

Ocean Beaches Strategy 2013–2023

Version 1.0 August 2013

Strategic
2013–2023







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“Gold Coast beaches need to be maintained, protected and where necessary, enhanced to ensure future generations are able to enjoy them.”

View south Palm Beach



Foreword



Our ocean beaches support a significant component of the regional economy and have earned the city an enviable reputation as a premier tourist destination and the best place to live. The extent of beachfront development is a testament to the value of our ocean beaches.

The environmental, social and economic benefits and services provided by our ocean beach areas highlights coastal management as a serious and important issue for the Commonwealth, Queensland Government, City of Gold Coast and the community.

The Gold Coast Ocean Beaches Strategy 2013-2023 seeks to ensure the following:

- everyone can enjoy a beach experience
- our beaches are healthy and clean
- our infrastructure is protected from coastal hazards
- there is joint stewardship of the ocean beaches.

Our Ocean Beaches Strategy highlights our ongoing and increasing commitment to managing and protecting Gold Coast beaches now and into the future. A significant portion of our urban fabric and economy is exposed to the high energy ocean environment. Competing uses, the protection of the environment, pressure to privatise public space, loss of amenity and increasing demand for public access are key challenges.

Our Ocean Beaches Strategy consolidates a framework to maximise current and future use, access to and enjoyment of our beaches by all users. It directs resources in the most appropriate manner to protect and improve the integrity of natural and man-made coastal elements.

This strategy has been developed in light of community feedback. Ongoing consultation about our beaches is critical to ensure there is strong community spirit. Coastal management is important for our business and community sectors, City of Gold Coast and other levels of government. With help from our key stakeholders, our Ocean Beaches Strategy builds on existing activities, plans and projects so our ocean beaches remain a centrepiece of this vibrant, global city.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Tate".

Mayor Tom Tate



Introduction

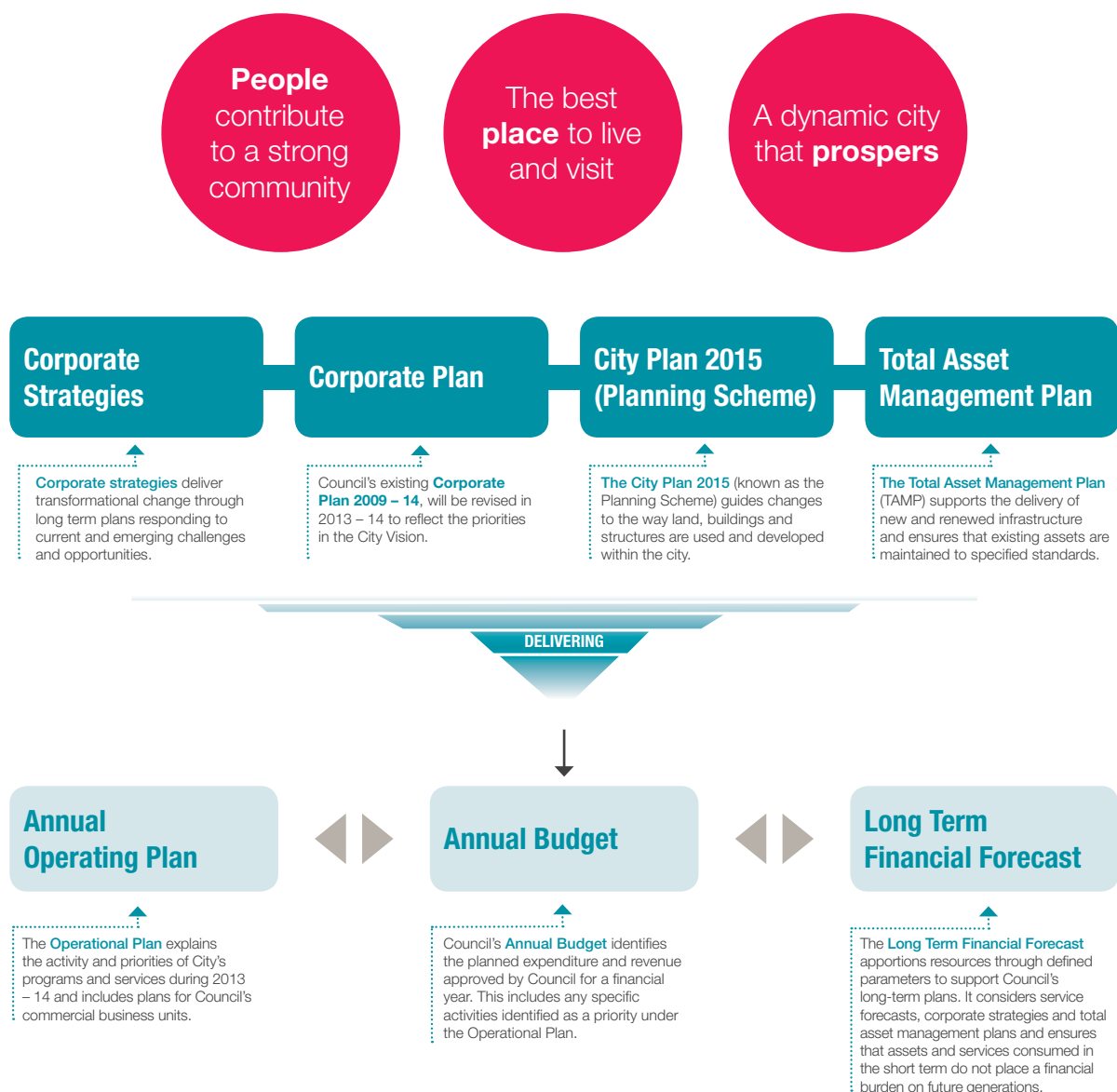
The City of Gold Coast's vision is 'Inspired by Lifestyle. Driven by Opportunity.'

