

Engagement Summary

Beachmere Shoreline Management Project

September 2022



Acknowledgement

Moreton Bay Regional Council respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Country across our region. We also acknowledge and pay our respects to the Kabi Kabi, Jinibara and Turrbal Traditional Custodians, and their elders past, present and emerging.

Disclaimer

The Moreton Bay Regional Council and its officers accept no responsibility for any loss whatsoever arising howsoever from any person's act or omission in connection with any information, expressed or implied, contained within this report. Nothing in this report should be taken as legal advice.

What we heard from you...

Beachmere property owners and representatives of the Queensland Government worked with our team at Council to create mutually acceptable solutions to ongoing erosion issues at Beachmere. This was a complex problem where Council, the State and property owners all had some level of responsibility. Working collaboratively has been essential to the positive outcomes of the project.

This project kicked off after a severe erosion event in December 2020 that threatened some homes at Beachmere. We met with property owners, elders of the Kabi Kabi people, and our State Government counterparts to identify everyone's concerns and needs. The Beachmere Shoreline Management Project (BSMP) aimed to find solutions that worked for all parties.



The project relied on iterative engagement to create the best outcomes. Between February 2021 and August 2022, people who live or own a property along the Beachmere shoreline were invited to participate by:

- Completing a phone survey
- Having an onsite meeting with the project team
- Attending one of our pop-up displays
- Joining in a property owners' workshop
- Calling our team to discuss options.

We received input from more than 100 people via 47 phone surveys, 33 property meetings and site visits at foreshore properties, three workshops and four pop up displays.

Thank you to everyone who got involved and took the time to share your insights.

Finding solutions to ongoing erosion risks

The 8km Beachmere foreshore is directly adjacent to 212 privately owned properties. Some of these properties have a legally approved seawall, some have unapproved seawalls, some have well established natural dunes, and some are under threat from erosion.

While erosion management is the responsibility of property owners, we found their ability to take action was constrained by State Government regulations and Council approval processes.

We worked collaboratively with property owners, traditional owners, the Department of Environment and Science, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Department of Resources and the State Assessment and Referral Agency to find acceptable solutions.

Solutions include a choice of implementation pathways that meet the needs of property owners, Council and the State Government:

- to build new approved seawalls, or maintain existing seawalls,
- to make existing unapproved seawalls compliant where possible or
- to manage and maintain sand dunes and vegetation.

Foreshore erosion (image credit Claudia Keeping)



Step 1: understanding issues and needs

We started by gathering information about the situation. We met with property owners, State Government department representatives and the traditional owners to understand their issues and needs.

Here are some of our initial findings:

- Of the 122 existing seawalls that were identified in a survey of the shoreline in early 2021, only 22 had been approved.
- Six properties without seawalls had significant risks to residential buildings from ongoing erosion within five metres of the building.
- An additional 14 properties without seawalls had risks where erosion was within 10 metres of a residential building.
- Council officers across multiple departments understood the difficulties in attaining a development permit to establish a new seawall, and how it was contributing to an increasing number of unapproved seawalls in Beachmere. They agreed that a solution needed to be developed in partnership with the State Government.
- State Government representatives agreed that property owners should have the ability to build approved seawalls, and the government would need to adjust some of their standard processes to achieve this.
- Protection of the marine park and remaining mangrove vegetation was a critical concern.

Some seawalls are in very poor condition and create risks to public safety, neighbouring properties and the environment.

The Marine Park and shoreline are sensitive areas, protected under State legislation and home to several threatened species.



Property owners told us they needed:

- A clear process to gain development approvals and access to the beach for construction or maintenance work
- The option to manage the foreshore through dune and vegetation management, and not to be compelled to build an unwanted seawall
- Opportunity to achieve compliance for unapproved seawalls that are of a suitable standard, rather than doing unnecessary construction
- The choice to manage the foreshore through dune and vegetation management and to retain the right to build a seawall if the situation changes in the future
- Protection from “losing” land if the approved alignment cuts through their existing property
- To maintain their right to choose how they manage their foreshore, including if, how and when they build seawalls.

Property owners told us the biggest challenges in managing erosion on their own property were:

- difficulties gaining approval for erosion management works
- the cost of works, such as building a seawall
- the cost impact on some of their neighbours, particularly older residents
- gaining access to the beach to undertake works
- environmental impacts of seawalls on the foreshore.



