

Media Release:

Australians Speak Out for the Coast: Coastal Survey Preliminary Results

20 May 2008

A National Coastal Act and supporting Coastal Policy with national leadership to effectively develop strategic direction for Australia's coast. Education, education and more education on all matters impacting our coastal environments. These were some of the suggestions that respondents offered in the recent MCCN Coastal Strategy Survey 2008, which gave Australians an opportunity to express a view on the future conservation and sustainability of our coasts and marine environments.

The MCCN Coastal Survey received nearly 700 responses to its survey which was sent to its participants on-line and via [MCCN's WAVES Magazine Vol 14, Number 1 2008](#).

"With 85% of Australia's population living near the coast, MCCN conducted the survey to assess what professional coastal managers and everyday Australians thought about emerging issues such as the future management of our precious and diminishing coastal and marine resources, the possible impacts of climate change on our coastal areas and water issues as they pertain to our coast", said Fiona Mandelc, National Coordinator of the Marine Coastal Community Network, who conducted the recent survey.

"Just as the 2020 summit brought together invited Australians to help shape a long term strategy for the nation's future, MCCN has pursued this 'national conversation' with its participants who have an interest specifically in our marine and coastal environments", said Ms Mandelc.

At the recent 2020 Summit, the MCCN Coastal Survey asked people to list tasks they thought should be prioritised by the new Australian Government to address population, sustainability, climate change and water issues as they pertain to our coast.

The responses to this question were overwhelming with no shortage of BIG ideas for the Coast*, such as:

- Develop an Australian Oceans Act
- Set development limits and maintain them with 100 year timeframes not 20
- Develop coastal policy and planning, including legislation
- Stop developing wet lands and low lying coastal areas and pull development further away from the coastal edge
- Put in place limits to growth on the coast - absolute no-go areas urgently needed
- Control of development adjacent to sensitive marine areas
- Population planning should be resource/capacity based rather than demand based
- Encourage smaller families, to reduce population and therefore coastal impact, particularly by empowering women
- Appropriate coastal development in line with scientific recommendations

- Fund research into developing 'liveable' high density, sustainable housing to stop the sprawl putting pressure on the coast and waterways.
- Investment in sustainable energy
- Reduce price of locally produced food and increase price on heavily transported food

A summary of some of the significant preliminary findings for coastal management from the survey included the following:

- Approximately 80% of respondents said there should be a national coastal act and supporting coastal policy to strengthen the role of the Commonwealth Government in regulating coastal management in Australia.
- Approximately 90% respondents have indicated they think: “national leadership was required to effectively develop strategic direction for Australia’s coast”.
- When asked “Which sphere of government do you think should have the most regulatory control for managing the Australian coast”, about half thought the Commonwealth, approx 30% said State, approx 10% said Local and 12% said Regional organisations.

*Note: a summary of the preliminary responses to this question is available as a download on MCCN’s website [view online](#). An analysis of MCCN Coastal Survey results will be published in the next edition of [MCCN's Waves magazine](#).

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MCCN Background:

The Marine Coastal Community Network (MCCN) is a national, not-for-profit network. It aims to inform, engage, and connect community interests, government and industry to facilitate positive outcomes for the conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity and ecological processes, and the ecologically sustainable use of Australia’s marine and coastal environments.

There are currently over 10,000 organisations, groups and individuals who use the services of the Network, covering government agencies, industry and the community sector.

The MCCN’s Coastal Survey ran from early April – May 18 2008. The survey offered Australians an opportunity to express a view on the future conservation and sustainability of our coasts and marine environments. In total MCCN received nearly 700 responses on-line and via [MCCN's WAVES Magazine Vol 14, Number 1 2008](#).

MCCN’s WAVES Magazines is a cutting edge, science-based, topical review of marine & coastal issues published three times a year, with contributions from some of Australia’s leading coastal and marine scientists. It aims to help connect people interested in marine and coastal science, Government policy and actions with informed commentary and a professional level of information on some of the key issues of the day. It is free by online subscription: <http://www.mccn.org.au/subscribe>

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