

## Stage 1 coastal reforms overview

The main elements of the stage 1 coastal reforms are:

- Amending the [Coastal Protection Act 1979](#) by the [Coastal Protection Amendment Act 2012](#) to make it easier for landowners to place large sandbags on beaches as temporary coastal protection works, to reduce erosion impacts during minor storms. Landowners will still be able to lodge a development application for larger works.
- Clarifying what information councils should put on section 149 certificates relating to projected sea level rise impacts - new guidelines will be prepared for councils by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.
- Giving councils the flexibility to consider coastal hazards in the context of their local circumstances – the State Government will no longer recommend statewide sea level rise benchmarks for councils.

The [Coastal Protection Amendment Act 2012](#) will amend the [Coastal Protection Act 1979](#) to:

a) Allow landowners to more readily place large sandbags as temporary coastal protection works, which are currently known as [emergency coastal protection works](#) in the Coastal Protection Act 1979. The main changes are that:

- the works will be able to be placed at any time on public or private land - landowners will no longer need to wait until erosion is occurring or imminent
- the current restrictions which limit private landowners placing these works on their land only once and only for 12 months will be lifted
- landowners will no longer need a certificate from council or the Office of Environment and Heritage before placing works on private land but a certificate will still be needed for works on public land
- the allowable time landowners can place works on public land will double, to two years.

b) Retain current powers of authorised officer to remove temporary coastal protection works causing erosion to neighbouring land or presenting a public safety risk.

c) Halve the maximum penalties for offences under the Act relating to the inappropriate use of sandbags on beaches - the current penalties are excessive.

These changes to the Coastal Protection Act will commence late this year, after a new code of practice for temporary works is finalised. The code will further relax requirements for temporary coastal protection works, where this is appropriate.

Other supporting actions in the stage 1 reforms are:

- developing a guide for coastal erosion hazard mapping by councils
- preparing a business case for an expert advice centre proposed by the chief scientist and engineer, to provide independent advice to councils
- the Minister for the Environment will give councils an extra 12 months to prepare their coastal zone management plans with their communities to allow time for councils to determine their potential future coastal hazards which reflect their local conditions
- the Minister will defer certifying any further coastal zone management plans while the Government's stage 2 reforms are developed as the Government needs to consider how these plans can better link with other legislation
- preparing a fact sheet for communities on the roles of the SES and councils in coastal erosion emergency management, to clarify the current arrangements
- the Coastal Ministerial Taskforce, supported by the Coastal Expert Panel, will continue to meet to develop stage 2 coastal erosion reforms, which will consider longer term reforms.

Further information on the stage one reforms is available in a [questions and answers](#) page.

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