

## Built Infrastructure | Stormwater Management Strategy – Community Consultation Summary

### Summary

Community consultation for the Draft Stormwater Management Strategy ran for a period of 5 weeks, ending on the 14 May 2021. Consultation consisted of:

- Have Your Say survey and website
- Email queries and responses
- Social media posts
- Targeted briefings with members of Organisation Sunshine Coast Association of Residents (OSCAR), Sunshine Coast Environment Council (SCEC) and Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA)

The responses provided useful insights into the priorities and concerns of the Sunshine Coast community, and highlighted areas where improvements to the Draft Strategy were required. The Draft Strategy was updated to reflect the relevant outcomes of community consultation.

### Have Your Say Survey Results

The Have Your Say survey received 106 responses. The survey questions were reviewed following the workshop with Council to better reflect the recently adopted Community Engagement Policy. The purpose of this review was to condense the survey to increase the rate of completion and focus on questions where feedback would be most useful. Questions that had been used to inform rather than engage were removed.

The survey questions included a mix of open-ended, rating scale and multiple-choice questions.

Healthy waterways was consistently rated as the most important priority for stormwater management based on the survey responses. This outcome reflects the high value that Sunshine Coast residents place on the environment.

#### Question 1

The key objectives for stormwater management were rated by the community in terms of importance as:

1. Objective 2 – Protected and healthy (83% rated as very important).
2. Objective 3 – Coordinated and well managed (71% rated as very important).
3. Objective 1 – Resilient and smart (68% rated as very important).

#### Question 2

A range of topics were provided as examples of what should be the focus of future community education material. The top five topics were:

1. How property owners and the community can contribute to healthier waterways and a more resilient region.
2. Stormwater harvesting.
3. Litter prevention.

4. How Council manages the stormwater network.
5. Erosion and sediment control.

These results will be used to inform the direction of future communications relating to stormwater management.

### Question 3

In order of importance, the outcomes that were considered most desirable with the delivery of new stormwater infrastructure were rated as being:

1. Waterway health
2. Public health and safety
3. Flood prevention
4. Improved flood resilience
5. Utilising stormwater as a resource
6. Rectifying nuisance drainage issues
7. Climate change adaptation
8. Landscape and amenity benefits
9. Low maintenance requirements
10. Affordability
11. Minimal disruption to the community during construction

These results will be used to inform the prioritisation framework that will then be used to rate capital works projects for stormwater management.

### Open-ended Questions

Two open-ended questions provided respondents an opportunity to provide their feedback on how they thought stormwater management in the region could be improved, and if they had any suggestions for the Draft Strategy.

The topics that were raised most frequently included:

- Maintenance of stormwater assets
- Stormwater and rainwater harvesting
- Community education and engagement
- Planning laws and development assessment
- Floodplain storage preservation
- Standards of service in existing urban areas
- Improved amenity provided by natural stormwater treatment measures
- Water quality
- Funding concerns
- Litter reduction
- Overland flow or drainage concerns
- Prioritisation of stormwater works
- Minimising impervious surfaces
- Increasing stormwater treatment

## Summary of Survey Feedback

Most issues raised in the survey responses were already covered in the Draft Strategy. A few respondents raised stormwater management issues that had significantly impacted on their quality of life, highlighting how important effective stormwater management is to the ongoing liveability and sustainability of the region. It was particularly concerning that several respondents were experiencing stormwater management issues in recently developed greenfield and infill areas. Changes to the Planning Scheme and implementation of the Stormwater Management Strategy will help to ensure these issues are rectified and avoided in the future.

Many of the responses highlighted areas where increased communication may be required, to help explain why some decisions are made, and how stormwater networks are intended to function. For example, it is not practical to install nets on stormwater outlets to prevent litter from entering waterways, as blockage of the outlets can increase the risk of stormwater flooding and they can become a source of dissolved pollutants. Similarly, it is not possible to retain all flows on a site, as runoff occurs even in natural environments.

## Email Responses

A total of 14 email responses were received. This included detailed submissions from:

- Unitywater
- OSCAR
- SCEC
- Pacific Paradise Progress Association
- Stormwater Shepherds
- Coolum and North Shore Coast Care
- Fiona Simpson MP (State Member for Maroochydore)

The email responses covered a range of issues, reflecting the different experiences with stormwater management across the region. The topics that were raised most frequently included:

- Maintenance of stormwater assets
- Standards of service in existing urban areas
- Community education and engagement
- Infill development
- Lawful point of discharge
- Stormwater treatment
- Planning laws and development assessment
- Water quality
- Overland flow or drainage concerns
- Improved auditing of private assets
- Funding concerns
- Minimising impervious surfaces
- Improving compliance
- Stormwater and rainwater harvesting
- Prioritisation of stormwater works

In general, the responses were supportive of the Draft Strategy, and the need for such a document on the Sunshine Coast.

