

## Fact sheet on sand and dredging at the Apollo Bay Harbour

Because of the complexity of sand dredging at the Apollo Bay harbour, Colac Otway Shire Council has created a more extensive fact sheet to ensure our communication on the topic is open and transparent. We acknowledge that Mother's Beach, where we are currently disposing of sand, is a popular beach for families and this situation is not ideal especially as we approach the summer tourist season. Council is committed to finding a better solution for sand disposal and we are working to develop an application for a sea dumping permit.

### **Who manages the Apollo Bay harbour?**

The Apollo Bay Harbour is managed by Council on behalf of the State Government. The operations and management of the harbour is funded by the State Government with no costs incurred by ratepayers. As part of Council's management responsibilities, the harbour entrance has to be regularly dredged of sand deposits to enable the safe entry and exit of boats.

Previously, disposal of the dredged sand has occurred in various locations including the groyne to the east of the harbour, into the sea east of the breakwater, and into the sea on the lee side (closest to the town) of the north harbour wall. Most recently, we have been piping sand at Mother's Beach.

### **Why did Council change its disposal point to Mother's Beach?**

When the new dredge was commissioned, Council was advised by the State Government that a federal sea dumping permit would be required if Council was to continue disposing of sand into the sea. Council hadn't previously had a federal permit but had always operated the harbour with coastal management consent from the State Government.

In response to this advice, Council started disposing of sand at Mother's Beach in line with the current conditions stipulated with State Government coastal management consent. We also commenced the process of obtaining a sea disposal permit from the Federal Government.

### **Why do you need a permit from both levels of government?**

There are two different permit requirements, depending on where the dredged sand is to be put. A State Government permit is required if the sand is to be disposed of on land. Both a State Government and Federal Government permit is required if the sand is to be disposed of in water - this is a requirement of the Sea Dumping Act 1983.

Council has a State Government permit, and is in the process of commissioning the necessary technical studies and reports required for obtaining a federal permit.

### **Why is the permit taking so long?**

Obtaining a permit to dispose of sand in the sea requires a significant amount of preparatory work. Several detailed technical reports are required to support a sea disposal application to the Federal Government. These include:

- A Safety and Environment Management Plan (SEMP). Council has completed this to State Government standards, and is being upgraded to Federal Government standards.
- A Sampling Analysis Plan (SAP) for sediment. Council has completed a draft.
- An Environment Management Plan (EMP). Council is due to commission this work before Christmas.

Other considerations include assessment of alternative dredge disposal locations.

In addition, it costs about \$23,500 to apply to the Federal Government for a sea disposal permit.

It is important to note that all plans, along with the permit application to the Federal Government, will be funded by the State Government, including any Council officer time to prepare them. No cost will be incurred by ratepayers.

As previously stated, at this stage Council is unable to confirm when we will receive a sea disposal permit. We aim to submit a formal application as soon as the required supporting plans are completed. Once the

application is submitted, the Federal Government then considers the application. Advice received from other ports is that the time taken for this consideration varies and can take up to 12 months. In the interim, Council will explore alternative disposal sites to Mother's Beach.

**Are ratepayers funding the fence around the sand disposal site?**

No, this fence is funded within the operational budget for the harbour.

**Why is the fence needed?**

Fencing has been installed to protect the public from the dredged sand and to prevent any safety issues. As it is unlikely that Council will obtain a federal permit to change the disposal location before the summer period, it is likely the fence will remain in place. Council apologises for the inconvenience and realises this is not ideal for the summer tourist season in Apollo Bay.

**Have you applied for an extraction licence?**

Council has not sought an extraction licence because we believe it's important to return the sand back to the environment for the health of our local beaches. By returning the sand back into the sea this reduces the environmental impact this has on the coastal environment further along the coast (heading east). The extraction and selling of sand is not in line with the current harbour management plan.

**Have you considered other options for sand disposal?**

As part of the application to the Federal Government, we are required to consider alternative options to sea disposal. One option, which includes trucking the sand to other locations along the coast is very expensive. Another option, such as pumping the sand through pipes along the main sand dune expelling either on land or out to sea, is both expensive and may require earthworks in public areas.