



**A 10-point plan for coastal Australia:**  
Towards A Sustainable Future for Our Coast

July 2010

86% of all Australians live along the coast yet the major challenges facing the nation's coastal communities are not being properly addressed.

Continuing growth and development is placing the coastal environment at risk. Coastal communities are at risk from the impact of climate change. They are also at the forefront of having to deal with the impact of Australia's ageing population.

It is time these pressures were taken seriously.

## Foreword

This discussion paper has been prepared as a step towards developing a Policy Framework for Coastal Australia that will achieve a collaborative national response to the social, environmental and economic challenges facing the nation's coastal zone and its communities.

The National Sea Change Taskforce has commissioned research into the priority issues facing coastal communities. This research has identified that coastal LGAs and their communities are attempting to deal with complex and extraordinary pressures. Research indicates that populations in regional, rural and remote coastal communities are characterised by lower incomes, higher unemployment levels and a higher level of socio-economic disadvantage than the Australian population as a whole. Coastal councils and their communities are at the forefront of Australia's ageing population and its impacts. They are also the communities most vulnerable to the potential impact of climate change and rising sea levels.

The rate of growth in coastal areas outside the capital cities is consistently higher than the national average. In just over a decade from 1997 to 2008 the population of non-metro coastal areas increased from 4.9m to 6.4m at an average rate of 131,000 people a year. This population now represents 83% of Australia's regional population and 30% of the nation's entire population. Analysis of Treasury's revised population projections indicates another 6.8 million people are likely to move to the coast over the next 40 years, including at least a million 'baby boomers' who are expected to start moving to the coast as they reach retirement age.

While a significant number of people have moved to Australia's non-metro coastal areas over the past decade, resources have not moved with them. Coastal councils are struggling to meet increasing demands for infrastructure and services in their communities without adequate support from Federal or state governments.

The challenges confronting coastal Australia are impacting on coastal communities in every state and placing at risk the high biodiversity and scenic values of the coastal zone. They are compounded by the high risk of rising sea levels. The National Sea Change Taskforce believes these challenges can only be addressed effectively through the commitment of Federal, State, Territory and local governments to work collaboratively to ensure the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the coastal zone. It is for this reason that the Taskforce proposes a Policy Framework for Coastal Australia as the most effective way of bringing about a consistent and coordinated national response to the pressures impacting on the Australian coastline and its communities.



**Barry Sammels**

Chair, National Sea Change Taskforce and Mayor, City of Rockingham

## Australia's Coastal Lifestyle under Threat



On behalf of all Australians who care about the coast the National Sea Change Taskforce calls on the Federal Government to provide national leadership on coastal management.

Only the Federal Government can play a leadership role in developing a national policy for coastal Australia. Such leadership will help address potentially dangerous inaction on climate change in some of Australia's most vulnerable communities.

The Taskforce calls on the Federal Government, in the national interest, to adopt the following 10-point plan:

1. Adopt and implement the recommendations of the coastal inquiry conducted by the bi-partisan House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts. These recommendations, released in October 2009, address many of the challenges facing coastal communities. As the inquiry report emphasises – *The Time to act is Now*
2. Introduce a new funding formula to enable coastal councils to respond effectively to the social and economic needs of coastal communities and to provide regional facilities and services. Communities in non-metro coastal areas require a specific rural and regional infrastructure fund to meet increasing demand for social, community, sporting and cultural facilities. These communities are disadvantaged under current funding arrangements.
3. Provide funding for coastal councils to undertake natural resource management activities in coastal areas. Most coastal councils have limited access to funding which is essential for communities to undertake natural resource management activities.

