

Council attempts to get headstart on climate change impacts

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Douglas Shire Council will apply for a grant to develop a Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy.

The State Government is calling for funding submissions from Queensland councils to develop a Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy that addresses sea level rises, more intense cyclones and accelerated coastal erosion.

Mayor Julia Leu said the Douglas Shire has a number of coastal settlements, as well as areas of interest, assets and infrastructure at risk from increasing sea levels.

“An initial review by Council has shown areas of particular interest are Wangetti, Oak Beach to Pebbly Beach, Mowbray to Newell Beach including Port Douglas, Rocky Point to Wonga Beach, Cape Kimberley, Thornton Beach and Cape Tribulation,” Mayor Leu said.

“Scientific data suggests that by 2100 we can expect a projected sea level rise of 0.8m, cyclone intensity increases and possible tracking of these cyclones further south more often, with the permanent inundation of some low-lying areas and an increase in the areas impacted by storm surge and king tides predicted.

“Adaptation strategies are intended to facilitate the mitigation of short, medium and long-term coastal hazard risks for the whole community and ecosystem.”

Under Council’s proposal, the Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy would review all existing erosion, flood and storm tide inundation studies covering the Douglas Shire in line with best practice and undertake a gap analysis to identify any additional studies required.

A preliminary list of coastal hazard areas which identify vulnerabilities to coastal settlements, Council assets and infrastructure and developing a communication and engagement plan which is crucial for managing

expectations around adaptation, disaster management and resilience would also form part of the strategy.

“Much of the Douglas Shire is within a World Heritage-listed area and the protection and conservation of these areas is vital,” Mayor Leu said.

“We need to act now to ensure we’re as best prepared for the impacts of climate change as we can be.”

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