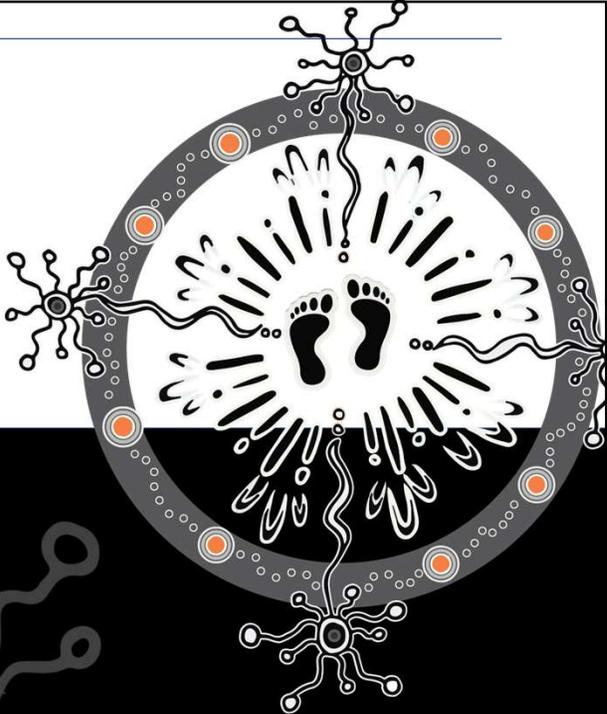


Planning and Environment

Connecting to Culture

Engaging First Nations people on coastal management programs



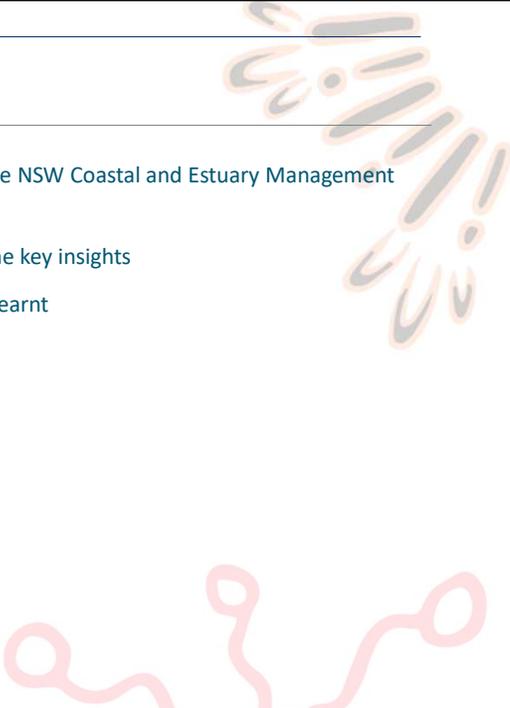
Emma Maratea, Rhelm
Andrew Williams, DPE

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Overview

- Commitments of the Future Directions Statement (FDS) for the NSW Coastal and Estuary Management Program
- Summary of FDS project survey results and key findings – some key insights
- Case studies to demonstrate recent experiences and lessons learnt
 - Eurobodalla Open Coast CMP
 - South Byron LGA Scoping Study



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FDS for the NSW Coastal and Estuary Management Program



Future Directions Statement for the NSW Coastal and Estuary Management Program



environment.nsw.gov.au



Priority 3: Supporting coordination, collaboration and engagement

Managing the coast in a way that reflects the values of the community can only be achieved through genuine collaboration and engagement in the planning process. Aboriginal people have held an intricate connection to Sea Country for tens of thousands of years. Over this time, Aboriginal people have cared for Sea Country through Indigenous knowledge systems, to ensure it remains a sustainable resource to be shared with future generations.

The NSW Government is committed to enhancing the lives of Aboriginal people through empowering local communities to inform decisions related to managing Country. In the coming five years, we will focus on increasing the level of engagement of Aboriginal communities in coastal management.

Together, the Coastal Management Act 2016 and Marine Estate Management Act 2014 set objectives and guiding principles for the planning and management of the State's coastal and marine environment. They establish an integrated and coordinated whole-of-government approach to work with local councils, industry, the community and traditional owners to protect and manage the coastal and marine environment.

The NSW Government is committed to implementing the Marine Estate Management Strategy (MEMS) to protect and enhance our waterways, coastline and estuaries. Many outputs from MEMS projects will help inform CMPs. An approach to Aboriginal engagement will be developed across the coastal zone and marine estate, to maximise collaboration.