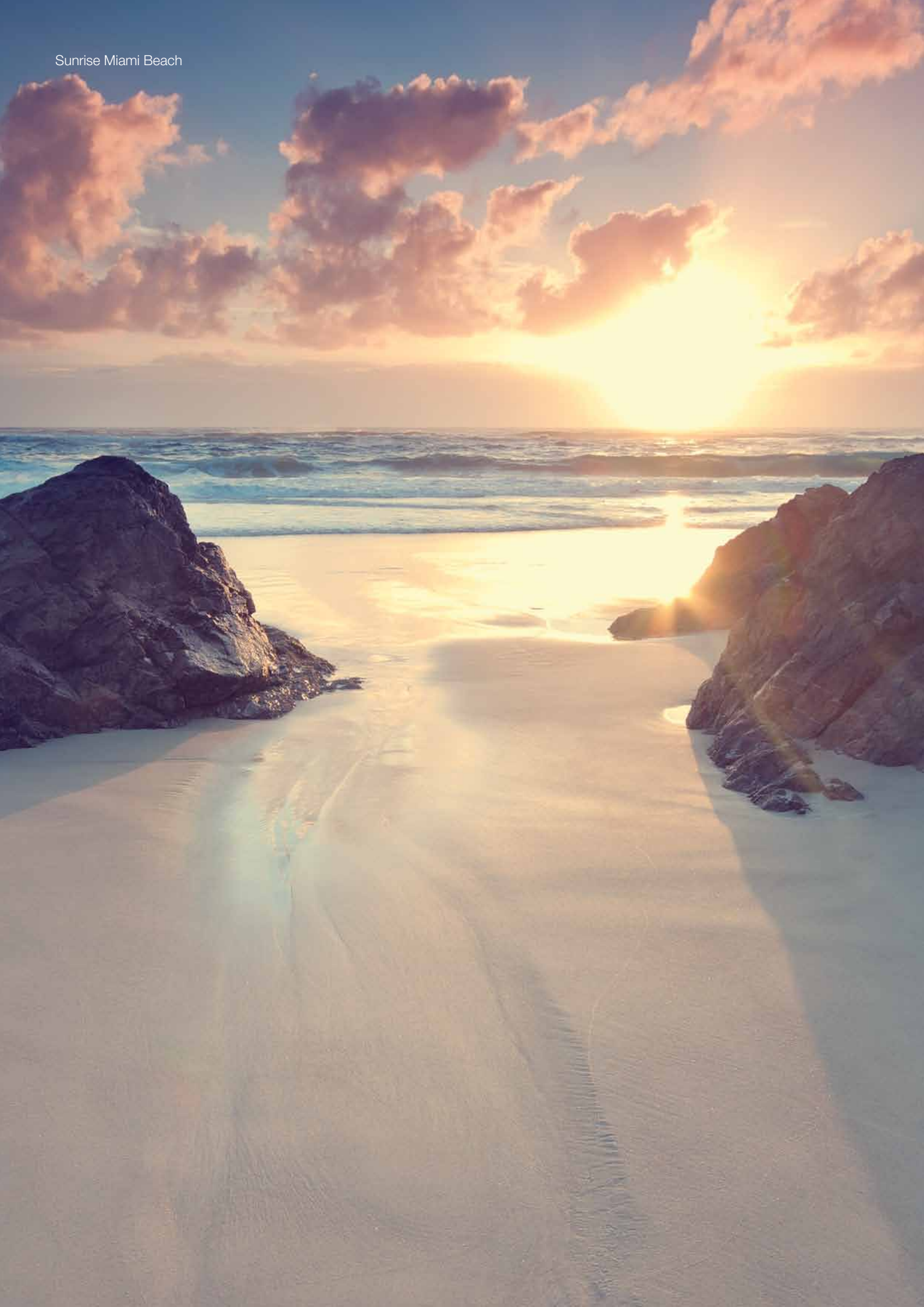
This vision drives the City's corporate plan and its portfolio of corporate strategies. The City's approach to long-term planning is based on the integration of our vision, corporate plan, long-term asset management, financial plans and our corporate strategies.

