

Stockton Erosion

Frequently Asked Questions

September 2019



City of
Newcastle

What is the current erosion situation at Stockton?

Recent large swells at Stockton Beach in August and September 2019 have created significant erosion, shoreline recession and loss of amenity and access to the beach. Although the erosion has occurred across the entire beach, the worst hit zones are north of Mitchell Street Seawall from Stone Street to Griffith Avenue, and in front of Stockton Holiday Park to Dalby Oval.

How much sand has been lost from the beach?

City of Newcastle has been monitoring the beach using drones since August 2018, allowing us to develop 3D models and quantify sand losses.

The sand loss following an August 2019 storm event from Stone Street to Griffith Street alone is estimated at 13,000 cubic metres, resulting in a 15 metre foreshore recession, and a 2.2 metre drop in beach height.

The most recent erosion events in the southern section of the beach near the Holiday Park in September resulted in an estimated loss of 6,900 cubic metres of sand, an approximate 6 metre shoreline recession, and an approximate drop of 3 metres in beach heights.

Has City of Newcastle considered trucking sand onto the beach?

City of Newcastle has considered bringing in sand from elsewhere to rebuild the beach.

To replace the northern section of the beach from Stone Street to Griffith Street would require around 23,400 tonnes of sand, or 2,127 truck loads, with work taking around four months.

Replacing the southern section near the Holiday Park and Surf Lifesaving Club would require more than 7,400 tonnes, or 675 truck loads.

Has City of Newcastle considered sand scraping?

City of Newcastle utilises sand scraping where possible however it is not currently a viable option at Stockton due to a lack of available sand on the beach.

How much money has City of Newcastle invested into addressing erosion at Stockton Beach?

Since 2015 City of Newcastle has invested more than \$5 million in to addressing erosion at Stockton Beach, including the recent emergency works. This investment has ensured the long term future of community assets including the Surf Life Saving Club, Lexie's Café and the beach car park.

What can City of Newcastle do to address erosion at Stockton Beach?

City of Newcastle can only undertake actions at Stockton Beach which have been endorsed by the State Government. The State Government endorsed the Newcastle Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) in late 2018. This Plan provides City of Newcastle with approval to undertake short to medium term actions, but critically no long term actions to counter coastal erosion.

Under the CZMP City of Newcastle has recently undertaken emergency sandbagging at Barrie Crescent Reserve to protect properties from ongoing erosion. City of Newcastle will demolish the former childcare centre under the CZMP to prevent debris falling onto the beach and into the ocean, and undertake multi-million dollar maintenance to the northern end of Mitchell Street seawall to prevent future failure and protect local roads and homes.

What about long term solutions?

The long term solutions for erosion at Stockton Beach are being assessed under a Coastal Management Program (CMP). The CMP will include relevant research, assessments and business cases for the long term coastal management at Stockton.

Although legislation dictates the program will come into effect from 31 December 2021, City of Newcastle and the State Government are in discussions about how this CMP could be significantly brought forward. The CMP must be approved by the State Government.

Are there no more immediate options?

City of Newcastle is calling on the State Government to review legislation which currently does not allow offshore sand mining. Taking sand from offshore and using it to replenish the beach is seen as a viable and timely solution to Stockton's ongoing erosion issues. This option is supported by research by the University of NSW, which was funded by the State Government.

Is it safe to go to Stockton Beach?

City of Newcastle has closed all beach access at Stockton other than the King Street (breakwall) entrance for safety reasons. The public is advised to keep away from sand cliffs as they may be unstable, and avoid debris on the beach.

