Frequently Asked Questions

Inverloch Coastal Protection – April 2020

Q. What works are being undertaken to fix the immediate erosion issues along the Inverloch foreshore?

A. In February 2020, works commenced to install a 70-metre long wall consisting of 270 specialised sand-filled geotextile containers along the Surf Live Saving Club (SLSC) area of the Inverloch foreshore to help protect this section from further impacts of wave erosion.

The sand-filled geotextile container wall was selected as the most appropriate short to medium term solution, up to 10 years, for the current protection measures required at the SLSC building area.

Q. Why has a rock wall been installed at the Cape Paterson-Inverloch Road (Bunurong Road) area?

Over the Easter weekend, a significant storm surge event occurred affecting the Cape Paterson-Inverloch Road (Bunurong Road) area.

Waves overtopped the dune causing further erosion and splashed over onto the road. Regional Roads Victoria (RRV) closed the road temporarily while emergency works were carried out.

500-tonne of rock was transported to the site to construct an 80-metre wall, as part of the emergency response to this extreme wave and tidal erosion event. RRV crews worked solidly for four days to undertake these emergency works.

Even though planning was in progress for mitigation works at this site, RRV is now currently undertaking design work for additional rock walling. This will ensure that local conditions are taken into account such as projected tide heights and the water table level. Rock will then be constructed to a suitable level which may mean removal and reconstruction of the current wall, ahead of the winter period.

Q. If rock is now being used at the Bunurong Road area, why wasn't this mitigation measure used at the SLSC location?

A. An options evaluation was undertaken on recommended stabilising options for the SLSC area following further erosion from a number of storm events late in 2019. The most appropriate protection measure recommended and adopted by the Inverloch multi-agency working group was a geotextile container wall.

The key benefits of sand-filled geotextile containers are: a design life of over 10 years; relatively low cost; wave reflection due to sloped design; much safer to have on a popular beach than rock; aesthetically more attractive compared to rock or seawalls and easy to remove in the future if sand builds back up.

The installation of a hard-engineered structure, such as a rock wall, could have a severe impact on the beach along the foreshore, so it is very important that this type of protection be investigated further by coastal engineers during the development of a local coastal hazard assessment.

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Q. Has the trial wet-sand fencing worked?

A. Trial wet-sand fencing was installed in March 2019 to attenuate wave energy, collect sand, thereby providing a buffer to assist in preventing further erosion at the Bunurong Road and SLSC areas.

There is some evidence that the wet-sand fencing, coupled with sand renourishment, did slow down erosion impacting on dunes to some extent, however it is too soon to gauge the overall effectiveness of the wet-sand fencing. The structures need to be exposed to a full seasonal cycle (12 to 18 months) to fully assess their performance.

The wet-sand fencing was not intended as a long-term solution. It was installed as a short-term interim trial, while funding was sought to investigate coastal processes at Inverloch and surrounds for more permanent solutions.

We will continue to actively monitor both areas.

Q. Some of the geotextile container wall bags have been damaged during storms, and there has been erosion at the ends – is it working?

A. The Inverloch geotextile container wall is a temporary structure which will be monitored throughout its life and minor maintenance or repairs to the sandbags will be undertaken as required. There will also be periodic sand nourishment at the ends of the structure to manage further erosion.

The length has been designed by a consultant engineer to provide protection to the Surf Life Saving Club building. It is performing as expected by protecting the dune in front of the Surf Life Saving Club from erosion.

Q. What is happening with the Regional and Strategic Partnership (RaSP) announced in October last year?

A. A Project Manager has been appointed to provide support services and establish the RaSP.

Work is underway to determine membership of the RaSP and, once partners have been agreed, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio will formally create the RaSP under the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*. This administrative work is anticipated to be complete by the end of May 2020.

In addition, work on establishing the scope for the local coastal hazard assessment is in progress. This includes investigating the coastal processes of Inverloch and the surrounding coastal environment through data collection, analysis and modelling.

This research will be run in conjunction with extensive community engagement. Together, this body of work will inform detailed risk and vulnerability assessments and lead to the development of strategic coastal resilience planning for the Inverloch coast and surrounds.

Q. What's next?

A. Monitoring and evaluation of the effects of the installation of the geotextile container wall at the SLSC area and the rock wall at the Bunurong Road area will be undertaken.

Establishment of the RaSP and planning for commencement of the local coastal hazard assessment will continue.

For further information, contact DELWP Traralgon on 03 5172 2111