program for Parks and Reserves to ensure that facilities are maintained efficiently and within budget constraints;
- Encourage community groups to assist with maintenance;
- Ensure the efficient and conservative use of water, pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers on Council ground; and
- Carry out bush regeneration in accordance with standard accepted practices for bush regeneration.

4.6 Fees

Council applies fees for the use of Council reserves. An application must be lodged with Council prior to the event. All applicable fees must be paid prior to the hire/use of the reserve.

The fees associated with the hiring of Council reserves for major events, concerts, functions etc, are detailed in Council's Fees and Charges Schedule. Council's fee structure is reviewed on an annual basis.

4.7 Uses and Activities Requiring Council Approval

- All activities defined in Part D Section 68 of the Local Government Act 1993;
- Fetes/cultural activities;
- Exhibition/displays;
- Commercial photographic/film shoots;
- Concerts/performances;
- Large, formal gatherings; and
- Recreational and environmental facilities under the care, control or management of Council, rehabilitation of wetland systems, essential public works.

4.8 Prohibited Activities

Activities in the view of Council which may be damaging, disruptive and/or may represent a danger to either users of the reserve, neighbouring properties or the site, or which are not consistent with the 6(a) zoning.

4.9 Sale of Alcohol

Council must approve the sale of alcohol on Council property. Before approval is sought, a Functions Licence must be obtained from the NSW Police Department. This licence must be produced in every instance where an application involving the sale of alcohol on Council property is sought.

Applications must meet the requirements set down by the Licensing Board, Courts of NSW and Council.

4.10 Signage

Council uses signs to regulate the activities carried out on community land and to provide educational information so as to provide a safe and enjoyable place for passive and active recreational pursuits.

Whilst signs are a crucial source of information, they have a significant impact on the aesthetics of a reserve. All signs must meet a design standard and be approved by the Manager of Environment. All signs must be sympathetic to their environment in their design, construction and location.

All Council signs erected under Section 632 of the Local Government Act and as part of the Strategic Asset Management Program (SAMP), plus reserve name signs and traffic and safety signs, are permissible. Council must approve all other signs before erection.

4.11 Easements

Council reserves the right to grant easements as required for utilities and access, bearing in mind the impact of such easements on the site.

4.12 Leases, Licenses and Other Estates

Council does not propose to grant any leases, licences or other estates (apart from easements as earlier noted) in respect of the community land except for those leases, licences and other estates permitted by Clause 25 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 1999.

4.13 Animals on Reserves

Existing Acts and Regulations regarding the prohibition of animals such as dogs and horses on community land including a public place or part thereof, without prior Council approval, must be enforced to keep these areas free of animals and excrement.

Council will enforce the Companion Animals Act 1998 and Regulations or equivalent which states that the owner of a dog found in a prohibited place is in breach of the law. In general, without prior approval of Council a dog is not permitted in the following places (whether or not they are leashed or otherwise controlled):

- Within 10 metres of any playing apparatus provided or part for the use of children;
- Within 10 metres of any apparatus provided for the preparation or consumption of food by humans;
- Public bathing areas including a beach that Council has ordered that dogs are prohibited and upon which there are signs notifying the Council order of prohibition;
- Any areas provided or set apart for public recreation or the playing of games that Council has ordered that dogs are prohibited and upon which there are signs notifying the Council order of prohibition.

4.14 Public Safety

As recommended by the LOGOV Risk Management Services report, Council has developed a Strategic Asset Maintenance Program (SAMP) for all its assets. SAMP has been developed to create and maintain all assets under the care, custody, control and management of Council to a safe standard and in a safe condition which is in fact the highest standard and condition that Council can reasonably afford in all of its circumstances and having regard to financial economic, environmental, aesthetic, social or political factors or constraints.

5.0 MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES, ISSUES AND STRATEGIES

5.1 Management Objectives

(i) **The core objectives of this Plan of Management are defined in Section 36 (1) of the Local Government Act 1993.**

The core objectives for management of community land categorised as general community use are to promote, encourage and provide for the use of the land, and to provide facilities on the land, to meet the current and future needs of the local community and of the wider public.

- (a) *In relation to public recreation and the physical, cultural, social and intellectual welfare or development of individual members of the public;*
- (b) *and in relation to purpose for which a lease, licence or other estate may be granted in respect of the land (other than the provision of public utilities and works associated with or ancillary to public utilities).*

Council's corporate goals, which are set out under Section 3.2 of this document, are also key management objectives that must be addressed under the Plan of Management.