2022

we will

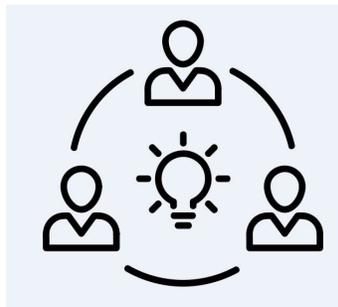
- Collaborate with relevant agencies and stakeholders to provide additional guidance on involving Aboriginal communities in coastal planning and management to reflect Aboriginal peoples' spiritual, social, customary and economic use of the coastal zone

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Role of the FDS project team

- Define the current situation about how First Nations people are engaged
- Develop recommendations to assist improve engagement and organisational capacity
- Project team draws on collective experience and perspectives
- Project team members include coastal management and community engagement practitioners



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FDS project survey

Purpose

- Ground our understanding of the current situation with 'real world' qualitative information

Approach

- Collaborative survey design with DPE Social Research Team
- Application of 'Qualtrics' and 'Q' software
- Survey designed to minimise the effort required by respondents



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Survey themes

Key themes:

1. Cultural safety and responsibility
2. Engagement skills and expertise
3. Resources and support
4. Engagement opportunities
5. Cultural intellectual property
6. Partnerships and networks



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Who responded to our survey...?

Profiling info

Sample size of 102 respondents

70% of respondents represent local government

28% NSW government and **2%** other organisations

68% of respondents selected coastal management best represents their 'day to day' work, and

54% of those have 10 or more years experience in coastal management in NSW

41% have experience in leading CMPs

46% involved in a support role

22% community engagement

32 councils and DPE staff



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What they told us...?

We have a general understanding of cultural safety

We don't all have the skills and experience to engage First Nations people

We are not confident to engage in a culturally safe way

We have limited experience of engaging

We don't feel supported when engaging with First Nations people on CMPs

First Nations communities are not well resourced to engage and this includes LALCs