4. Develop a national growth management policy to better coordinate the planning and provision of infrastructure in regional and rural areas, including rapidly expanding coastal communities. The policy would involve the three spheres of government working collaboratively to better meet growth in demand for economic, social, cultural and community infrastructure and services. The policy would also aim to prevent the loss of productive agricultural land which is a major issue in many rapidly-growing coastal communities.
5. Ensure that the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) collects accurate and consistent data on non-resident populations in coastal areas to enable more effective allocation of resources to meet demand associated with tourists, non-resident workers and part-time residents. Current demographic data is based on information from the census and from annual Estimated Resident Population data released by the ABS, which only include data on permanent residents.
6. Assist coastal councils to address the social and economic needs of ageing populations and to meet the shortfall in aged care accommodation and services in these areas. Coastal communities are at the forefront of Australia's ageing population and its impacts.
7. Introduce a consistent national response to the legal and insurance risks associated with coastal planning and the impact of climate change to assist coastal councils to implement adaptation and coastal infrastructure protection plans in response to rising sea levels. Australia's coastal councils face the risk of costly legal actions when making planning decisions in potentially vulnerable coastal areas. Similarly, coastal councils have significant concerns in relation to insurance cover for assets in the coastal zone.
8. Declare 2012 as *The Year of the Coast*. This would raise national awareness of the significant contribution coastal Australia makes to the nation's social, cultural, economic and environmental values. It would also provide an opportunity to raise awareness and support for the measures necessary to achieve the long-term sustainability of the coastal zone.
9. Initiate a collaborative national approach to address the shortage of affordable housing in coastal communities. This should include controls to retain existing low cost housing and a requirement for private developers to introduce affordable housing in residential developments.
10. Review current governance and institutional arrangements for the coastal zone. The Taskforce supports the recommendation by the Parliamentary coastal inquiry that the Australian Government develops an Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone to be endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments and that the intergovernmental agreement be overseen by a Coastal Zone Ministerial Council.

## National Coastal Policy Framework

Current methods of planning, funding and managing the impact of growth in coastal areas are inconsistent and inadequate. Australia needs a coordinated national policy on coastal planning and managing which is based on a commitment by all three spheres of government to work collaboratively to ensure the sustainability of coastal communities and the coastal environment. The most appropriate vehicle for establishing this collaboration is the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

There is an urgent need for a national policy framework that addresses the social, environmental and economic sustainability of the coastal zone. The need for such a policy is emphasised by revised estimates of Australia's population growth over the next 40 years which indicate that the national population will increase to approximately 36 million by 2050. These revised estimates have significant implications for growth rates in Australia's regional coastal communities.

Only the Australian Government is in a position to play a leadership role on this issue, recognizing that the responsibilities for coastal planning and management are currently shared between the three spheres. The 10 key elements of the proposed National Coastal Policy Framework are outlined in the following pages.

### 1. Adopt the Recommendations of the Parliamentary Coastal Inquiry

The Taskforce supports the recommendation of the coastal inquiry conducted by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts that:

*the Australian Government, in co-operation with state, territory and local governments, and in consultation with coastal stakeholders, develop an Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone to be endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments. The intergovernmental agreement should:*

- *define the roles and responsibilities of the three tiers of government – federal, state and local – involved in coastal zone management;*
- *include a formal mechanism for community consultation;*
- *incorporate principles based on strategic regional coastal planning and landscape scale/ecosystem based coastal zone management;*
- *include an effective implementation plan with resources allocated to ensure that objectives are realised;*
- *be overseen by a new Coastal Zone Ministerial Council; and*
- *be made public.*

**RECOMMENDATION 1: Adopt and implement the recommendations of the coastal inquiry conducted by the bi-partisan House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts. These recommendations, released in October 2009, address many of the challenges facing coastal communities. As the inquiry report emphasises – *The Time to act is Now***

## 2. A new funding formula for regional coastal communities



Communities in Australia's non-metro coastal areas are disadvantaged under current funding arrangements, including the system of Financial Assistance Grants. The rate of population growth in non-metropolitan coastal local government areas (LGAs) is consistently higher than the national average. Growth in itself, however, is not an economic benefit unless it is supported by an adequate allocation of resources.

While Australia's non-metro coastal areas have expanded considerably over the past decade resources have not moved to match the migration to these communities. This situation has left many coastal LGAs struggling to meet increasing demands for infrastructure and services in their communities without adequate support from Federal or state governments. The shortfall in funding for infrastructure and services in these communities continues to grow and is exacerbated by the substantial inflow of non-resident visitors such as tourists, part-time residents or absentee landowners, who are not counted in the estimated resident population data released annually by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This information is used as the source of official population data for the calculation of Financial Assistance Grants and other funding programs for regional Australia.

The Taskforce proposes that the formula for Financial Assistance Grants be amended to broaden the range of 'disabilities' to include factors such as the financial impact of rapid population growth and the need to respond rapidly and appropriately to increasing demand for regional infrastructure and services. The Taskforce also proposes that the formula be amended to include the impact of non-resident populations, as indicated elsewhere in this document.

Research conducted by the Taskforce has identified that populations in coastal communities are characterised by lower incomes, higher unemployment levels and a higher level of socio-economic disadvantage than the Australian population as a whole. Non metropolitan coastal areas also have a higher proportion of families receiving income support benefits and are at the forefront of Australia's ageing population and its impacts. These communities have therefore been particularly vulnerable to the effects of the global financial crisis.

