

**PRESS RELEASE – COLLAROY SEAWALL – 10 Jun 2016**

**SURFRIDER WANTS TO SEE AN END TO THE STONE AGE OF COASTAL MANAGEMENT**

Surfrider Foundation Australia will continue to argue against the use of rock walls as a coastal management strategy. Sea walls cause sand to be removed from the beach and dragged out to sea.

Local Northern Beaches Branch President, Brendan Donohoe, says “Surfrider is emphatically opposed to the construction of seawalls on devastated coasts. Seawalls kill beaches. Collaroy exemplifies this.”

Surfrider has said this from its inception and Donohoe challenges deniers to take a leisurely stroll from Collaroy beach to Narrabeen at high tide next reasonable swell keeping the sea wall on your left.”

Where there is a sea wall, there is no beach now and as soon as those rocks end the beach magically reappears, if you’ve ever wondered about it, now is the time to see it with your own eyes.

“Surfrider believes beaches are sand, not rocks.”

“This not some hippie philosophy that sea walls kill beaches but rather it’s straight physics, the waves energy reflects off the hard structure backwashing sand out to sea off the beach.” he said.

We will likely see more intense storms, greater inundation of our coastline and larger erosion events with climate change and sea level rise, devastating coastal communities globally.

This is of course not just a local issue.

Surfrider National Chair Brendan Frawley says, “It’s an international issue – a global indication of places like Tuvalu that risk losing their heritage, their livelihoods and their lifestyles to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. The damage, erosion and devastation to our coastline caused by this storm are evidence on our doorstep of the global effects of climate change and issues at hand.”

“Tuvalu and other low-lying nations are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. While these nations and communities face the greatest risk, they remain the most under-resourced to prepare and recover.”

Surfrider around the world has been calling for strategic action on sea level rise for years.

“Surfrider’s been strong on our opposition to seawalls since its conception and hasn’t resiled from this position. The fact that seawalls exist is a shame. And in no way are we trying to apportion blame on the beachfront residents.” said Frawley

He continued, “Surfrider has kept its promise to the residents to not leave them in the lurch after the now famous 2002 ‘Line in the Sand’ action that saw over 3,000 shoulder to shoulder along the length of the proposed 1.1km wall along the beach.”

“Surfrider representatives have spent hundreds of hours attending meetings and lobbying all levels of government furthering the arguments that prove the worth of sand nourishment. Indeed they have secured thousands of cubic metres of sand from excavations for apartment blocks in the area that would otherwise have been sold and has had it delivered to the beach free of charge.

We are very proud of actions in attempting to achieve a long term sustainable solution for this beautiful world class asset.”

Donohoe noted that “this NSW Government is currently acquiring over 400 homes in the greater Sydney Region for various infrastructure projects but for some reason this public asset, the magnificent world famous 3km strip of once beach, apparently deserves a solution that we have proved beyond reasonable doubt has no long term future.

We keep doing the same things on the coast and for some reason expect a different outcome.”

Donohoe says “This issue is beyond the tipping point. Band-aid approaches have buggered this beach and we need long-term strategies that include nourishment and buyback. The community is sick to death of footing the bill for seawalls because once you start a seawall, you never finish it.”

“These storms are unpredictable and seemingly getting worse. We have had the strongest ever recorded cyclone the Pacific has seen smash Fiji earlier this year and the beautiful old Coogee SLSC that has happily survived for over 100 years cop more damage from this last East Coast Low than it ever has before...it sits on a natural seawall called a cliff about 10 feet above the surf but this time even that couldn’t save it.”

Surfrider Foundation Australia believes that Australia must develop and implement a coastal planning strategy now. Australia needs a policy that directly tackles these issues to protect our coastal communities by implementing strategies to minimise risk to storm effects, including the retreat of future developments from the coastline, beach nourishment and at-risk coastal home buyback.

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