We value and understand the importance of building respectful relationships

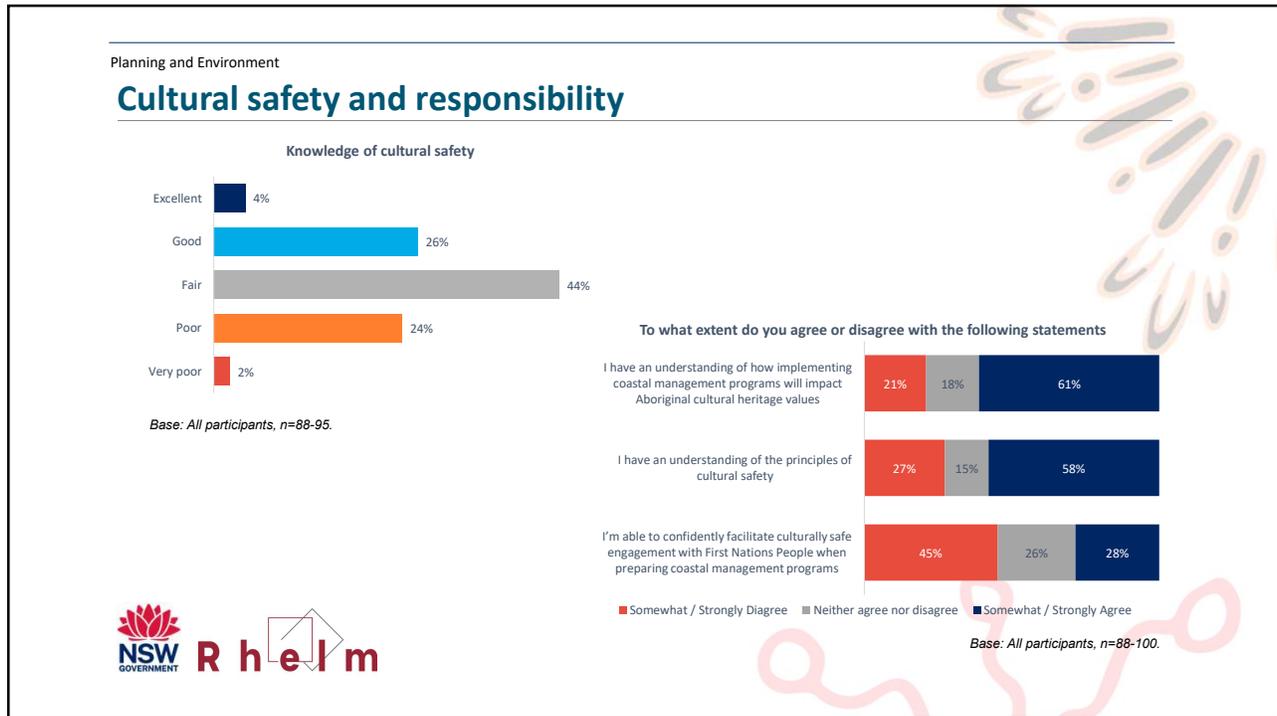
Additional resources are necessary

Establish a fee for service model

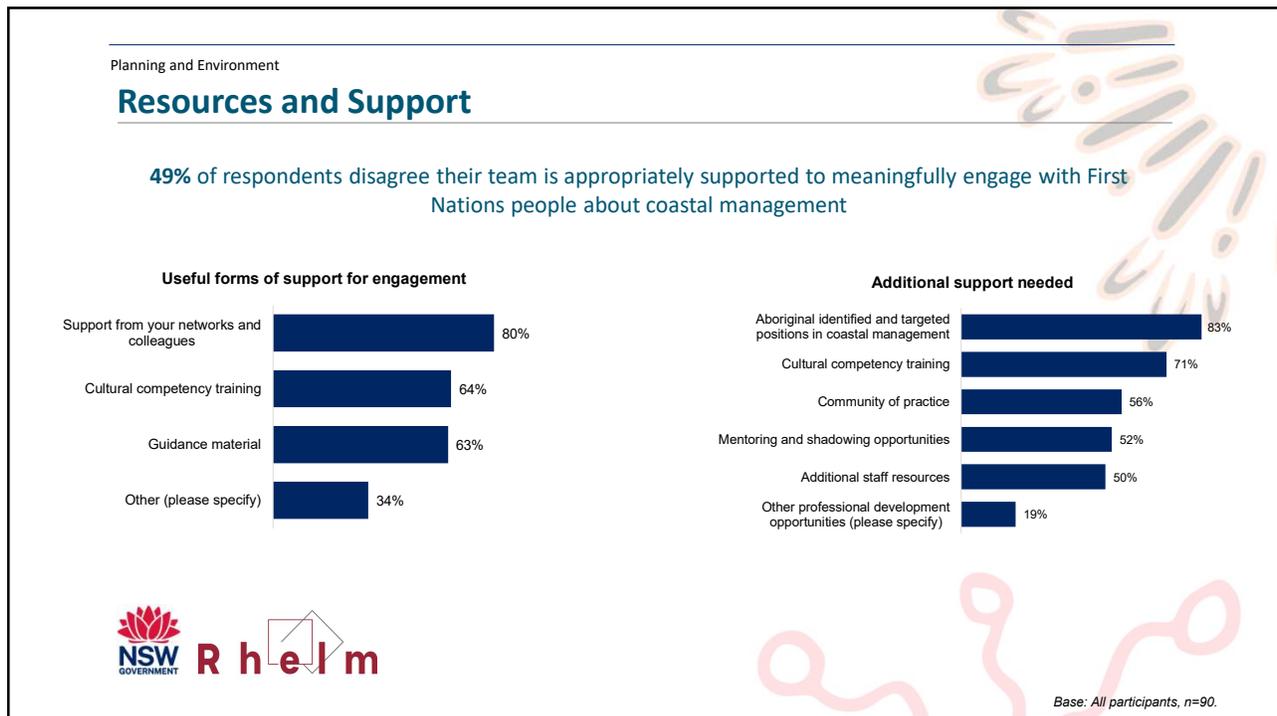
Create identified and targeted positions



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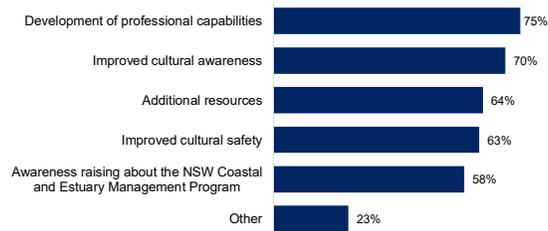
Engagement opportunities

42% of participants disagree that there are equitable and culturally safe engagement opportunities when preparing CMPs in their region.