Economies in coastal areas are heavily dependent on the tourism, property and construction sectors. Each of these sectors was affected by the global financial crisis with flow-on effects for local economic activity. A survey of economic conditions in coastal communities conducted by the Taskforce in 2009 identified the need for policy initiatives to provide additional support for regional coastal communities, including the following:

- Continuation of the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure program to provide further economic stimulus to regional coastal communities, which are particularly vulnerable to the global financial crisis and its impact on the construction sector, and that future guidelines for the program be developed in consultation with local government representatives to ensure funding is effectively targeted to meet local community
- Review of the eligibility criteria for the \$300,000 growth component of the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure program to enable high growth councils with populations of less than 30,000 to benefit from this part of the program. Alternatively, the Taskforce proposes that coastal councils with populations of less than 30,000 be the subject of a separate funding program to deal with the community infrastructure challenges they are facing which are more demanding than those faced by larger municipalities that have the benefit of a larger revenue base;
- The formula for Financial Assistance Grants be amended to broaden the range of 'disabilities' to include factors such as the financial impact of rapid population growth and the need to respond rapidly and appropriately to increasing demand for regional infrastructure and services;
- A Commonwealth stimulus package be specifically developed to upgrade facilities to meet visitor needs in coastal areas; and
- The Australian Government undertake a national initiative as a matter of urgency to assess the growth in demand for social services and infrastructure in regional communities and that local councils be adequately resourced to address these social needs.

**RECOMMENDATION 2: Introduce a new funding formula to enable coastal councils to respond effectively to the social and economic needs of coastal communities and to provide regional facilities and services. Communities in non-metro coastal areas require a specific rural and regional infrastructure fund to meet increasing demand for social, community, sporting and cultural facilities. These communities are disadvantaged under current funding arrangements.**

### 3. Funding for NRM Programs in Non-metro Coastal Areas

Regional coastal LGAs now have significantly reduced access to Federal funding to undertake natural resource management (NRM) programs in coastal areas unless they are within one of the following seven priority coastal 'hotspot' sites designated in the *Caring for Our Country* program:

- Adelaide Coastal Waters (SA)
- Derwent Estuary (TAS)
- Great Lakes (NSW)
- Moreton Bay (QLD)
- Peel Inlet and Harvey Estuary (WA)
- Port Phillip Bay and Western Port (VIC)
- Vasse-Wonnerup and Geographe Bay (WA)

The Shire of Denmark in Western Australia, for example, which is approximately 400km south of Perth, could previously access funding through the regional delivery model of the NHT program. The new *Caring for Our Country* program, however, is now focused on national investment priorities, which exclude coastal LGAs unless they are within one of the priority coastal 'hotspots' indicated above.

As with most regional coastal LGAs around Australia, the Shire of Denmark has management responsibility for a number of coastal reserves which are nodes for both low-impact and high-impact recreational activities. The Shire has a residential census population of approximately 5,000 people, but with tourists and other non-residents the population more than quadruples in peak holiday periods. The Shire's funding for the management of coastal reserves has relied in the past on accessing Federal and State NRM grants for implementing coastal improvements and facilities such as beach access stairs, fencing, car park improvements and toilets, and NRM works such as dune rehabilitation, restoration of vegetation and weed management. Increasingly, the Shire faces major environmental impacts such as vehicle track proliferation in coastal dune systems and conflict of multi-users on beaches (swimmers, cars, boats, bikes etc), leading to severe safety issues. There is growing demand for larger car parks, more boat trailer/caravan/camping management options, and for separation of user-group activities to maintain quality of experience and visitor safety.

Coastal LGAs need to expand their environmental infrastructure, including environmental areas, corridors and rehabilitation, to respond to the impacts of climate change and to protect biodiversity values. As most coastal councils are no longer eligible for *Caring for Our Country* NRM grant funding, they have increasingly limited access to Federal and State Government funding. This funding support is critical for small LGAs in particular for the adequate natural resource management of coastal reserves at a time when demand for coastal recreation activities and quality amenity provision is increasing. Non-metropolitan LGAs do not have the capacity to fund this activity through existing sources such as rates.

