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# Finalisation of the Scoping Study for the Richmond River Coastal Management Program

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Planning and Delivery (Andrew Logan)

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## Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receive and note the submissions report outlining the public exhibition process and outcomes associated with the Scoping Study (Stage 1 of the *Richmond River Coastal Management Program*).
2. Endorse finalisation of the Scoping Study as outlined in the submissions report.

## Background

Under the NSW coastal management framework, local councils are to prepare Coastal Management Programs (CMPs) that set the long-term strategy for the coordinated management of the coast, consistent with the objectives of the *Coastal Management Act 2016*. A CMP is prepared in five stages:

Stage 1: Identify the scope of a CMP

Stage 2: Determine risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities

Stage 3: Identify and evaluate options

Stage 4: Prepare, exhibit, finalise, certify and adopt the CMP

Stage 5: Implement, monitor, evaluate and report.

This report relates to Stage 1 of this process.

At the ordinary meeting of Rous County Council (RCC) on 17 April 2019, Council resolved *inter alia* (Resolution No. 16/19) to “Proceed to commence development of a Coastal Management Program (CMP) for the Richmond River estuary in 2019/20 through the conduct of a Stage 1 Scoping Study.”

The Richmond River estuary is situated within three local government areas: Ballina Shire Council, (BSC); Lismore City Council, (LCC); and Richmond Valley Council, (RVC). RCC is responsible for flood mitigation activities and related natural resource management issues on behalf of these local councils within this zone. In accordance with our service level agreement with these councils, over the past 18 months RCC (and consultants *Hydrosphere Consulting*) – in partnership with key stakeholders have prepared the *Scoping Study for the Richmond River Coastal Management Program*. The Scoping Study has been undertaken on a whole-of-catchment basis so as to understand all of the pressures on the coastal zone. Given this whole-of-catchment focus, the Scoping Study has also been prepared in partnership with Byron Shire Council and Kyogle Council.

The purpose of this report is to summarise the public exhibition process conducted for the Scoping Study, and to secure endorsement for finalisation of the report.

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## Governance

- **Integrated Planning and Reporting**

Strategic objective 1.1.2 under the *Sustainable delivery* key theme contained within the *Business Activity Strategic Plan 2022-2032* involves “Development of the Coastal Management Program for the Richmond River Estuary”.

- **Finance**

Inclusive of critical tasks and associated project management, the Forward Program included in the Scoping Study identifies a 3 year investment required (for completion of Stages 2-4 of the CMP preparation) of \$1,038,000. Grant funding is available through the *Coastal and Estuary Grants Program* at a 2:1 ratio.

For RCC, the following funding contributions to this grant application process would be required to complete the subsequent stages of the CMP preparation:

2023/24:	\$34,500
2024/25:	\$27,000
2025/26	\$15,200

RCC’s Long Term Financial Plan for the Flood Mitigation service delivery function includes an annual allocation for coastal management implementation/actions. This 3 year total of \$76,700 would be sourced through this allocation and incorporated into the Long Term Financial Plan.

- **Legal**

Under the *Coastal Management Act 2016* there is no legal requirement for a Scoping Study to be placed on public exhibition.

## Consultation

Preparation of the Scoping Study involved a community input/consultation phase, extensive engagement with catchment stakeholders and a series of workshops with all catchment councils.

The Final Draft Scoping Study was placed on public exhibition for a 3 week period (from 21 November to 16 December 2022) providing the invited stakeholders and the broader community the opportunity to review the Final Draft Scoping Study. The Scoping Study has also been reviewed by internal stakeholders.

A Submissions Report has been prepared that summarises the details of the submissions received, the comments made and how the comments have been addressed. A copy of the Submissions Report is attached.

## Conclusion

RCC and its consultants – in partnership with catchment councils - have completed all requirements of the NSW Coastal Management Manual in relation to the conduct of a Stage 1 Scoping Study. Subject to adoption of the recommendations by RCC, the Scoping Study shall be finalised as outlined in the submissions report. RCC staff shall then proceed to lodge the Stage 2 grant application and commence preparation of the technical specification for the Stage 2 initiatives.

### Attachment

1. Richmond River Estuary Coastal Management Program Scoping Study: Public Exhibition – Submissions Report