



Coffs Harbour Boat Ramp Sand Management

Community Update

July 2025



Transport for NSW acknowledges the Gumbaynggirr people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and pays respect to Elders past and present.

Transport for NSW is committed to maintaining safe, reliable access at the Coffs Harbour Boat Ramp.

The Coffs Harbour boat ramp sits in an area where complex coastal conditions result in significant sand movement. Transport for NSW (Transport) understands that regular sand maintenance or intervention is essential to keep the Coffs Harbour Boat Ramp accessible for boaters.

What work have we done?

In November 2022 a Sand Management Plan (SMP) was developed to improve access to the boat ramp area. We have implemented a number of initiatives of that plan including:

- **April 2023:** Implementing the Sand Pump Trial (SPT). Four temporary jet pumps were installed at the boat ramp to transfer sand from the boat ramp channel to a dewatering area.
- **January 2024:** A groyne was built west of the boat ramp to redirect sand away from the inner ramp area towards the sand jet pumps.
- **April 2024:** Gallows Beach Sand Transfer System, a pipeline installed to allow sand to be returned to the natural environment.
- **August 2024:** A fifth jet pump was installed to support the SPT and protect the channel in certain weather/wave conditions.
- **Cutter Suction Dredge:** Used as needed to support the Sand Pump Trial and reach areas the jet pumps couldn't.

A 12-month trial of the sand pumping system ended in April 2024. The system has remained in operation while we carried out a review of the system and explored what was best for long term management.

A successful trial, informed by data

The installation of five underwater jet pumps marked a significant step forward in our approach to managing sand movement. The trial demonstrated the pumps' ability to shift large volumes of sand rapidly and responsively and their use has helped us maintain access through periods of significant coastal activity.

In parallel, we've undertaken comprehensive environmental and operational monitoring — including hydrographic surveys, wave and tide data, and seabed level analysis — to build a complete picture of how best to manage sand in and around the boat ramp.

This data-driven evaluation, undertaken in collaboration with leading coastal engineers Royal Haskoning DHV, has informed a whole-of-harbour sand management strategy. As a result, we're evolving our approach to ensure greater flexibility, improved consistency, and long-term sustainability.

What is changing and why?

While the sand pumps proved effective during the trial phase (extracting over 18,500m³ over the trial period) we're now transitioning to the use of a mobile cutter suction dredge. This is a more agile and targeted approach which provides even greater adaptability and reliability, particularly around the more dynamic and variable conditions of the boat ramp area.



Location of work area



When is work happening?

We'll begin the safe removal of the trial pumps from the harbour in July, weather permitting. The work will take approximately three weeks.

The boat ramp, channel and carpark will remain open and accessible throughout the work.

Divers will be in the water, and minor navigation adjustments may be in place. Divers will remove the jet pumps, so we urge all vessel operators in the area to be extra cautious while this work is being completed.

Looking ahead

A small mobile cutter suction dredge will now be used for regular maintenance of the boat ramp channel and basin.

Sand transfer to Gallows Beach will continue, ensuring sand remains in the active coastal system. A larger dredging project is also being planned for the outer harbour and entrance to further enhance access and safety.

Contact us



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