**RECOMMENDATION 3: Provide funding for coastal councils to undertake natural resource management activities in coastal areas. Most coastal councils have limited access to funding which is essential for communities to undertake natural resource management activities.**

#### 4. National growth management policy

The third Intergenerational Report, released by Treasury in February 2010, estimated the national population will increase 64% to reach 36 million by 2050. This is 8 million higher than previously estimated in the Intergenerational Report 2007 and 14 million higher than the current population (*Intergenerational Report 2010*). The Taskforce has analysed the revised figures and considered a range of future scenarios. This analysis suggests the capital cities are not likely to grow by more than 60%, from 13.7 million to 21.9 million, due to geographical constraints and limits to water supplies.

This means the remaining 5.8 million people will need to be accommodated elsewhere, and the most likely scenario is that they will seek to settle in non-metro coastal areas. This projected increase is in addition to the one million 'baby boomers' planning to retire to coastal areas between 2010 and 2026. The combined effect of this growth will be to increase population in coastal areas by 106% by 2050 - from 6.4 million to 13.2 million. The current resource base of LGAs in coastal areas is inadequate to meet the level of demand for economic, social and environmental infrastructure that will be generated by growth of this magnitude.

The revised population estimates for 2050 highlight the need for a national growth management policy. The Australian Government has previously adopted a national leadership role in relation to the development of cities and regions, specifically under the Department of Urban and Regional Development in the early 1970s and the Building Better Cities Program in the early 1990s. The scale of the projected population increase by 2050 would require development of a national growth management policy to ensure the projected growth is managed effectively and adequate provision is made for associated infrastructure. This requires coordination by the Australian Government in conjunction with the States and local government.

One of the objectives of such a policy would be to prevent the location of urban settlements in areas that are vulnerable to the impact of climate change. Another critical objective would be to prevent the loss of productive agricultural land in the coastal zone. This is essential if the nation is to achieve food security for an increased population, recognising that some of our most productive rural land in an era of global warming is in the coastal zone. Ensuring the nation's future food security will also require re-capitalisation and investment in non-broad acre farming and the associated skills base.

The national growth management policy should promote a coordinated approach, involving Federal, state and local governments, in the task of identifying, prioritising and funding the economic, social, art, culture and sporting infrastructure required to meet the needs of rapidly expanding coastal communities. This approach could be informed by the Queensland Government's SEQ Regional Plan and accompanying infrastructure Plan, which provides a blueprint for meeting the infrastructure and services needs associated with rapid population growth.

**RECOMMENDATION 4: Develop a national growth management policy to better coordinate the planning and provision of infrastructure in regional and rural areas, including rapidly expanding coastal communities. The policy would involve the three spheres of government working collaboratively to better meet growth in demand for economic, social, cultural and community infrastructure and services. The policy would also aim to prevent the loss of productive agricultural land, which is a major issue in many rapidly-growing coastal communities.**

## 5. Non Resident Populations

Current demographic data for the Australian coast is based on information from the census and from the annual Estimated Resident Population data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). This data does not **capture the impact of non-resident population such as tourists, part-time residents or absentee landowners.**

The official data for Australian population is based on Estimated Resident Population figures released by the ABS each year. This data is limited to an estimate of the number of usual residents within statistical and local government areas. It does not include people such as holidaymakers, workers in the area who live elsewhere and other temporary residents.

For example, the permanent population of Bruny Island, which forms part of Kingborough Council in Tasmania, is approximately 600 people. In peak holiday periods, however, this population increases to approximately 15,000 people. As most coastal councils know only too well, the number of temporary residents in coastal communities often exceeds the number of permanent residents, but is not currently taken into account by State and Federal government agencies in estimating local demand for infrastructure or services.

There is a clear need to establish an accurate and consistent method of measuring the impact of tourists and other non-resident population groups in Australian coastal areas to enable planners and decision-makers to better match resources with demand associated with population growth.

**RECOMMENDATION 5: Ensure that the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) collects accurate and consistent data on non-resident populations in coastal areas to enable more effective allocation of resources to meet demand associated with tourists, non-resident workers and part-time residents. Current demographic data is based on information from the census and from annual Estimated Resident Population data released by the ABS, which only include data on permanent residents.**

## 6. Ageing Communities

Coastal councils and their communities are at the forefront of Australia's ageing population and its impacts. The effects of this continuing increase in the percentage of ageing people in coastal communities are significant. LGAs in coastal areas do not have the resources necessary to meet the increase in demand for community infrastructure and services required to meet the needs of an ageing population. There is an urgent need for development of national policy initiatives to meet the current and future social and economic needs of ageing populations in coastal communities, including programs to meet the current shortfall in health care, aged care facilities, housing, home care and support, advocacy services, support groups, respite care, appropriate housing, nursing homes, retirement accommodation and learning and education services.

