

## Introduction

The City of Gold Coast has the benefit of approximately 52 kilometres of beachfront to the Pacific Ocean. It offers some of the best and most popular surfing beaches in Australia, and accordingly, a major tourist attraction and coastal recreation area.

Dunal areas are critical for the protection of these beaches. They are natural 'buffer zones' that reduce the impact of fluctuations of the shoreline and erosion by the sea.

The provision and proper management of adequately sized dunal 'buffer zones' is the most effective means of protection against the loss of the City's beaches.

Appropriate management of the dunal areas within the City is integral to promoting a positive City Image for our tourist industry and City residents and preserving the function and sustainability of the dunal system for future generations to come.

The policy for the Management of Coastal Dune Areas developed by the Gold Coast City Council is unique in Queensland and has provided Council with a clear and comprehensive approach to ensure the protection, conservation, rehabilitation and management of the dunal areas within the City.

The policy has been awarded the AILA "Environmental Landscape Project Award for Excellence - 1998" and the RAPI "Environmental Planning Award for Excellence 1998".



## Why we needed a policy

The Gold Coast City Council is the day to day Managing Authority for the dunal and beach environment. Problems with managing the dunal environment are unique to the Gold Coast, as a large proportion of beachfront land and dunal areas is privately owned. The impact of urbanisation on the actively forming dunal areas has disturbed the natural balance between erosion and replenishment, the consequence being loss of adequate beach areas in some locations.

The policy was initiated due to a number of issues which have arisen over the last few years in managing dunal areas adjacent to beachside properties. These issues include:

- a perception that Crown Land is privately owned or inaccessible to the public;
- the use of inappropriate plant species in active dunal areas, that restricts the dune growth (height and width) and inhibits their capacity to act as long term sand reserves;
- inadequate processes for dealing with rehabilitation after Foreshore Seawall (boulder wall) construction, planning approvals and landscape approvals;
- lack of clear guidelines for the community and landscape professionals on appropriate use, activity and vegetation management in dunal areas.



## Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to enable Council to manage dunal areas comprehensively through its public works programs and development approval processes by:

- promoting the establishment and retention of appropriate vegetation as the preferred form of dune stabilisation;
- preserving the function and sustainability of natural dunal systems by:
  - minimising sand losses from wind and water erosion;
  - establishing a sustainable habitat and corridor for wildlife; and
  - facilitating safe public access through dunal areas by defining accessways and public areas that can be maintained to a high standard with minimal impact on the natural systems;
- providing community guidance on sustainable dunal land use by utilising the policy as a promotional and educational tool; and
- projecting a positive City image through use of appropriate vegetation in dunal areas and promotion of good landscape design principles in establishing new vegetation in urban areas in, and adjacent to dunal areas.



## Implementation of the policy

The policy has been adopted as:

- a Local Planning Policy attached to the Planning Scheme, thereby triggered by Development applications on private property;
- Council's policy for undertaking it's responsibilities under the Beach Protection Act 1968; and
- this policy will be reviewed and adopted as a code under the new Planning Scheme which is being prepared under the new Integrated Planning Act 1997.

## Description of the policy for Management of Coastal Dune Areas

This policy provides a comprehensive approach for protection, conservation, rehabilitation and management of all dunal areas within the City.

It provides:

- Background information on the nature of erosion and the impacts of inappropriate activities, uses and vegetation;
- Identifies Dunal Management Units such as Non Urban Dune Areas, Urban Dune Areas and Minor and Major Public Areas. Each Dunal Management Unit has an intent, set of policy provisions and guidelines for activity, use and vegetation. Dunal Management Units have also been identified on a series of mapped information layers which are displayed on Council's GIS Easimaps System to support the policy provisions. This ensures that information is updated regularly and information is readily available to the Council and general public;
- Plant Schedules are also included for each Dunal Management Unit;
- Undesirable Species List for Dunal Areas;
- Basic management guidelines for removal of environmental weeds;
- Basic design guidelines for planting in land adjacent to Urban Dune Areas; and

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Copies of the "Policy for Management of Coastal Dune Areas" are available from the Nerang and Surfers Paradise Administration Centres for a cost of \$5.00 per copy