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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Key community groups urge Noosa Council to focus on major environmental impact issues**

Local community groups are calling for Noosa Council's draft Eastern Beaches Foreshore Management Plan (EBFMP) to be re-prioritised so the issues which are having the biggest impact on the environment and causing climate change susceptibility are made the key focus areas to be addressed.

Eastern Beaches Protection Association (EBPA) and Noosa Boardriders Club say developing catchment management plans for coastal creeks would have a significant impact on preventing erosion, and effectively managing stormwater run-off would keep waterways and beaches clean.

Minna Knight, spokesperson for EBPA said Noosa Council's draft plan is lacking objectivity due to narrow initial consultation which has led to the most significant problems being overlooked and sidelined.

"According to the draft plan, it was developed 'after initial discussions and engagement with stakeholders...including Bushcare groups and community groups'. Not surprisingly, given the focus areas of some of these groups, the most common issues raised were encroachments, weeds in the dunes and the management of public beach accesses. The entire prioritisation as well as the budget allocated to works has been based on this incredibly narrow and selective 'consultation'."

Budget allocated to the entire plan is \$770,200 with more than half of that (\$415,000) allocated to encroachment prevention and restoration and just \$25,000 to bush regeneration and improving water quality at Burgess Creek and other coastal outlets.

"Don't get me wrong, we believe Council should be enforcing the existing laws already at their disposal to prevent illegal encroachment into the foreshore areas. There is no excuse for vegetation damage for views and we do not in any way endorse this behaviour."

"However, compared to the other issues in the plan, encroachment is not our biggest vulnerability to climate change, and it isn't causing the biggest detrimental impact to our beautiful environment. Yet it takes the lion's share of the budget. There needs to be a level of perspective and science applied to the plan, so we prioritise the most important areas and also allocate budget responsibly," said Minna.

Paul Peterson, President Noosa Boardriders Club said despite the plan acknowledging Council's stormwater management is ineffective and failing, there is no funding assigned to address it.

"This area is known for its crystal clear waters and pristine beaches but the reality is a stark contrast. The plan notes the water quality of Burgess Creek has decreased and pollutants have increased and our Boardriders talk about how murky and brown some of the creek

## Eastern Beaches Protection Association Inc. IA60190

mouths have become. We are aware that lifesavers have even found needles which have been washed down onto the beaches. The problem seems to be getting worse.”

“We need to be focussed on assessing stormwater management requirements for the catchment and effectively dealing with the stormwater run-off to ensure the health of our creeks, oceans and beaches into the future,” said Paul.

Despite the draft plan referencing two significant erosion concerns near the mouth of Burgess Creek caused by high flow events and uncontrolled foot traffic down, and on, a very steep creek bank, Minna said there are no commitments by Council to rectify the problems.

“Rather than incorporate and prioritise the solutions for the coastal creek erosion and storm water issues into this plan where they have been identified as a key concern, Council has published a second document stating they are out of scope. They haven’t provided any information on how and when these issues are to be addressed, despite publicly stating the issue would be addressed through the foreshore management plan. We have an opportunity right now to address what is of most importance and fixing our creek systems needs to be ranked number one.”

“We want Council to prioritise the development of catchment management plans for coastal creeks within the plan which would include remediation works on land slips, slumps and other impacts. As the population increases, the plan needs to be amended to incorporate proactive management strategies to repair and put in erosion prevention measures to reduce costs and foster greater environmental and social impacts,” Minna said.

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