In addition, ageing demographic trends present challenges to coastal communities in terms of stimulating inclusiveness, participation and accessibility among older people. There is a need for policy initiatives, to be administered by the Australian Department of Health & Ageing, to foster greater opportunities for older people to play an active and valued role within their communities.

**RECOMMENDATION 6: Assist coastal councils to address the social and economic needs of ageing populations and to meet the shortfall in aged care accommodation and services in these areas. Coastal communities are at the forefront of Australia's ageing population and its impacts.**

## 7. Legal and Insurance Risks Associated with Climate Change

Australia's coastal councils are facing a legal dilemma relating to planning decisions in potentially vulnerable coastal areas. Failure on the part of an LGA to consider climate change impacts when making coastal planning decisions could leave the council exposed to potentially costly legal actions. Recent legal cases show that climate change risks are different from other land-use risks such as subsidence or acid sulphate soils. In a case heard by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) last year, involving a council decision to grant permits for dwellings on the Gippsland coast, the VCAT found that despite no explicit statutory duty to do so, potential sea level rises due to climate change are 'relevant matters to take into account'. The Tribunal overturned the council's decision.

Meanwhile, the South Australian Supreme Court in 2008 upheld a decision by the District Council of Yorke Peninsula to refuse subdivision permits at Marion Bay on the grounds that the developer had not adequately addressed the effect of coastal retreat due to climate change. In that case, the Court cited sea level rises of 30cm over the next 50 years in its ruling against the development proposal and noted that the changes in sea level were 'expected', not merely 'a probability'. The dilemma is that in considering a development application in a coastal area that may be vulnerable to inundation or severe events, such as a storm surge, how much weight should a local planning authority attach to the potential impact of climate change and associated increase in sea levels?

Similarly, coastal councils and communities have significant concerns in relation to insurance cover for assets in the coastal zone and scientific projections that climate change is likely to have a major impact on the frequency and severity of extreme weather events. This concern was identified as a key emerging issue in the coastal inquiry conducted by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts, which was tabled on 26 October 2009. There is a need to develop a consistent national approach to managing these risks.

The Taskforce therefore supports the Recommendations by the inquiry that the Australian Law Reform Commission undertakes an urgent inquiry into legal issues and climate change impacts on the coastal zone and that the Australian Government request the productivity Commission to undertake an inquiry into the projected impacts of climate change and related insurance matters.

**RECOMMENDATION 7: Introduce a consistent national response to the legal and insurance risks associated with coastal planning and the impact of climate change to assist coastal councils to implement adaptation and coastal infrastructure protection plans in response to rising sea levels. Australia's coastal councils face the risk of costly legal actions when making planning decisions in potentially vulnerable coastal areas. Similarly, coastal councils have significant concerns in relation to insurance cover for assets in the coastal zone.**

## 8. 2012 - Year of the Coast

The declaration of 2012 as the Year of the Coast would raise national awareness of the significant contribution coastal Australia makes to the nation's social, cultural, economic and environmental values. The Year of the Coast would provide an opportunity for all coastal communities to play a role in presenting a year-long program of local events aimed at promoting the role community groups play in caring for the coast. It would also provide an opportunity to raise awareness and support for the measures necessary to achieve the long-term sustainability of the coastal zone. It would also be intended to provide stimulus to domestic and international tourism.

The Year of the Coast would provide a vehicle for gaining the support and collaboration of organizations that share a desire to promote and protect the coast, such as Surf Life Saving Australia and NRM bodies. It is also likely to gain the support and participation of industry sectors including tourism, hospitality, transport, media and communications and education.

The Year of The Outback 2002 provides a guide to the way in which the Year of the Coast could be organized. That year-long event included more than 3,000 individual community events which were attended by millions of people. The Year of the Outback is estimated to have generated economic activity to the value of at least \$324 million.

**RECOMMENDATION 8: Declare 2012 as *The Year of the Coast*. This would raise national awareness of the significant contribution coastal Australia makes to the nation's social, cultural, economic and environmental values. It would also provide an opportunity to raise awareness and support for the measures necessary to achieve the long-term sustainability of the coastal zone.**

## **9. Affordable Housing**

As indicated earlier, most non-metropolitan coastal populations are characterised by greater levels of socio-economic disadvantage than other parts of Australia. Demand for new housing and holiday accommodation reduces affordable housing opportunities. These factors are contributing to social polarisation within many coastal communities for these low income groups.

