



Ballina CoastCare opposes Ocean Pool – January 2020

Ballina Coastcare has been restoring vegetation on the dunes from Lighthouse Beach to Skennar's Head for more than 30 years. Our constitution commits us to the "protection and conservation of foreshores" and to "defend the integrity of Ballina's coastal environment".

Ballina Coastcare cannot support the proposed Shelly Beach Ocean Pool for the following reasons:

1. Indigenous ownership recognition. The proposed site is culturally sensitive, but Indigenous and broad community consultation has been limited. This is especially important while Native Title and Land Use Agreements for the entire Shire are being negotiated.
2. No comprehensive environmental impact statement has been completed. Drilling through rock bed (or pouring cement on top) will damage this marine environment. Beyond the immediate rock platform, fish and sea mammals will be harmed by construction pollutants, noise and vibrations. The site supports 49 bird species including the endangered Australian Pied Oyster Catcher. Other vulnerable local and migrating species forage and roost on the site. Osprey and Brahmani Kites hunt fish in the shallows. The site's limited Marine Ecology Report indicates that sand scour will create the need for significant heavy vehicle traffic across the intertidal zone (for frequent sand removal). This will damage intertidal species (crabs, pipis and other small crustaceans) and potentially damage the underlying cobblefield. Construction will also damage significant whelk and cunjevoi populations.
3. The pool will reduce opportunities for nature education. One of only 2 accessible rock platforms in the Shire, Shelly Beach is safer and more used by primary schools and families with young children, who can interact with anemone, starfish, crabs, barnacles and other critters. A 50x20m pool with a legally required high fence, will remove much of that opportunity.
4. Increased traffic and infrastructure demand (to upgrade roads, footpaths, disabled access, bike tracks, toilets, showers, parking, and waste removal) will increase use of dune pathways and impact green buffer zones.
5. Climate change impacts have not been considered. Ballina's Coastal Zone Management Plan recognises that storm surge inundation, sea-level rise and erosion may result in a 20-metre landward movement of our shoreline by 2050 and warns that rock platforms may be subject to altered inundation.
6. High maintenance costs could be better applied to environmental objectives. All ocean pools have high maintenance and insurance costs. These funds may be better used in our Shire to support ongoing efforts by Ballina Coastcare and similar organisations.

Neil Denison,
Ballina Coastcare President.