Corporate strategies are fundamental in delivering transformational change and respond to current and emerging challenges and opportunities. They draw upon every area of the City's work and are developed and supported by stakeholders, community members and other levels of government. Together the portfolio of corporate strategies and plans will contribute to the city's transformation, while ensuring our liveability into the future.

Our Ocean Beaches Strategy will complement and be implemented alongside the other corporate strategies, asset and financial plans through a consistent program of collective planning, decision-making and performance measurement.

City of Gold Coast. Inspired by lifestyle. Driven by opportunity.





Executive summary

The Gold Coast Ocean Beaches Strategy 2013-2023 is an overarching transformational strategy that makes clear the need to manage the ocean beaches in consultation with a complex group of stakeholders.

The Ocean Beaches Strategy includes four strategic outcomes:

- everyone can enjoy a beach experience
- our beaches are healthy and clean
- our infrastructure is protected from coastal hazards
- there is joint stewardship of the ocean beaches.

It articulates the importance of our beaches and identifies 13 key actions to be undertaken to achieve these outcomes.

The draft strategy was released for community and stakeholder engagement between March and May 2013, with 1415 formal responses received.



The strategy considers the environmental, social and economic value of beaches, given challenges such as:

- growing population which can lead to access issues, development and use conflicts
- increasing climate variability and our ability to protect the beaches and coastline
- understanding and maintaining social, environmental and economic values of beaches
- use of beaches – identifying what events and commercial activities are appropriate to ensure equitable and sustainable beach use
- dynamic coastal processes that require careful consideration and understanding to ensure expectations for beach use are complementary to natural coastal processes.

The strategy provides direction for the Ocean Beach Asset Management Plan and associated 10-year Service Financial Forecast.

The strategy highlights the challenges of managing ocean beaches given the dynamic environment and the importance of our beaches to the city's image, liveability and ultimately, to the economy.

