FLUME MAKES WAVES FOR SEA LEVEL RISE SCIENCE

Planning Minister Rob Stokes last night opened Australia’s largest wave flume at Manly Vale’s Water Research Laboratory, which will be used to improve scientific understanding of coastal response to possible sea level rise.

The wave flume is a water-filled pool 44 metres long and 1.6 metres deep with a paddle at one end to generate waves. The facility is used to recreate waves’ movement through the water and simulate their effect on the coastline in real life.

Mr Stokes said the flume will play a key role in the laboratory’s research into future impacts on our shoreline and how communities and properties could be affected.

“The flume and the laboratory will be vital for researching the future effects of climate change, erosion, and particularly sea level rise, which has generated a great deal of angst in different parts of our community,” Mr Stokes said.

“Current projections of coastal impacts resulting from climate change rely on the scientifically crude “Bruun Rule” which can create very cautious assumptions and lead to some coastal areas being sterilised when this may not be necessary.

“Research at this facility is taking a closer look at how the shoreline responds to sea level rise, which will help generate more reliable future projections on what areas are vulnerable to coastal hazards.”

The NSW Government is undertaking a comprehensive reform agenda for coastal management and planning, with work focused on delivering a modern and coherent coastal management framework to respond to current needs and future challenges.

This includes the creation of a new Coastal Management Act, and providing improved technical advice to local councils.

The flume is named after Associate Professor Doug Foster, a foundation staff member of the laboratory when UNSW established it in 1959. Described by his peers as “the father of coastal engineering in Australia”, Associate Professor Foster made a substantial contribution to help educate, supervise and inspire a generation of coastal engineering professionals across the country.