Beachmere foreshore properties

What we found at the start of the project:

- More than half of the 212 properties had experienced erosion before the severe erosion incident in December 2020.
- Less than 30% had experienced storm tide inundation, with only one reporting severe inundation.
- Many property owners live interstate or overseas, and more than half had owned the property for more than 10 years.
- About 40% of properties are not owner occupied. These include businesses, such as Palm Lake Resort, holiday homes and investment properties.

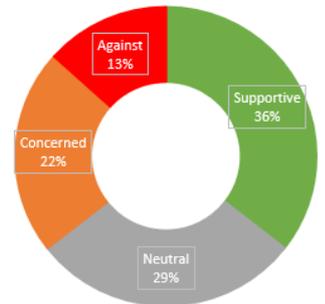
Step 2: developing the A-line

An A-Line is an approved design standard and alignment for seawalls. It ensures seawalls along the foreshore are integrated and that they have a consistent form. This provides better erosion protection and reduces the negative impacts of seawalls on the sensitive Marine Park environment and other properties.

We used feedback from property owners and our State Government counterparts to develop options for erosion management at Beachmere, including a draft A-line.

When we spoke to property owners along the foreshore about developing an A-line, initial reactions were mixed.

- just over a third (36%) supported the concept
- just under a third (29%) had no opinion and did not believe it would affect them personally
- a relatively small proportion (13%) were opposed to the A-line
- the remaining 22% had concerns about the process that would determine their support or otherwise.



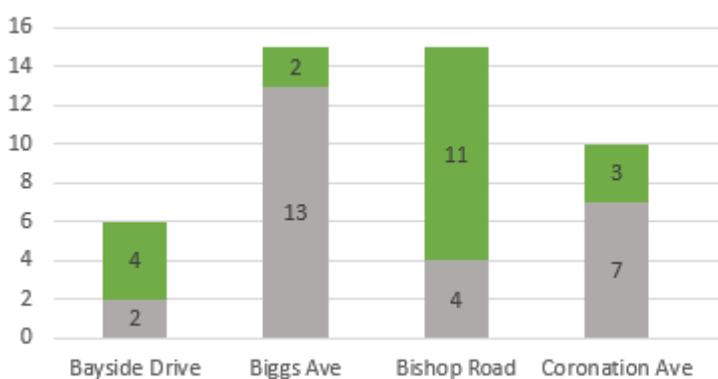
Attitude towards proposed A-line.

Specific aspects of the decision-making process that raised concern related to:

- the location of the alignment for proposed seawalls relative to their existing property boundary
- the design options for the seawall and
- any future construction requirements.

Prior experience with erosion impacted attitudes towards the proposed A-line but did not fully account for attitudes. We found that:

- 60% of respondents who reported significant erosion experience and 40% of those reporting some erosion experience supported the A-line
- of those who were opposed to the A-line, 66% had also experienced either some or significant erosion
- of those who were against the A-line, 66% expressed a preference for natural vegetation and dunes
- of those who expressed a preference for natural vegetation and sand dunes, only 20% were against the A-line and 25% were supportive.



Expressed preference for natural sand dunes and vegetation (green) vs no preference stated (grey) by property owners.

Support for the proposed A-line also varied across foreshore areas. Residents of Bishop Road and Bayside Drive reported a stronger preference for natural sand dunes and vegetation than other foreshore residents.

Property owners with a preference for sand dunes and vegetation were less likely to support seawalls.

Overall support for the proposed A-line varied by location:

- 46.7% of Biggs Ave respondents
- 40% of Coronation Ave respondents
- 33.3% of Bishop Rd respondents
- 16.7% of Bayside Dr respondents.

Step 3: refining the options

Property owners feedback guided the development of draft A-line designs and other options. We took the selection of draft solutions back to all parties in the process to refine them and make sure they met everyones needs.



To ensure everyone had a chance to contribute, we gave property owners a variety of ways to have their say:

- Invitations to online workshops to discuss the options, or to contact Council to make other arrangements to share feedback. This was sent by mail to all 212 registered property owners and by email to 150 property owners whose contact details Council had
- Three property owner workshops, consisting of one for the northern section (Bayside Dr), one for the central section (Bishop Rd) and one for the southern section (Biggs and Coronation Avenues), so that discussion could focus on the issues faced by each section
- Individual meetings, emails and phone calls with property owners regarding options
- Published options on Council's project website for review and feedback.