- “OSCAR and its member groups congratulates SCRC on the development of the Draft Storm Water Management Strategy. The strategy and actions in the main are comprehensive, detailed and forward looking. They are also consistent with other SCRC key strategic documents.”
- “SCEC supports the purpose of the strategy and further considers the draft strategy to provide a comprehensive and well-considered articulation and underpinning technical explanation of Council’s priorities and policy direction in relation to managing the impacts, opportunities and fundamentals of sustainable stormwater management now and into the future.”
- “Unitywater supports and commends Council on the overall vision, objectives and strategic direction laid out in the strategy. There is strong alignment with a total water cycle approach including reference to an integrated network and planning, and seeking outcomes for community wellbeing, resilience, sustainability and waterway health.”

There was some criticism that the Strategy was an engineer’s document, and that there needed to be greater focus on waterway and ecosystem health. Changes were made where possible, including one of the key objectives, to highlight the importance of these outcomes to stormwater management.

## Summary of Email Feedback

Most issues raised in the email responses were already addressed in the Draft Strategy. Similar to the survey, the email responses highlighted areas where further clarification was needed in the document and improved communication may be necessary in the future.

Concerns were raised around standards of service in existing urban areas and the potential impact of infill development, particularly when filling is required to achieve appropriate regional flood immunity. Concerns around the role of private certifiers were also raised. Additional detail was therefore provided in the document, in order to help clarify the intent of the Strategy. For example, development in existing urban areas needs to account for existing overland flow behaviour and stormwater risks, as well as those that may arise from the impact of climate change. Development should not rely on future upgrades of the stormwater network, such as installing kerb and channel, as these may not be feasible or scheduled to be delivered in the near future.

Protection and enhancement of overland flow paths to ensure that urban densification occurs in a water sensitive manner is one of the driving principles of the Strategy and will inform the development of the new Planning Scheme.

Several submissions raised concerns around the lack of discussion relating to funding requirements.

## Social Media Posts

Social media posts about different stormwater management topics were used to encourage the community to provide feedback. A total of 941 engagements were made with the social media posts. The most popular post topics were:

- Passive stormwater harvesting
- CCTV stormwater surveys
- Stormwater pipe relining
- Litter prevention

## Targeted Briefings

Targeted briefings provided a summary of the Draft Strategy to members of SCEC, UDIA and OSCAR. These briefings provided opportunities for discussion and informed the email feedback provided by these groups.

# Revisions to Draft Strategy

Revisions to the Draft Strategy were made to address shortfalls in communication that were highlighted by the feedback. These included:

- Including more information on rainwater tanks.
- A paragraph to discuss floodplain storage preservation in relation to stormwater management.
- Additional information on ageing infrastructure and standards of service in existing urban areas.
- Additional information on how stormwater modelling and a prioritisation framework will be used in the capital works prioritisation process, and how this will be used to inform when upgrades in existing urban areas are required.
- Further information was provided around how development in all urban areas is required to account for existing stormwater risks as well as those that may occur due to climate change, severe storms or if blockages of the stormwater network occur. Development is not to rely on future upgrades as these may not be feasible or scheduled for delivery.

The survey and email responses highlighted confusion around how urban densification could be delivered while minimising impacts to existing residents and the environment. An additional figure will be added to the Stormwater Management Strategy to explain how urban densification can protect overland flow paths, reduce the urban heat effect, minimise hydrological impacts and improve waterway health if it is conducted in a water sensitive manner.

Concerns were raised around notifying property owners about public infrastructure stormwater works that may impact their property. The requirement to consult with owners of affected property was therefore added.

The OSCAR submission highlighted several issues with the priority of some of the detailed actions, which were not picked up during the editing process. These issues were rectified.

Further clarification was provided around the definition of natural stormwater treatment.

The second key objective was slightly modified to include “ecosystems”, as stormwater management is not just about protecting the health of human communities.

Strategic direction 3.2 was reworded as “Sustainable levels and standards of service that are fit for purpose”, as the previously used word “appropriate” was considered to be open to misinterpretation.

Changes were made to policy positions. The revised policy positions are:

- 1.7 e) Opportunities to enhance overland flow are explored in order to improve the performance of existing stormwater networks, and should not be constrained to existing Council owned or managed land.
- 1.7 f) The use of Council owned land for the purpose of improving the performance of the existing stormwater network must not compromise the primary function or ecological value of the land.
- 3.16 c) The performance of proprietary products is validated through a national protocol for the evaluation of stormwater quality improvement devices.

Revisions and additions to the detailed actions in Part B were also made as a result of the survey and email responses. Most of these actions related to:

- Ongoing maintenance and compliance activities.
- Litter management.
- Processes to improve customer experience with stormwater enquiries
- Fostering community participation and collaboration in catchment management.