Financial and non-financial investment from all levels of government, as well as close collaboration with stakeholders, will be required to effectively implement the strategy.





Strategy background

Gold Coast City

Defined by its spectacular beaches, hinterland ranges, forests, waterways and vibrant communities, the Gold Coast is an outstanding global city, proudly looking towards the future.

Inspired by lifestyle, driven by opportunity, we are Australia's sixth largest city, based on the estimated resident population of 530,000 spread across 1378 square kilometres. Our five-year annual average population growth rate is 3.2 per cent (compared to 1.8 per cent for Australia).

Conveniently located in the heart of the booming South East Queensland corridor with a catchment of almost three million people, the Gold Coast is not just a great place to holiday, it's also a great place to live, study and do business. Our city is the perfect location for innovation, dynamic growth, investment, business expansion and/or relocation. It is already home to a thriving and modern business community.

We dream large, build big and rise to emerging opportunities. Nationally recognised initiatives already occurring include a city light rail system, the hosting of the 2018 Commonwealth Games, a new Gold Coast Hospital and a Health and Knowledge Precinct. Construction (\$3.8 billion) and manufacturing (\$2.2 billion) contribute to our economy, estimated to be worth \$23 billion. The Gold Coast's combined tourism and surfing industries are worth an estimated \$7.5 billion to the city annually.

Our tourism industry attracts some 11.5 million visitors each year and generates more than \$4.5 billion in visitor expenditure annually for the city. Our 52 kilometres of beaches, 27 of them patrolled, are an integral part of the collection of villages, each with its own character, that unite us in a collective pride.

*The ongoing health of our beaches is a vital element
to the future of the Gold Coast economy.*

Background

The city's ocean beaches extend from Point Danger in the south to Jumpinpin at the northern end of South Stradbroke Island. There has been a consistently high rate of population growth over a long period, with similar trends forecast. As the number of residents and tourists increase, so too does the number of beach users. It is crucial to carefully manage the dynamic ocean beach environment and ensure sufficient services are in place to meet community expectations.

City of Gold Coast (Council) has been at the forefront of coastal management since the 1960s. The technology and techniques pioneered on the Gold Coast have benefitted other coastal communities around the world. In addition to providing beach cleaning and maintenance, the City also employs the largest professional Lifeguard Service in Australia. Our lifeguards partner with volunteers from Surf Lifesaving Clubs help to keep our beaches safe.

As the city's population grows and diversifies, the way we use our ocean beaches is also changing. It is critical that we find ways to work together with all levels of government and the community to meet the challenges of protecting, enhancing and funding the management of these world-class iconic beaches so they will continue to be here for us to enjoy into the future.



Current services to the community

City of Gold Coast manages the ocean beaches from both an operational and capital works perspective. Our operational or maintenance component of works include year round professional lifeguard service, beach cleaning activities, maintenance of dune and foreshore areas including access-ways, viewing platforms, dune fencing, vegetation and beach shower provisions.

The City's capital works area of ocean beach management provides for large scale dredging of creek entrances and associated beach nourishment as well as construction and/or renewal of seawalls, beach showers, viewing platforms, accessways and dune fencing. Extensive planning activities are continually undertaken to ensure informed decisions are made concerning major capital works projects now and into the future.

In addition, the City partners with State Government departments in undertaking a range of coastal mitigation activities each year. The City also actively supports annual community engagement and coastal research programs undertaken by local academic institutions.

Current trends and issues

The Ocean Beaches Strategy 2013-2023 addresses key trends and issues that face the city now and into the future.

