

PROJECT UPDATE #2

February 2026



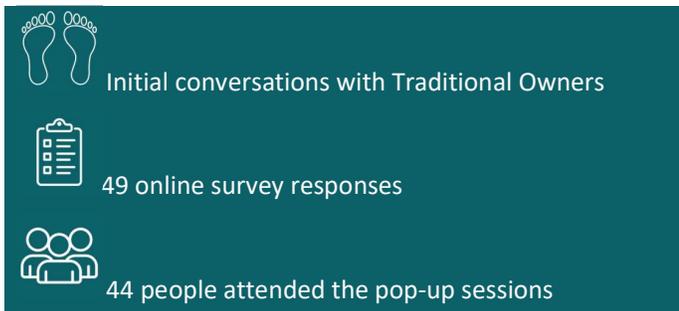
DOUGLAS SHIRE COUNCIL

Shoreline Erosion Management Plan development

Douglas Shire Council is commencing a Shoreline Erosion Management Plan (SEMP) for Four Mile Beach and Newell Beach. The Plan will explore coastal processes and develop management options to reduce the risk of coastal erosion. Information on the Shoreline Erosion Management Plan can be found on our website (<https://douglas.qld.gov.au/have-your-say-shoreline-erosion-management-plan-semp/>) which will be updated during the course of the project. Phase 2 of the project is underway, assessing coastal processes at Four Mile Beach and Newell Beach. The community feedback outlined in this project update will inform the next phases of the project.

Stakeholder engagement

We invited you to provide input on the validation of values, aspirations, and concerns related to Four Mile Beach and Newell Beach. Consultation was open from Monday 8 December 2025, to Tuesday 27 January 2026. Participants contributed their thoughts via an online submission form, email and pop-up events.



What you told us

Respondents indicated that the key values and activities at both Four Mile Beach and Newell Beach remain unchanged, underscoring the importance of maintaining these values and ensuring continued access to these activities.

Who we heard from

Of the respondents to the online survey:

- 57% live within 1km of Four Mile Beach or Newell Beach
- 56% describe themselves as a local resident of either Four Mile Beach or Newell Beach

Your key values



Maintain easy, safe access for recreation



Protect the natural environment



Preserve the unique sense of place

Key activities



Fishing



Dog walking



Exercise



Recreation



Meeting friends / family



Relaxation

Have your coastal values changed since Tropical Cyclone Jasper?

Respondents were asked, 'Have your coastal values changed since Tropical Cyclone Jasper?' 38% responded yes and below are some of the key reasons why:

- Erosion is now seen as an immediate and escalating risk, particularly to homes, infrastructure, public access and safety at Newell Beach.
- Community priorities have shifted towards urgent, practical coastal solutions.
- Increased concern about the effectiveness of beach nourishment.
- Increased erosion following TC Jasper has led to stronger community expectations for coordinated, science-based coastal management.
- Heightened awareness of climate change impacts, environmental values and long-term coastal hazard risk.

RESILIENT COAST

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Traditional Owner Engagement

Initial conversations with Traditional Owner groups in December 2025 focused on how they would like to be involved in developing the SEMP. These early discussions helped identify the best ways to engage and the next steps for holding dedicated meetings and engagement sessions.

Your concerns about Newell Beach

- Erosion is worsening, particularly at the southern end of Newell Beach near properties at Cyril Street, access points and infrastructure already impacted.
- Disruption to natural sand movement, especially concerns that relate to the sandbar at the Mossman River mouth, which the community is concerned is impacting longshore sediment transport and accelerating the erosion.
- Environmental impacts, including the loss of dune vegetation, reduced seagrass and marine life, and risks to turtle nesting sites and the nearby reef health.
- Concerns about recent sand nourishment works, including possible weed introductions.
- Need clearer information about who is responsible for decisions, how funding is being used, and need to get already endorsed plans implemented.

Your suggested coastal management solutions for Newell Beach.

- Working with natural processes where possible, including creating a more natural beach profile, improving river flow for sediment movement and strengthening dunes through vegetation where possible.
- Protect what is already helping, particularly retaining coconut trees where they appear to be holding sand and slowing erosion.
- Carefully consider temporary protection measures, such as geotextile bags, buried structures and short-term options ahead of the wet and cyclone season.
- Further consultation is required before any more beach nourishment.
- Base decisions on better data and shared knowledge, such as surveys and historical shoreline change.

Your concerns about Four Mile Beach

- Access and safety along the foreshore, including disconnected footpaths, steep or uneven beach access points and drop-off at ramps after high tides, particularly impacting DDA access.
- Ongoing erosion issues, especially at the southern end of Four Mile Beach and in areas between the Mirage and Mudlo Street, where drainage issues are also evident.
- Foreshore condition and vegetation management with concern about vegetation removal and its role in worsening erosion.

Your suggested coastal management solutions at Four Mile Beach.

- Improve foreshore access, including reinstating simple, practical solutions that have worked well in the past.
- Maintain a natural coastline, with a strong preference to avoid rock, timber and concrete walls (where possible) and to work with natural coastal processes.
- Protect and maintain foreshore vegetation, coupled with clearer penalties and enforcement where vegetation is removed.

How can I get involved?

To ensure you are kept up to date with the Resilient Coast program and the development of the Shoreline Erosion Management Plan:

- ✓ **Register** to receive regular progress updates and notifications of public meetings by going to <https://douglas.qld.gov.au/have-your-say-shoreline-erosion-management-plan-semp/> and click on the 'Register here to receive project updates' button
- ✓ **Ask Council** or their experts questions about coastal hazards or the SEMP process by emailing enquiries@douglas.qld.gov.au