

7 November 2018

<b>Submission</b>	Application for Land Use Consent to upgrade an existing coastal defence structure - seawall
<b>Applicant</b>	Buffalo Beach Homeowners Association
<b>Consent Authority</b>	Thames Coromandel District Council - <b>RMA/2017/89</b> Waikato Regional Council – <b>AUTH138330.01.01</b>
<b>Submitters</b>	Roger & Gill Blake and Bill & Sue Garland Property owners - 131 Buffalo Beach Road Whitianga
<b>Legal Descriptor</b>	Lot 4 – DPS 7107

131 Buffalo Beach Rd has been a family owned and much-loved holiday home since the 1950's and is now being enjoyed by the 5<sup>th</sup> generation. As owners we wish for this use to continue and for the property to retain its integrity and value.

We **support** the application for resource consent to retain and upgrade the existing seawall that has served its intended purpose very well over the last 10 years.

Coastal erosion is a prevalent reality affecting numerous and various property owners from private, to local and central government bodies. Managing the effects of erosion whilst balancing the needs and desires of communities is challenging and numerous and varying approaches have been trialled throughout NZ and the world.

Managed re-treat is a concept that is continually expounded as the panacea to coastal erosion. However, the reality, logistically, socially and financially is much more complex and an almost impossible scenario for communities to come to grips with. When taking into consideration land that is affected, such as, vital infrastructure, including roads, sewage, power, utility networks, reserves, marginal strips and last and by no means least, private property. Current protection approaches, with various seawall designs, are much more sensible, pragmatic and manageable and are now being considered as the most realistic outcome to manage the erosion process and associated effects.

Whilst the science and engineering behind coastal erosion process and solutions is abundant, we do not intend to repeat any of this in our submission as this has been covered in our application. Rather we would like to highlight some key issues for consideration.

The key considerations and points of our submission are;

- *Protecting (all) property from continued degradation caused by coastal erosion.*
  - Generally speaking, once land is taken away on masse by the ocean, it is gone and reclamation is not considered a feasible option for private property in coastal environments. There is strong evidence to suggest that the sand along Buffalo Beach follows a long-term cycle of accretion followed by erosion and that the net balance of sand moves within the dynamic Mercury Bay sediment transport loop. Evidence has shown that the dune system and shoreline has moved in and out by up

to 15m from the 1950's until the present day. This complex system has been studied but is still not that well understood and may play a much bigger role than climate change and sea level rise. So in fact if the cycle holds true the beach will replenish.

- *Treating all landowners in a fair and equitable manner.*
  - Utility network providers along with TLA are continually installing erosion protection structures under “emergency works” to protect infrastructure, yet the same process is much more time consuming, costly and difficult for private property owners.
- *Consideration has been given by TCDC to include a walkway along the top of the seawall to provide all tide access along the foreshore.*
  - At present during high tide some sections of the seawall do meet the water, but only for short periods. Our concern with a topside wall walkway is twofold. Firstly having a walking along the top of the wall seriously encroaches on the privacy of existing properties as the wall is at a higher level and a fishbowl effect will be created with the public able to look down and into houses. Secondly a walkway along the top will only serve to encourage people to access the foreshore walkway during large swell and storm events putting life at risk. The current access points are well located, and it is only a minor inconvenience to leave the beach and use the existing pathway alongside the road at times of high tide
- *Applying the most cost-effective protection option that provides longevity.*
  - A number of protection options have been trialled along Buffalo Beach and have included both soft and hard structures., most of these at the expense of private landowners. They have included;
    - Beach nourishment with sand. The sand is now on the tidal delta within Mercury Bay.
    - Whole trees with branches attached to trap sand. Washed away in easterly storm to become a hazard to boating.
    - Mass Block wall design. This was the initial wall which was undermined and fell outwards in the first storms of early 2000. Later to be reinforced with rock revetment which has proven to be the most effective option.

The existing seawall now in place along the frontages of the Buffalo Beach Homeowners Association properties has proved itself capable of withstanding significant storm events. The current combination of mass block and rock revetment work has proved the most effective option and has now survived numerous significant easterly storms including, ex tropical cyclones with significant storm surges and swell heights. The property frontages now have stable vegetation and the public have largely accepted the structure with very few issues. We request that there is minimal disturbance to the existing structure in order to minimise the visual and physical disturbance of the beach frontage and keep costs to a minimum.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our views, we look forward to a positive and sensible outcome.

**Roger & Gill Blake and Bill and Sue Garland**