Current trend or strategic issue	Implications/opportunities for City of Gold Coast
Active coastline management with built and natural infrastructure	Active management of the Gold Coast coastline has been occurring for many years. Coastal research and monitoring provides direction to ensure appropriate and effective coastal management and where necessary, allow for managed ecological and physical processes.
Increased erosion due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• frequency of storms• sea level rise• climate variability	Efficiently allocating existing resources, an increase in funding and improved data collection and sharing is required to support coastal management in a way that balances variable climate patterns with adequate protection of people and property.
Complex stakeholder responsibilities and interests in coastal management and decision-making	Actively engaging the community, sharing information and participating in multi-agency forums to ensure stakeholder interests are considered in managing the ocean beaches.
Valuing the ocean beaches environment	Further research and investigation will increase understanding of the ecological, social and economic values derived from ocean beaches to ensure appropriate management and protection.
Growing population and visitors numbers putting pressure on beach access and use	Understanding current demands for access and use of the ocean beaches and the likely conflicts and future demands will inform policy development, priority setting and planning for appropriate facilities and services. Development pressures and increasing land values also contribute to demand and access to beaches.
Increasing community concern and mis-information about beach management issues	Providing information about beach management issues, opportunities and outcomes in a way that is easily understood by the community.

Community Engagement

City of Gold Coast undertook community engagement to refine the Draft Ocean Beaches Strategy. This provided an opportunity to increase public awareness about the importance of a strategic approach to the management of our ocean beaches and to test key actions within the strategy.

A total of 1415 people participated in the community and stakeholder engagement process. Overall, findings from the community and stakeholder engagement process demonstrated between 65 and 89 per cent support for each of the proposed key actions outlined in the Draft Ocean Beaches Strategy.

Additional issues and priorities were identified during the engagement process. These have been taken into consideration during the finalisation of the Ocean Beaches Strategy and the development of the Strategy Implementation Plan. Details of this engagement can be found in the *City of Gold Coast Draft Ocean Beaches Strategy 2013 – 2023; Community and Stakeholder Engagement Report*.



Strategy vision

The four strategic outcomes of the Ocean Beaches Strategy are interrelated. Delivering on these outcomes as equal priorities will achieve the strategy's vision:

Our beaches are clean, healthy, safe and accessible now and into the future.

Strategic outcomes



Everyone can enjoy a beach experience

Residents and visitors of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds can enjoy the beach to relax, play, connect and exercise.



Our beaches are healthy and clean

We are able to enjoy litter-free stretches of sandy beaches, well-vegetated dunes and clean water.



Our infrastructure is protected from coastal hazards

Ocean beaches are actively managed using a variety of best practice methods to protect public and private infrastructure from coastal hazards such as erosion, storm surge and other climatic variability.