26% agree

32% neither agree nor disagree

Needed to improve engagement opportunities



Base: All participants, n=88-95.

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Next Steps...

- Develop a series of recommendations and strategies
- Recommendations to have a focus on **enhancing cultural safety**
- Enhancing cultural safety will assist with facilitating **inclusive and respectful engagement**

Cultural safety can be defined as being about...

'Creating a safe and reciprocal environment and having a shared understanding, respect and inclusion of First Nations peoples' cultural values and perspectives'



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Recent engagement with Traditional Owners as part of CMPs



The estuaries and open coast of the southern portion of the Byron LGA, plus Belongil Estuary

CMP Scoping Study: September 2020 – July 2021

Arakwal Bumberlin people are Traditional Custodians of the land in the CMP study area, and form part of the wider Aboriginal nation known as the Bundjalung Nation

140km of beaches, headlands and foreshore of the open coast

CMP Stages 1 to 4: January 2021 – December 2022 (estimate)

The Yuin Nation are the Traditional Owners. Within the study area there are numerous community groupings and organisations including six LALCs

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Southern Byron Shire Coastline and Estuary CMP



Scoping study brief outlined the priority of the study was to better understand, value and respect the significant cultural heritage and Indigenous knowledge held by the Arakwal Bumberlin People of the Bundjalung Nation and how that can inform coastal management as part of the CMP process.

Council and DPE staff had existing relationships with key representatives of the Arakwal Corporation and more broadly with knowledge holders as part of previous collaboration and engagement. This assisted in establishing good communication early in the project.



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Southern Byron Shire Coastline and Estuary CMP

- Cultural values, locations and uses within the coastal zone
- Identify key elders and other knowledge holders who should be engaged with as part of the CMP

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Southern Byron Shire Coastline and Estuary CMP

- Additional time to provide input was provided, when requested, e.g. to allow sufficient time for discussion at quarterly board meetings
- The scoping study and CMP forward plan incorporated a portion of the CMP's budget for the reimbursement of time and capturing of knowledge through the targeted consultation with the Traditional Owners.

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Eurobodalla Open Coast CMP

Scoping Study

Consultant project team included a local person who has existing network of contacts within local Aboriginal community

Council met, in person, with key knowledge holders on Country.

Identified high level coastal management issues and values.

Identified barriers to engagement and a desire amongst all involved for ongoing engagement and opportunity for tangible input to the CMP and its delivery.

- Perception that Council has not engaged well in the past with Traditional Owners
- Distrust of Council and State Government
- Frustration at being asked for input at the end of projects
- Engagement needs to be inclusive of all people who can speak for Country – this takes time

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Eurobodalla Open Coast CMP

Stage 2 CMP

While technical studies were being undertaken – opportunity to review and rescope engagement plan

Council continued contact with contacts established during Scoping Study to build relationships and identify additional contacts

- Insufficient time within the CMP program to undertake engagement required
- Engagement methods needed to be informed by Aboriginal community members
- Council staff did not feel they had the skills or knowledge to engage meaningfully
- Council submitted a grant for a co-design process that required additional funding and time

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Eurobodalla Open Coast CMP



Stages 3 and 4 CMP



Council staff cultural awareness training

Improve / establish relationships

Collaboration on how to engage

Improved staff confidence and motivation

Tools and techniques

Co-design workshop



- Respect time and investment from community; food, transport
- Small meetings, more often, on Country
- Visual engagement materials

Outcome of initial engagement



Meet on Country

Visit important sites, discuss specific issues

Eat, meet & yarn sessions








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Key learnings from recent experience

- **Respect** the ongoing and strong connection that Traditional Owners have to Country and acknowledge the important role they play in coastal management
- **Relationships** need to be based on people not organisations. Building new relationships and improving relationships takes time but is not impossible
- **LALCs** are a good starting point, but not the end point
- **Engage early** and continuously; keep communication open and flowing
- **Persist** - often organisations are under resourced and receive numerous requests for input and engagement.
- **Ask** how engagement can be undertaken
- **Be clear** about where there is genuine opportunity for engagement outcomes to contribute to decision-making and shape outcomes
- Meaningful engagement takes **time and effort**, and often also requires additional budget
- Don't be afraid to make mistakes – **be brave**








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Questions ?



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