We hosted a State Government working group discussion of options in relation to state objectives, priorities and processes; and an internal Council project control group discussion of options in relation to Council's legal responsibilities, the Planning Scheme, development processes and Council policy.

Property owners input to revisions of the draft options included:

- The need to have choice and control over how to manage their section of the foreshore, including choosing to either build a seawall or maintain natural dunes and vegetation
- Agreement that unsafe seawalls that present a risk to people or the environment need to be removed from the shoreline
- The need to protect remnant vegetation, particularly mangroves
- Uncertainty about whether a seawall is approved or not and the need for assistance to clarify
- Softer engineering options such as groynes and sandbagging may be preferable to seawalls in the short to medium term in some areas
- A need to clarify the requirements for property owners who want to make changes to seawalls with existing approvals, such as adding stairs.

"We should work with nature, but we do also need protection from sea level rise."

Shoreline resident

Step 4: solutions for different situations

In response to feedback, our final approved options for erosion management include the following:



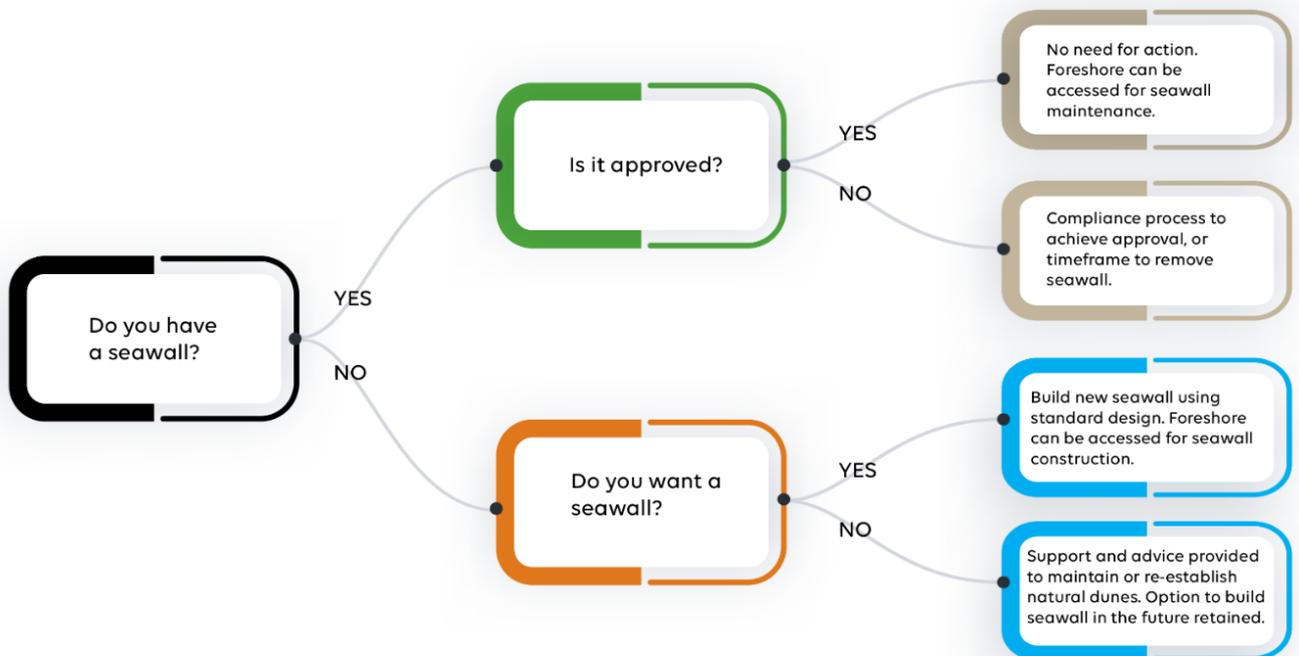
- A range of pathways that support the rights of property owners to decide if, when and how they will build a seawall
- The area between the Sandy Street drain and Louise Drive has been excluded from seawall approvals to protect mangroves and other remnant foreshore vegetation
- Support for property owners who choose to maintain sand dunes and vegetation
- Cost savings for property owners who choose to use the standard seawall design, while maintaining the option for property owners to use a different design that still meets Council’s minimum standards
- A pathway for existing unapproved seawalls to achieve compliance
- Allowing time for property owners with unapproved seawalls to either gain compliance or remove seawalls
- Owners consent, in the form of a Marine Park Permit, for property owners to access the beach to undertake construction or maintenance work
- Council worked internally to establish a clear and simple development application and compliance process for the Beachmere foreshore.