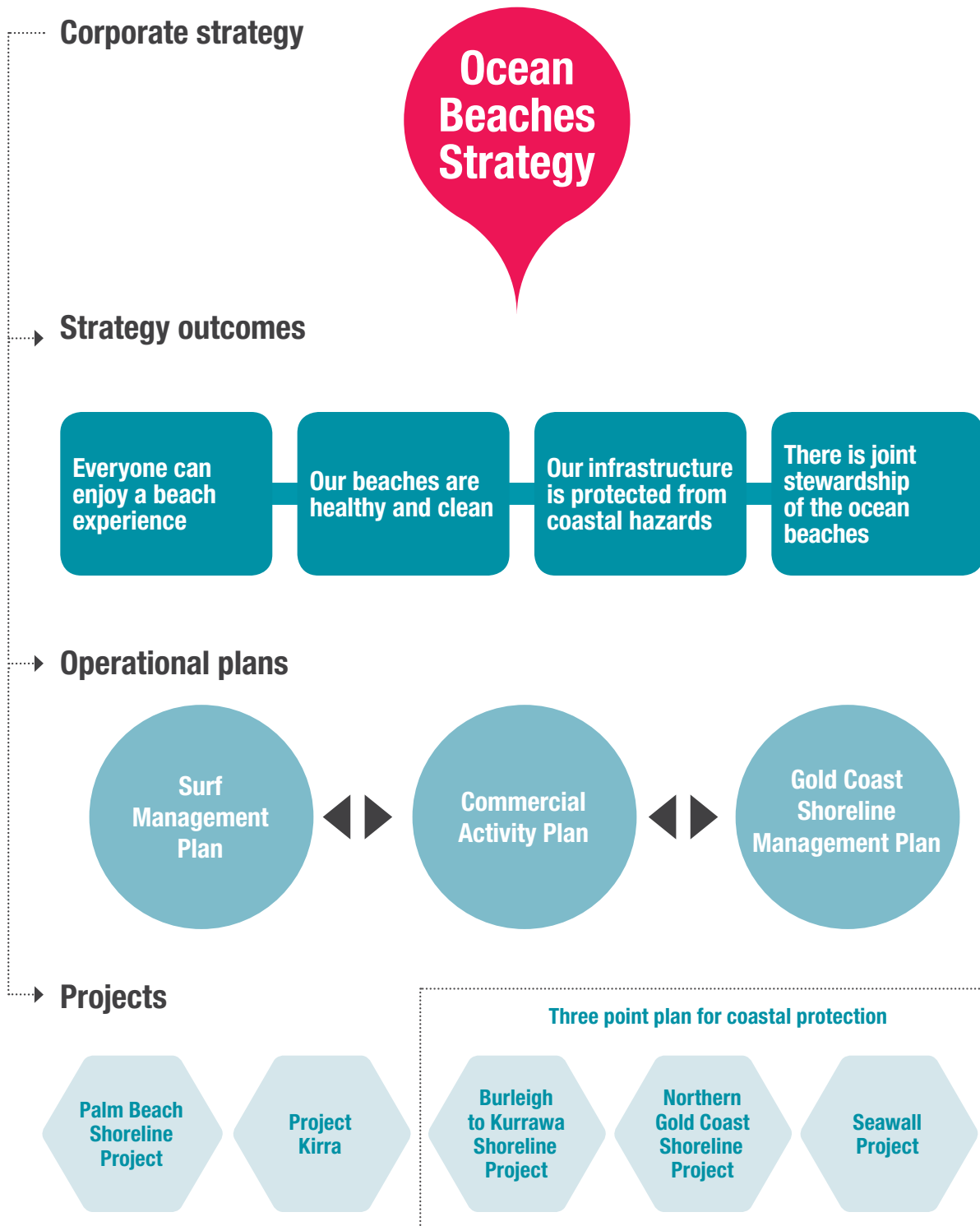


There is joint stewardship of the ocean beaches

All levels of government, business and the community who benefit from the city's ocean beaches contribute to its management.



Ocean Beaches Strategy hierarchy



The actions needed to achieve and measure these outcomes are outlined on the following pages.





Strategy outcomes

1. Everyone can enjoy a beach experience

With a growing, ageing and increasingly diverse population and finite amount of ocean beaches, it is important to manage our ocean beach environment so that everyone can enjoy a beach experience.

For the community this will mean:

- **people of all abilities and backgrounds can enjoy a beach experience.**
The beaches are open and accessible to everyone - whether you are on foot or wheels, you will enjoy our wonderful beaches.
- **there are diverse options for getting to or along the beach.** We will cater for the different ways you arrive at the beach – whether it be by foot, bicycle, vehicle or public transport.
- **it is safe to swim at the beach.** With the largest professional lifeguard service and the help of surf lifesaving club volunteers, we will help to keep beaches safer.
- **a safe beach environment.** We will plan to balance different ocean beach activities to ensure everyone who visits the beach is safe.
- **residents and visitors can enjoy a beach experience** – whether it be swimming, surfing, fishing, relaxing or attending events.
- **a coordinated approach** to managing commercial activity on our beaches and in our parks

Outcome Measures

- Level of satisfaction with beach access and safety (with respect to appropriate infrastructure).
- Level of satisfaction with beach and surf amenity.

Deliverables

- Commercial activity plan.
- Surf management plan.



What are our key actions?