(ii) **Specific Management Objectives**

Specific management objectives have been set for this site. These are as follows:

- (a) To mitigate impact on the reserve by community use.
- (b) Protect and enhance all functions associated with the reserves role as a buffer between the residential development and the beach
- (c) Encourage the preservation of the ecological sustainable use of the beach.
- (d) To provide for passive recreational activities or pastimes or active recreation associated with surfing.

5.2 Management Issues

The management issues involved with the beach and its objectives are discussed together with possible options and solutions. Then strategies or performance targets have been established to achieve the desired outcomes.

5.2.1 Regeneration and Conservation of Native Plant Species

By the late 1980's virtually all of the indigenous vegetation on the beach had been removed and replaced by Bitou Bush. This loss of vegetation had led to severe degradation and erosion of the dune. As part of the works to stabilise the dune the reshaped dune has been replanted with native grasses and trees and shrubs which are suited to the harsh environmental conditions on the dune. It is critical to the stability of the dune system and hence the protection of private and public property along Pacific Avenue that this vegetation be conserved and regenerated.

Bitou Bush is now declared a Noxious Weed and as such is required to be controlled by the Illawarra Noxious Weeds Authority. The Authority has a program to control the weed but because of limited resources additional input is required to ensure that a reinvasion of the restored dune does not occur. The Werri Beach Dunecare Group has been assisting in this and should be encouraged in their work.

5.2.2 Protection of the Dune System

This issue relates to the management objectives that refer to the ecological sustainable use of the beach, the role of the beach as a buffer between the residential development and the sea and mitigating against the impact on the reserve by the community. The dune on the reserve is the remains of a frontal dune which is a remnant of an extensive dune system which would have extended back to the Werri Lagoon. This system would have been removed and flattened when the area was opened up for residential development. However, evidence of this system can still be seen in the form of small undulations on the private property, particularly between Renfrew Road and Pacific Avenue.

By the early 1980's, the frontal dune on the beach north of the Progress Hall was in a very degraded state. Virtually all the native vegetation on the dune had been removed and replaced by Bitou Bush. Serious blowouts had occurred in numerous places and the remnant dune was progressively moving west towards Pacific Avenue. Whilst the dune was two to three metres high at the northern end of the beach, in the middle it was level with the roadway in places. As a result, there was a reasonably high chance that the dune could be breached in a large storm. In consultation with the NSW Soil Conservation Service(now part of the Department of Land and Water Conservation), Council undertook major works aimed at stabilising the dunes. This involved removal of the Bitou Bush, including the seed bank in the surface layer of the sand, and complete reshaping of the dune to a stable profile and planting firstly with grasses and then with native trees and shrubs. This work was commenced in 1992 and completed in 1998 under the NSW Coastal Program. It was equally funded by Council and Department of Land and Water Conservation and has been successful in providing a more stable system which affords better protection to the public and private assets in Pacific Avenue and which has improved the general amenity of the beach.

It must be recognised that beaches, even in their most pristine state, are not fixed systems but are dynamic systems. Whilst it is impossible to restore the beach to one with a completely restored dune system (mainly because of the loss of sand from the system over the years), the restored dune will offer the best protection available against these storms. At times storms will damage the frontal dune. This however, is the part of the natural process and one of the functions of the dune. At times after severe storms works may be required to restore eroded areas but given time and suitable conditions, the vegetation collects sand and enhances the dune thereby providing improved protection against major storm events. Possible rises in sea level due to future climate change are an additional factor adding to the importance of protecting the dune system. For those reasons it is very important that these dunes be maintained by encouraging the vegetation cover, carrying out maintenance following storm attack and by providing defined access across the dunes. Any activities such as poisoning or removal of dune vegetation or which result in damage to the vegetation or the dune are very serious attacks on this system. Vehicle access to the beach must not be permitted except for Surf Rescue vehicles or Council vehicles.



Photo 3 – Stabilised dunes

5.2.3 Provision of Recreational Facilities

The reserve is used for passive recreation except for occasional surfing carnivals. These uses are appropriate bearing in mind the environmental and physical constraints of the site. The amenity of the grassed area could be improved by the provision of covered picnic tables, more shade trees and a shared pathway.

