

Coastal Adaptation Study Consultation



Murray Estuary (Hindmarsh Island) Community Workshop Summary 20 October 2020

The Alexandrina coastline is of significant cultural, social, environmental and economic value to the local community, Ngarrindjeri nation and visitors to the region.

The Coastal Adaptation Study aims to understand how people, the natural environment and built assets might be impacted by rising sea levels so that Council and other stakeholders, such as State Government and private landowners, can plan for the future.

From 12 October to 27 November 2020 Council engaged with members of the community about the findings of the study and to hear how the impacts of climate change might affect our coast into the future, and to learn about the possible adaptation options for Alexandrina's coastline. As part of this consultation, Council held a number of face to face workshops and online webinars.

This report provides a summary of the feedback received at the workshop held at 6.30pm to 8.30pm on 20 October 2020. This workshop was by invitation only and was attended by 37 people comprising members of the community as well as the Mayor, Elected Members, the CEO and staff from Alexandrina Council.

Format of the workshop

Mark Western from Integrated Coasts provided a comprehensive presentation of the Coastal Adaptation Study with a focus on its findings for Hindmarsh Island.

Attendees at the workshop were able to ask questions and seek clarification during the presentation as well as at key points dedicated for questions and discussion. The workshop was independently facilitated by Nicole Halsey from URPS.

In addition to comments recorded by Nicole during the workshop, attendees were also able to provide feedback by completing a feedback form and returning it prior to leaving the workshop.

Feedback received via both of these methods is summarised below:

Whiteboard notes

- Barrages – role in study
 - » Why not included?
 - » Need to consider what's happening on the other side as well.
- 1 in a 100 will become more 'regular' over time
- Seems the study is based on a 'worst case' scenario
 - » Should we make decisions on this basis?

- Movement of Murray mouth
 - » Lived experience shows that it does move dependent on which barrage is open
 - » Moves more than study takes into account e.g. 1km in one month
 - » Deposit of sand in front of Sugars Avenue shacks has grown over the years.
- Saltwater intrusion impacts viability of farm land, ecosystems, freshwater estuary
- How can we positively impact these changes that occurring along the coast?
- Is a better option to shut off the Murray mouth rather than build levees?
- Need to convert land to freehold. Lease hold means that people won't invest in private protection and take action to adapt (eg raise finished floor levels, install protection structures etc) as they have no certainty. The community want to be part of the solution, but need certainty first. Council's best asset is its community.
- There should be a focus on reducing emissions so that we don't have this projected future
- There was a levee bank around Mundoo Island in 1940's.

- What about other areas of the island that need protection? Study is focussed on certain areas.
- Murray mouth is a small area – surely can do something to better manage it that are currently that will have less impact and is cheaper eg stop sand coming in.

From feedback forms

Eleven completed feedback forms were returned at the end of the workshop.

How do you think you will be personally impacted by sea level rise and the adaptation proposal above?

Of the feedback forms returned the majority of people responded that they do not believe they will be greatly affected on a personal level due to the elevation or design of their property, as well as their short-term lease. Others are concerned they will be personally impacted by salination of their farmland, losses due to storm events, the cost of the proposal, or direct flooding to their property.

All comments recorded on the feedback forms are provided below:

- “Apart from site access by road impacting. I am situated on the hill on Mundoo Channel Drive, being one of a group of five or six shacks which greatly exceeds the forecast 2100 sea levels.
- Not greatly (our land is privately leased until 2060 so future is uncertain anyway).
- No, my home is on stilts and will not be affected.
- Luckily my property is engineered, designed and raised to be okay for the minimal sea level rise. Not doing anything to help if I lose my property at the end of my lease.
- My farmland impacted by salt. Environment impacted, ecosystem impact. Socially that would be terrible for tourism – look at mm options in barrages etc. Individual titles for landowners.
- Very low.
- Cost will be our main concern.

- Probable loss of land in storm event which are happening more often and to a great degree.
- Get it right and I and the community and its visitors will continue to love one of the most unique areas in the country. Get it wrong and lives and livelihoods will be at risk.
- Lose a lot of good farmland.
- My shack on Mundoo Channel Drive is at ground level and would be at high risk of flooding, if not from a 0.3 meter increase by 2050 then by a 1 in a 100 year event. Not sure levee along waterfront would be effective due to flooding from the rear/road side.

What are your thoughts about managing the impact of flooding of properties projected for beyond 2050?

Some community members identified that they are unwilling to manage the impact of long term flooding of properties unless they are granted freehold leases. Others suggested that the project should go ahead as a priority, with flows controlled where possible with barrages or gates across the river, low height levees, sand relocation and/or rock walls. The projects should work with and empower the community to be part of the solution. Climate change mitigation should also be considered.

All comments recorded on the feedback forms are provided below:

- “It should go ahead as a priority.
- Will not do anything unless my property is ‘freehold’. Fix the mouth. You will not get the feedback that you require as we all have no security so currently is not our issue.
- No point in doing anything if my land isn’t free hold. No interested.
- Mitigate climate change. Control flows where possible. Low height levies. We need to support landholders. Gates across mouth of Murray – open and shut. Let fresh water through barrages – to push sea water back at the time? Move sand from one side of the

mouth to the other.

- Not that great.
- Lease hold expire on 2061 so if nothing is freeholded then the leases all go back to the owner of the leases. Why should we be bothering in doing anything if we don’t own the land?
- Government and Council assisted implementation of levees for protection of assets. Perhaps Council supplying rocks etc. at discounted prices for land holders to implement role walls etc.
- Staged approach. Risk based. Enable the landowners and community to help themselves and the greater solution.
- Fix Murray mouth with regulation to stop storm surges.
- I think a watch and wait approach is reasonable over the next 20 years to gauge if the predicted 14mm/year rise is still likely. I thought the levee proposal was only feasible if around the whole South of Hindmarsh Island, as in previous floods (1971?) the water came from the back (roadside) of Mundoo Channel Drive and not from the channel front.

What criteria or principles should Council be thinking about when developing a plan in relation to this adaptation proposal?

Of those people who completed a feedback form, many identified that the Council should be prioritising freeholding property leases in order to increase action by the community as a result of the study. Other criteria that people felt Council should be considering included working together in collaboration with other Councils and levels of Government, protecting Council rates, climate change mitigation, road access, and using common sense when developing the adaptation plan.

All comments recorded on the feedback forms are provided below:

- “Road access. Levee walls etc.
- Cannot be managed without knowing how barrages and

Murray mouth are going to be managed. Depends on Government planning for use of the land i.e. private or national park.

- Look after its community i.e. 'leaseholders' who will look after the environment. Unless freehold option worked out, no one will pay as it is not their land! Double effect – look after us and then people will care!
- COMMUNITY: work with Denver, make the land FREE-HOLD. THIS WILL MAKE PEOPLE/OWNERS CARE!
- Get on with mitigating. Carbon neutral plan, advocate to others. Low height levies. Control flows – minimise impact also on farm. Gate across land mouth. Open estuaries and connection better.
- Common sense.
- Council need to be proactive in freeholding Mundoo Channel and Sugars Avenue.
- Protection of their Council rates.
- This is an opportunity to allow the area to thrive and be the world class area it has the potential to be.
- Work with other Councils, State Government and Federal Government to fix the mouth.
- I think that Mundoo Channel Drive properties being freehold is imperative, as I wouldn't consider investing in a levee or other flood protection if my lease is to expire in 2060. It is hard to comment or invest in a plan without freehold, so it is a priority to have this issue sorted.