Actions	Detail
1.1 Deliver infrastructure that supports beach access and use	We will conduct an audit of existing infrastructure that supports people's access to the beaches. This will include public transport linkages, parking, amenities, access points and lifeguard services. We will maintain and further develop this infrastructure across the network of ocean beaches. We will annually survey ocean beach users about their beach experience.
1.2 Develop a consistent approach to managing commercial activity on beaches	We will clearly define 'commercial activity' and actively engage stakeholders in the development of a commercial activity plan. This plan will clarify the rules around commercial activity on the beaches and management of these activities. We will ensure any commercial activity is closely monitored.
1.3 Develop a surf management plan that recognises and supports Gold Coast's surf amenity	We will actively engage surfers, surfing bodies, business and the broader community to develop a surf management plan. This plan will recognise the importance of surfing to the city's lifestyle and economy and provide a framework to address the increasing demands on our city's surfing resources.
1.4 Deliver the coastal pedestrian and cycle network	We will complete the coastal cycle and pedestrian route outlined in the Transport Strategy and Active Transport Plan. The Transport Strategy will guide the city's transport system to 2031, creating a smart, connected and liveable city under a one network approach. The Active Transport Plan will provide a safe active transport network that helps make walking and cycling attractive alternatives to the car.



2. Our beaches are clean and healthy

The value of the natural beach environment is often underestimated and provides significant social and economic benefits in addition to beach ecological values. The Gold Coast is lucky to have naturally beautiful, sandy beaches. The beach amenity is recognised nationally and internationally, attracting 11.5 million day visitors annually. Maintaining healthy and clean beaches is important to visitors and is core to why residents choose to live here.

For the community this will mean:

- there is a balance of sand for walking, playing and relaxing,
- there are sand dunes with native vegetation, reducing the risk of sand loss and providing animal habitat,
- sand dunes are protected from becoming overgrown with weeds and negative human impacts, such as pedestrian traffic;
- the water is of a high quality, to support marine life and swimming safety;
- the beaches are free of litter;
- there are long stretches of unadorned sandy beach;
- national and international tourists are attracted to our world-class beaches.

Outcome Measures

- Progressive increase in positive beach health report findings.

Deliverables

- Annual beach health report.



What are our key actions?

Actions	Detail
2.1 Monitor and improve beach health	We will monitor beach health and prepare and publish an annual beach health report that measures dune health, water quality, sand volume, ecological health and landscape amenity. We will seek to maintain and improve beach health each year. This includes implementing dune management plans.
2.2 Maintain clean beaches	We will review our approach to structured beach cleaning to ensure the best approach for different types of beaches. We will ensure adequate bins across the ocean beaches network. We will review the way dogs are managed on our beaches. We will acknowledge the many residents who regularly volunteer their time to clean their local beaches.



3. Our infrastructure is protected from coastal hazards

Climate variability, frequent and intense storms and sea level rise are resulting in increased risk of erosion events and damage to coastal infrastructure. A holistic approach to coastal management is essential in order to protect infrastructure and manage erosion. Active management of the coastline has been occurring and will continue to occur. Natural ecological and physical processes will be embraced to assist with protecting infrastructure from the ocean.

For the community this will mean:

- the beaches and dunes are managed to protect public property;
- private property owners understand their responsibilities in protecting their properties;
- the volume of sand on the beach provides a buffer from erosion and storm events;
- there is a rock seawall along urban sections of the coastline to protect infrastructure;
- new development will be set back to allow for natural coastal processes

Outcome Measures

- Sand volume targets met.
- Percentage of coastal **public** beachfront requiring protection with a certified seawall.
- Percentage of coastal **private** beachfront requiring protection with a certified seawall.

Deliverables

- Updated City Plan 2015 (Planning Scheme).



What are our key actions?