Existing low cost housing options in caravan parks and affordable rental accommodation are steadily declining as sites for mobile homes are developed for other purposes and low cost rental accommodation is subjected to high levels of tourism demand. The decline in availability of this type of affordable housing has a direct impact on low to medium income groups including key workers such as teachers, health workers and emergency services workers. New 'greenfield' developments can be inaccessible and inappropriate for those experiencing housing stress and perpetuate other issues surrounding coastal urbanisation and a dependency of motor vehicles for transport.

Lack of affordable housing availability is a national issue but responsibility for utilising planning systems to promote affordable housing objectives resides with the States and Territories. The National Sea Change Taskforce proposes that the Federal Government play a leadership role in developing a collaborative national approach to addressing the shortage of affordable housing in coastal communities with the participation and support of all three spheres of government. The Taskforce proposes that a national affordable housing policy be adopted to support low cost housing in coastal areas. The policy should incorporate the following principles:

- Stimulate lower cost forms of housing through the private market, subject to appropriate locational and design criteria;
- Introduce requirements for property development companies to contribute to local affordable housing programs as part of the development approval process;
- Introduce controls over the change of use of sites of existing low cost housing, such as mobile homes and caravans, and set a proportion of those low cost housing options to be retained for permanent residents.

**RECOMMENDATION 9: Initiate a collaborative national approach to address the shortage of affordable housing in coastal communities. This should include controls to retain existing low cost housing and a requirement for private developers to introduce affordable housing in residential developments.**

## **10. Review of Governance and Institutional Arrangements for the Coast**

Coastal councils are at the forefront of responding to key issues in the coastal zone but are ill-equipped to respond appropriately to what constitutes a complex set of challenges. There is a clear need for enhanced coordination of planning and management of coastal growth at a local, regional, state and Commonwealth level as well as a greater need for cross-jurisdictional coordination between all levels of government in relation to coastal planning and management.

The Taskforce supports Recommendation 44 by the coastal inquiry conducted by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts that the Australian Government, in cooperation with state, territory and local governments, and in consultation with coastal stakeholders, develop an Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone to be endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments and that the intergovernmental agreement be overseen by a Coastal Zone Ministerial Council. The Taskforce also supports Recommendation 45 by the coastal inquiry that the Australian Government ensure that the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone forms the basis for a National Coastal Zone Policy and Strategy, which should set out the principles, objectives and actions that must be taken to address the challenges of integrated coastal zone management.

**RECOMMENDATION 10: Review current governance and institutional arrangements for the coastal zone. The Taskforce supports the recommendation by the Parliamentary coastal inquiry that the Australian Government develops an Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone to be endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments and that the intergovernmental agreement be overseen by a Coastal Zone Ministerial Council.**

### **About the National Sea Change Taskforce**

The National Sea Change Taskforce was established in 2004 as a national body to represent the interests of coastal councils. The role of the Taskforce is to provide support and guidance to coastal LGAs. Funding for the Taskforce's activities is derived from membership fees.

It was recognised at an early stage that an advocacy campaign needed to be supported by solid and credible research. In 2005 the Taskforce commissioned the first stage of an on-going research project to identify the priority issues facing coastal communities. The second stage of the research project, conducted by the Planning Research Centre at The University of Sydney, identified best practice models of local and regional planning for sea change communities. The third and most recent research project identifies best practice measures for responding to the impact of climate change on coastal communities.

The findings of the Taskforce research reports have influenced the development of coastal policy at a Federal, State and local government level. In Victoria, for example, the Taskforce research reports were prime reference sources for the development of the 2008 Victorian Coastal Strategy.

Through an on-going advocacy campaign the Taskforce has placed the key issues facing coastal communities, including the impact of rapid growth, climate change and ageing populations, on the national political agenda. The Taskforce has also successfully engaged with the Federal Government on behalf of coastal councils and their communities. Both the Taskforce Chair and Deputy Chair have been appointed to the Steering Committee of the Australian Council of Local Government, the body set up as an interface between the Federal Government and the local government sector.

Authorised by Alan Stokes  
National Sea Change Taskforce Inc  
6 Powell Street Neutral Bay NSW 2089  
T: 02 9908 2401; F: 02 9908 2803  
E: [info@seachangetaskforce.org.au](mailto:info@seachangetaskforce.org.au)

