



Hon Tony Kelly MLC
Minister for Planning
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister for Lands
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Leader of the House in the Legislative Council

MEDIA RELEASE

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GOVERNMENT RELEASES LANDMARK COASTAL PLANNING GUIDELINE

The NSW Government has introduced landmark guidelines to help councils and State agencies consider the impact of sea level rise when planning for the NSW coast's expected 600,000 new residents by 2036.

Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, today released the *NSW Coastal Planning Guideline: Adapting to Sea Level Rise*, which covers the State's 1,500 kilometre coastline.

"These guidelines illustrate the leadership and certainty the NSW Government is taking on planning for our coastline, including sea level rise," the Minister said.

"It is vital to properly plan for sea level rise to ensure homes are not built too close to hazard areas."

The guidelines have been finalised following a formal consultation period which attracted 90 submissions and encourage a risk-based approach to land use planning and development assessment in light of projected sea level rise impacts along coastal NSW, including low-lying land adjacent to tidal waterways such as coastal lakes and estuaries.

They urge councils to:

- Consider applications on land which could be affected by future coastal changes or sea level rise by 2100 against strict criteria;
- This criteria may include designing homes to be able to be relocated away from or above risk areas, or be subject to time-limited consents. If a proposal cannot be adapted to sea level rise, a council could decide to refuse development consent;
- Avoid intensifying land-use (such as by rezoning land from rural to urban) in areas subject to coastal risks unless the impacts of sea level rise can be effectively managed; and
- Identify "sea level rise investigation areas" in areas where coastal risk mapping is not yet in place, to help inform decisions on rezoning requests.

The release of the guidelines follows last year's publication of the NSW Sea Level Rise Policy Statement that sets out the Government's sea level rise planning benchmarks.

They plan for a 40 centimetre rise by 2050 and 90 centimetres by 2100. These benchmarks are based on the most credible national and international projections of sea level rise as they relate to the NSW coast.

Mr Kelly said release of these documents was a landmark moment because specific sea level rise figures are now written into the State's planning system.

"The guidelines will be subject to review if future reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change or CSIRO indicate significant changes to projected sea level rise are expected," the Minister said.

Australian Coastal Society President and University of Sydney Emeritus Professor, Bruce Thom, applauded the initiative.

"This is the best example in Australia of what local planners can achieve," Professor Thom said.

"The guidelines offer landowners greater clarity in making decisions about future developments in areas at risk to sea level rise under climate change conditions."