Actions	Detail
3.1 Undertake planning related to coastal protection initiatives	We will collect, record and analyse coastal data to assist in the prioritisation of the Gold Coast Shoreline Management Plan recommendations. We will identify the most effective approach to working with private property owners in completing their seawalls. We will revise the method for quantifying the volume of sand on beaches and annually report on sand volume across the beach network. We will formalise agreements with state government agencies involved in dredging programs to ensure the beneficial re-use of sand.
3.2 Implement recommendations from the Shoreline Management Plan	We will implement the prioritised recommendations from the Gold Coast Shoreline Management Plan including construction of public seawalls, coastal control structures and beach nourishment works.
3.3 Ensure the City Plan (Planning Scheme) supports Ocean Beaches Strategy outcomes	We will ensure Ocean Beaches Strategy outcomes are adequately reflected in the City Plan 2015 (Planning Scheme) and realised through development approval and compliance practices.



4. There is joint stewardship of the ocean beaches

Gold Coast ocean beaches are enjoyed by, and provide benefits to many people. Individuals, businesses and governments benefit either directly or indirectly from the sandy beaches. It is important we work together to ensure that the effort required to maintain the benefits is equitably distributed.

For the community this will mean:

- everyone understands the benefits of having clean, healthy, safe and accessible beaches;
- there is equitable investment in beach management from different levels of government and those who benefit from having clean, healthy, safe and accessible beaches;
- research and community engagement activities inform balanced decision-making;
- stakeholders are informed and actively participate in actions to manage ocean beaches.

Outcome Measures

- Level of financial and non-financial investment from partners.
- Level of stakeholder satisfaction with engagement processes and outcomes.

Deliverables

- Annual Stakeholder Engagement Plan.



What are our key actions?

Actions	Detail
4.1 Develop collaborations and partnerships that support ocean beach management	We will collaborate with other levels of government, business, research institutions and the community around policy priorities that support ocean beach management. We will seek leveraged funding from all levels of government to support the effective management of the Gold Coast's ocean beaches. We will review the City's investment strategy.
4.2 Undertake and promote research about the ocean beaches	We will consolidate existing research on coastal management and continue formal agreements with research institutions that provide an evidence base for decision-making. We will promote and publicise research to inform public dialogue about ocean beaches management.
4.3 Actively engage local stakeholders in ocean beach management	We will implement a proactive stakeholder engagement program that supports joint stewardship. We will provide opportunities for ongoing dialogue with the community about coastal management initiatives such as the Gold Coast Shoreline Management Plan, the Palm Beach Shoreline Project, dredging and artificial reefs. We will continue to deliver a coastal community education program.
4.4 Report on Ocean Beaches Strategy outcomes	We will monitor and report on the progress and outcomes of the Ocean Beaches Strategy to the community and other stakeholders.



Review

There are three levels of review and reporting for the Ocean Beaches Strategy.

- A progress report every six months, published in the Corporate Performance Report.
- An annual review which will be included in the City's Annual Report.
- Major reviews will be undertaken in 2018 and in 2023.

The Ocean Beaches Strategy Communications Plan provides further detail about communicating progress and outcomes to the community and broader stakeholders.

To find out more visit cityofgoldcoast.com.au/oceanbeachesstrategy or call us on **1300 694 222**.

Overview of key actions

Strategic outcomes

1. Everyone can enjoy a beach experience

- 1.1 Deliver infrastructure that supports beach access and use.
- 1.2 Develop a consistent approach to managing commercial activity on beaches.
- 1.3 Develop a surf management plan that recognises and supports Gold Coast's surf amenity.
- 1.4 Deliver the coastal pedestrian and cycle network.

2. Our beaches are healthy and clean

- 2.1 Monitor and improve beach health.
- 2.2 Maintain clean beaches.

3. Our infrastructure is protected from coastal hazards=

- 3.1 Undertake planning related to coastal protection initiatives.
- 3.2 Implement recommendations from the Shoreline Management Plan.
- 3.3 Ensure the City Plan 2015 (Planning Scheme) supports Ocean Beaches Strategy outcomes.

4. There is joint stewardship of the ocean beaches

- 4.1 Develop collaborations and partnerships that support ocean beach management.
- 4.2 Undertake and promote research about the ocean beaches.
- 4.3 Actively engage local stakeholders in ocean beach management.
- 4.4 Report on Ocean Beaches Strategy outcomes.



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