Introduction to the Waterfront Development Control (WDC) Program

The Waterfront Development Control Program (or WDC) is an integrated system to guide development within Gold Coast City, and to assist developers with decision making for developing waterfront sites. The WDC program also identifies where foreshore structures may be placed, defines waterfront setbacks, and suggests acceptable environmental and engineered solutions for our city’s waterways. The WDC program aims to ensure sustainable and integrated development occurs along our waterways, and outlines ways to reduce potential conflict as waterways are developed.

The WDC program aids planning decisions for foreshore structures (e.g., pontoons and jetties). Some concerns regarding structures on foreshores include stability of the slope, impacts on habitat, impacts with flooding and public access. The diagram below shows the waterway development cross section. This diagram is from the Gold Coast City Council Planning Scheme, and is the framework for acceptable solutions for urban developments on our waterways. In addition to this diagram, Council has information for each property that relates to appropriate building setbacks to waterways, and any specific information for waterfront properties. This information is periodically updated, and anyone considering purchasing or undertaking any type of development on a waterfront property are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the WDC information, and to contact Council.

In developed areas the WDC information may include lines such as a quay line, revetment regulation line and waterfront building setback. These lines are shown on the following diagram. The purpose of these lines is to show suitable and acceptable development options for waterfront sites. Anyone undertaking development can avoid delay with their proposals by following the acceptable solutions suggested by the WDC program.

FACT SHEET 1  Coastal Information

‘A’ line
The foreshore seawall line or ‘A line’ refers to the seaward top edge of the seawall. A seawall alignment has been established for most ocean front properties between Main Beach and Coolangatta. The seawall assists in the protection of beachside property from erosion during large storms or cyclonic conditions, and forms a ‘last line of defence’. For ocean front properties, all buildings or structures must be setback no less than 8.1 metres from the foreshore seawall line (A line).

Quay line (D)
A quay line is a boundary that defines how far foreshore structures such as pontoons, jetties etc may extend out into a waterway. Quay lines are determined by Maritime Safety Queensland.

Revetment regulation line (E)
Revetment walls are permanent structures designed to protect the embankment adjacent to a waterway. The revetment regulation line is a line that shows the acceptable position for the construction of the revetment wall. Property owners should be aware that if they determine a revetment wall is necessary to protect their property from erosion, it is the responsibility of the property owner to ensure a suitably constructed wall is built in on the revetment regulation line.

Waterfront building setback line (F)
The waterfront building setback line for a property defines how close a structure may be built to a waterway. The distance of the waterfront setback is determined by flood levels, amenity issues, and takes into account environmental values of the specific waterway. If a waterfront site does not have WDC acceptable alignments then a waterways report should be completed to establish where the waterfront building setback line should be.

Waterfront allocation area
The waterfront allocation area is a section of foreshore bound by the side property boundaries of a waterfront property. The waterfront allocation area extends into the water out to the quay line. The purpose of waterfront allocation areas is to confine the construction of waterfront structures to within an acceptable area, and to ensure the equitable use of foreshore areas. This allows each waterfront property in suitable areas to have a structure such as a pontoon or jetty. To do a waterfront allocation area search for your property, please contact Queensland Transport on 13 23 80 or via email planning.projects@transport.qld.gov.au for all enquiries.

A recent waterfront development