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20 March 2020

The Hon Mark McGowan MLA
Premier of Western Australia
Level 5 Dumas House
2 Havelock Street
West Perth WA 6005

Dear Premier McGowan,

RE: Coronavirus Stimulus Package

I am writing to advise that the Australian Coastal Councils Association has written to Prime Minister Scott Morrison to propose that a portion of the coronavirus stimulus package announced by the Australian Government is allocated to local councils to implement urgently-required coastal adaptation works, such as seawalls, hard rock groynes, offshore artificial reefs and other coastal protection works. On behalf of the Association we invite the West Australian Government to support this initiative.

These adaptation works are vital, given that the Australian coastal zone is one of the nation's most highly valued social, economic and environmental assets. It is home to the state capitals and to more than 85% of Australia's population. Most of the nation's industrial and commercial assets are located in coastal areas and coastal communities face the challenge of keeping pace with some of the highest population rates in the nation.

The coastal zone plays a pivotal role in the life of the nation, but it is under increasing threat from coastal hazards such as widespread coastal erosion, inundation and more frequent and severe extreme weather events.

These challenges are impacting on coastal areas in every state and placing at risk the high biodiversity and scenic values of the coastal zone. At the moment, the task of dealing with these risks along Australia's 36,000kms of coastline is left almost entirely to local councils. The scale of the challenge is immense and requires a coordinated national approach with the participation and collaboration of all three levels of government. It also requires national leadership and national funding.

Our Association is aware there is an urgent need for such coastal works right around Australia and that most coastal councils have a project which is shovel-ready, requiring only the necessary funding in order to proceed. It is also important to point out that the works to be implemented are labour-intensive, which would make them eminently suitable for funding under the coronavirus stimulus package while generating much-needed economic stimulus to local communities.

In the national interest we call on the Australian Government to allocate sufficient funding under the stimulus package to enable these works to be undertaken, thereby generating significant economic, environmental and social benefits to the communities of coastal Australia. Our Association calls for the West Australian Government to support this initiative.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Sharon Cadwallader'.

Sharon Cadwallader

Chair, Australian Coastal Councils Association and Councillor, Ballina Shire Council

Steve Douglas

West Australian representative, Australian Coastal Councils Association
Councillor, City of Greater Geraldton