5.2.4 Access

Vehicle access is not permitted on the reserve except for emergency or maintenance purposes. There is adequate carparking provided in the parking bays along Pacific Avenue and at the Lloyd Rees Reserve. Pedestrian access to the beach across the dune is provided at defined accessways. Prior to the rehabilitation of the dune, pedestrian access was uncontrolled and was one of the prime causes of the serious erosion problems on the beach. In places residents have tried to establish additional pathways through the new vegetation. The accessways provided are generally not more than 100 meters apart leaving a maximum detour of approximately 50 meters. This is considered quite reasonable and no additional access across the dune should be permitted.

5.2.5 Erosion of the Northern Headland

As noted in Section 2.0, some local residents have expressed concern at the apparent erosion of the headland adjoining the Werri Lagoon and the possible adverse impact of this sediment on the lagoon. It is suggested that this is the result of removal of some of the large loose rock from around the base of the cliff when the concrete drainage channel was constructed in 1975.

The cliff is eroding and it is possible that it is due to the removal of this natural rock armouring at the base of the cliff. Further investigations are recommended to identify the process causing the problem, whether it is causing a significant adverse environmental impact and if required, the recommended method to minimise the erosion.



Photo 4 Werri Headland Erosion

5.2.6 Lagoon Opening

Werri Lagoon is typical of many coastal lagoons in that under natural operating conditions the entrance is generally closed to the sea and is only opened by flood water flowing out of the lagoon and breaking through the beach berm. Sea water enters the lagoon if the mouth is opened or during storms or very high tides depending on the height of the berm at the beach. However, experience has shown that the mouth of Werri Lagoon is not always opened by the flood discharge before it reaches a critical level where it is flooding private properties on the edge of the lagoon in Renfrew Road.

Attempts were made in the past to provide permanent openings to the lagoon by construction of a concrete channel and the stormwater pipeline. However, these were not successful due to the very dynamic nature of the area and the quick accretion of sand which naturally closes off the lagoon mouth and quickly makes any channel or drainage structure inoperable. As a result an agreement has been reached between Council, the residents and the NSW Fisheries to mechanically open the beach once the flood water reaches a critical height in the lagoon. The mouth is not opened for other purpose other than prevent flooding. This appears to be a satisfactory arrangement which is not interfering with the natural processes operating in the lagoon.

6.0 ACTION PLAN

The following table sets out a number of actions required to implement the identified Management Strategies and Performance Targets for the Werri Beach Reserves. These actions are the means of achieving the objectives of the Plan of Management. The actions will be developed and reviewed annually.

Unless otherwise noted, the responsibility for the implementation of these actions is with the Director of Engineering and Works for the remainder of the reserve area.

A clear indication of how the completion of the aims will be assessed is also provided in the tables under Performance Evaluation.

Because of the longer-term nature of the Objectives and the supporting Performance Targets as set out in the plan, these will need to be reviewed less frequently, approximately every five years.

Management Objectives	Management Strategies Performance Targets	Actions (means of achieving targets)	Performance Evaluation (how they will be assessed)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigate impact on the reserve by community use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit vehicle access to the reserve Control pedestrian access across the sand dunes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide suitable car barriers at all at all entry points Carry out Council Ranger patrols of the reserves Provide defined access points at convenient locations along the beach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authorised vehicles only in reserve Authorised vehicles only on reserve Maintenance of existing pedestrian accessways
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and enhance functions of the site as a buffer between the public and private assets and the sea encourage the ecological sustainable use of the beach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that works carried out on the reserve are in accordance with the aims and objectives of the NSW Coastal Policy Encourage community participation in dunecare and revegetation works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out maintenance works to the beach in accordance with the NSW Government Coastline Management Manual Undertake an investigation into the erosion of the north Werri Headland Provide financial and logistic assistance to appropriate local conservation groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of works Completion of Investigation & implementation of recommendations Formation of groups and implementation of on ground works
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide for passive recreational activities or pastimes or active recreation associated with surfing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide facilities suitable for passive recreation and active recreation associated with surfing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide and maintain suitable facilities such as picnic facilities on the reserve in accordance with Council's Strategic Asset Management Policy (SAMP) Provide additional covered picnic facilities and a shared pathway on the area between the dune and Pacific Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of facilities and compliance with the SAMP Provision of facilities

7.0 REFERENCES

Kiama Municipal Council Kiama Council Draft Management Plan 2001/2004

NSW Government Coastline Management Manual September 1990

NSW Coastal Council NSW Coastal Policy 1997

Kiama Municipal Council Local Environment Plan 1996