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PPCC Inc. Policy Statement No. 6

Dealing with Coastal Erosion or Accretion in Port Phillip

SUMMARY:

Coastlines are dynamic natural geomorphological systems that are subject to receding or accreting due to powerful and relentless natural coastal processes, which are best respected by not interfering with them or restricting them. To control erosion or accretion permanently is excessively expensive, and has many adverse effects.

DETAIL:

Sound Long Term Planning: This should recognize the dynamic and shifting nature of natural coastlines by keeping development sufficiently far away from them, having regard for their estimated rate of erosion, recession or accretion. This approach to planning preserves both the natural system and the development that is protected by such planning and forethought. Much earlier planning has failed to adopt this approach, and has prompted demands for engineering protection against erosion or accretion that is unsustainably expensive in the long term, and very damaging to the qualities of the natural coastal system.

The most economically efficient planning approach is to withdraw development from areas likely to erode or accrete and relocate it, if necessary, away from such areas. Engineering interference introduces consequential adverse effects, and in the long term is an unjustifiable and prohibitive expense for the community to bear. Structures in the sea, such as breakwaters, that cause erosion or accretion should be removed.

Renourishment of Beaches: The artificial renourishment of eroding beaches by pumping sand from a suitable part of the seabed of Port Phillip can be an environmentally acceptable procedure in some circumstances where the community considers that it is of overall community benefit to pay the high price involved, and there are no unacceptable adverse effects due to relocation of sand. Such renourishment is best carried out where no groyne structures are required to retain the sand. If such structures are considered to be an essential part of the operation, they should be made of timber rather than rock so that they do not remain behind indefinitely in the quite possible event that sand renourishment is not repeated or sustained.

ADOPTION: This original version of PPCC Inc. Policy Statement No. 6 was adopted by a General Meeting of the Port Phillip Conservation Council Inc. on 27th April 1998.