Pick your pathway

The collaborative approach has created three pathways for property owners to manage their section of the Beachmere foreshore:

- build new approved seawalls, and maintain existing seawalls
- make existing unapproved seawalls compliant where possible or
- manage and maintain sand dunes and vegetation.



Construction and maintenance of approved private structures including seawalls, and natural dune and vegetation management are the responsibility of the property owner.

Managing dunes and vegetation

Many property owners in the central and northern foreshore areas talked about their preference to continue to maintain a natural shoreline, with the ability to walk over a dune to the beach. There is no requirement or time limit to build, or not build a seawall. Council recognises that maintaining natural dunes is an effective, and often preferable, erosion management measure. Property owners who choose to maintain natural dunes and vegetation will retain the right to build a seawall at some point in the future if circumstances change.

We developed guidelines to support property owners who want to protect, enhance and restore native foreshore vegetation. The guidelines identify plant species, recommended planting locations, planting density requirements, and planting instructions. These guidelines are available online at moretonbay.qld.gov.au/BSMP.

Did you know?

- Native vegetation plays an important role in protecting the foreshore from coastal erosion. Sand that builds up around vegetation can help replenish the beach after sudden erosion events. Foreshore vegetation also provides food and nesting areas for native fauna.
- Opportunities to revegetate and protect foreshore vegetation will depend on the availability of foreshore land.
- A 15 metre wide buffer from the highest tide to the nearest fixed structure within the property is ideal to establish a natural dune that can adequately address coastal erosion.

Building seawalls

Property owners will be able to build a new seawall at a time and in a manner of their choosing. It is important that property owners follow State Government regulations and Council development processes.

The new Beachmere Shoreline Management webpage at moretonbay.qld.gov.au/BSMP provides information for property owners including minimum standards and downloadable designs for the standard seawall.

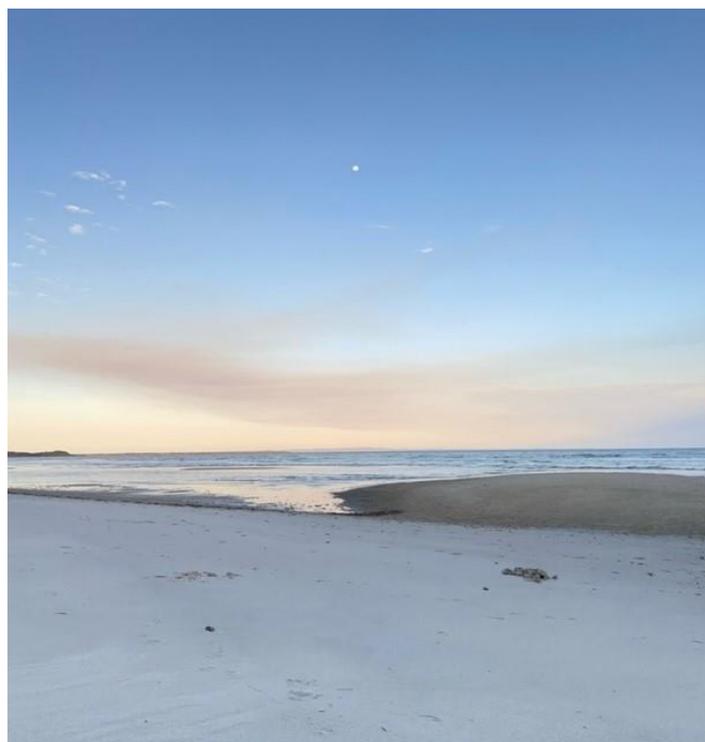
Property owners with unapproved seawalls have been informed of the compliance process and actions required so they can avoid future compliance actions. Existing unapproved seawall structures must be resolved, either by achieving compliance approval or by removing the structure. Compliance action, including significant fines, will commence if non-compliant seawalls remain.

