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Community reference group to help design coastal hazard strategy

The appointment of a Community Reference Group to assist with the implementation of Council's Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy (CHAS) will ensure project involvement at a community level and input from numerous residents with knowledge of the region's coastline.

Council, at its Ordinary Meeting today, accepted the nominations of 18 residents from across the region as members of its CHAS Community Reference Group.

Environment portfolio spokesman Cr Bill Trevor said the practice of establishing similar reference groups in the past had proven invaluable for Council in ensuring a community layer existed within the consultative framework.

"In instances like this when we are dealing with historical facts in relation to the dynamics of our coastline, where better to get reliable information and to test proposed solutions than with people holding first-hand knowledge through living within the project area."

Cr Trevor said he was delighted to see that five women were also a part of the new CRG. "The balance and perspective women provide within any committee organisation is well-recognised and respected," he said

"The CRG members come from locations across the region including Moore Park Beach, Innes Park, Elliott Heads, Bargara, Burnett Heads, Mon Repos and Woodgate Beach.

"There are seven representatives from Woodgate Beach and Walkers Point. Areas of Woodgate Beach are also currently involved as a trial site in a Shoreline Erosion Management Plan (SEMP) project and the findings from this study will easily transpose into the broader CHAS project."

Under the CRG Terms of Reference members of the group are required to assist in informing the study while also relaying information through their respective networks to keep the community updated.

"These people are at the grass roots level and are able to access community thoughts and ideas and bring them to the discussion table. Their personal interest and desire to assist their community with this study is commendable," said Cr Trevor.

"In broad terms the CHAS will explore the expectation that many coastal communities will face significant erosion and possible inundation as sea levels rise in the coming decades.

"We need to understand the vulnerabilities and risks to our exposed areas and develop strategies that will manage or mitigate this should the expectation become a reality."

The CHAS Community Reference Group was selected following advertising through newspapers, radio and online during May calling for expressions of interest.

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