



# CRAIG BAUMANN MP

## MEMBER FOR PORT STEPHENS

---

### MEDIA RELEASE

---

Friday 4th November 2011

### **Public urged to have a say on Halifax/Fly Point sand build up**

The public is being invited to comment on a report detailing options for the ongoing sand accumulation problem at Halifax Point and Fly Point, Member for Port Stephens Craig Baumann said today.

“Fly and Halifax Points are widely regarded as the most popular coastal dive locations in the country, with local operators estimating the sites are worth approximately \$14 million per year to the local economy,” Mr Baumann said.

“Over several years, Halifax Point and Fly Point have accumulated unprecedented sand build-up which was inundating environmentally significant sponge beds in a Marine Park Sanctuary Zone.

“The sand inundation of the Halifax Point dive site has wiped out 70 per cent of the habitat at this location.

“Fly Point is also suffering from some sand inundation however sand has only covered about 10 per cent of this area.

“At the request of Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, a technical report on underlying causes of the sand movement at Fly Point and Halifax Point and possible solutions has been undertaken.

“The consultant’s report has identified actions which, if implemented, may help safeguard these sites from further damage,” Mr Baumann said.

These include:

- Detailed design and environmental assessment for sub-aerial sand removal of approximately 57,000m<sup>3</sup> from the western end of Shoal Bay beach and from Little Bay beach
- Detailed design and environmental impact assessment for subaqueous dredging of approximately 80,000m<sup>3</sup> at Fly Point and the lobe adjacent to Nelson Head
- Ongoing monitoring for a period of at least two years

Mr Baumann said the required actions detailed in the report are valued at \$3.62 million initially, with ongoing maintenance works thereafter.

“These actions will help reduce the amount of sand that could move to underwater habitats at Halifax Park and Fly Point in any future storm event, but ongoing removal and relocation work may be required to deal with the natural processes that cause sand to accumulate at the western end of Shoal Bay.”

Between May 2008 and May 2009, around 10,000m<sup>3</sup> of sand was lost from the eastern end of Shoal Bay, mainly through storms, while over the past 40 years it has been observed that the beach has receded 22 metres.

Fly Point and Halifax Point have high biodiversity values that have been recognised for many years, with the area declared an Aquatic Reserve since 1983, then a sanctuary zone as part of the Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park in 2007.

The public is being invited to make comment on the report before a decision is made.

The report is available on the Marine Parks Authority website [www.mpa.nsw.gov.au/halifax.html](http://www.mpa.nsw.gov.au/halifax.html)