Marine Park permit

Council has obtained a Marine Park Permit for the Beachmere foreshore area. This permit allows property owners to undertake construction and maintenance of privately owned seawalls, including access to the foreshore to undertake works.

Development approval

Council has submitted an application for a Development Approval (DA) for Operational Works to construct seawalls on Beachmere foreshore properties, excluding the area between the Sandy Street Drain and Louise Drive. The DA includes the design specifications, alignment and construction materials for new seawalls. Minor modifications to the standard seawall design may require a Recheck of Amended Plans, which will attract a fee from Council. Property owners who wish to use an alternative design to the one approved under the DA can submit their own DA to Council.

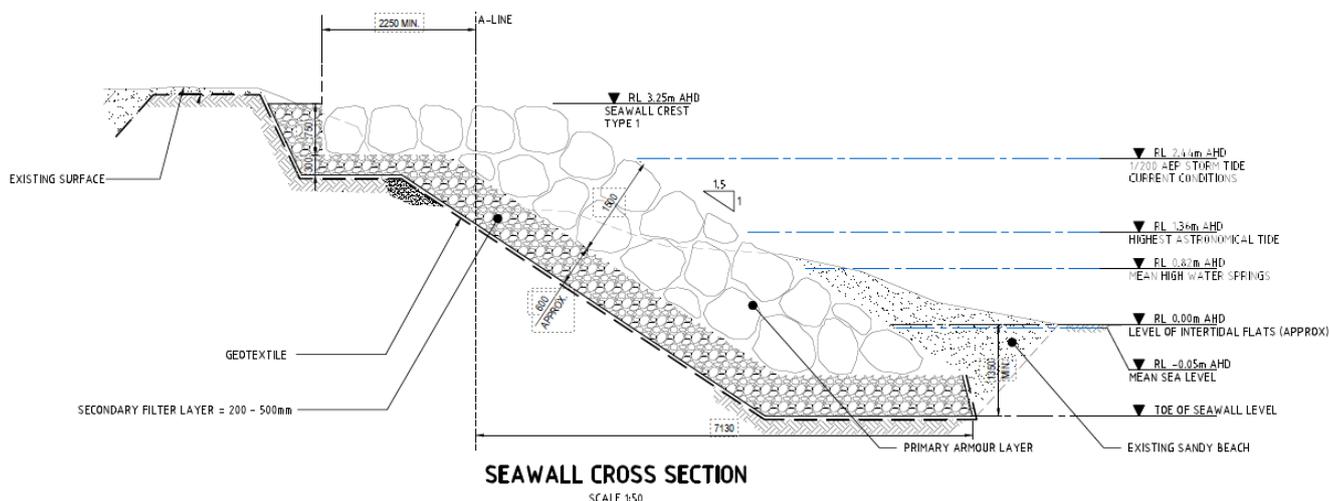


Beachmere foreshore (image credit John Finglas)

Seawall designs

Council has provided a standard seawall design suitable for the Beachmere foreshore which meets the minimum required standard. That is, the design is able to withstand the effect of waves or water levels resulting from a storm or other event of 2% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP). Property owners may choose to use this design or develop an alternative design. An alternative design that is not consistent with the standard seawall design may require a Development Approval for Operational Works.

Details and specifications for the design can be found at moretonbay.qld.gov.au/BSMP. For more information contact Council's Development Services Team.



A cross section of the standard seawall design included in the development approval application.

The Northern Moreton Bay Shoreline Erosion Management Plan (SEMP)

The SEMP will be updated to include the alignment for integrated seawalls (A-line) on the Beachmere foreshore. This creates a statutory requirement to place new seawalls on the A-line. The A-line alignment follows the clearest ambulatory boundary extent of existing properties. This includes:

- Existing seawalls, both approved and unapproved
- Where there is a gap between seawalls, the natural line between the existing walls
- The crest of existing sand dunes
- Where existing approved structures were within the standard seawall design footprint, the A-Line alignment was shifted seaward
- For Bayside Drive properties, the existing right line property boundary.

Contact information

For more information on permits and development approvals contact MBRCs Development Services team on (07) 3205 0555 or visit moretonbay.qld.gov.au/Services/Building-Development.