

7 December 2017

MEDIA RELEASE

PEAK COMMUNITY GROUP SUPPORTS MAROOCHY RIVER GEOBAG DECISION

OSCAR fully supports the decision by the SCRC at Thursday's Council meeting to approve the preferred groyne field replacement option of geobag to geobag for the Maroochy River Estuary.

Thanks to a strong media and community campaign at the beginning of the year, the January 2017 Council Meeting staff recommendation that would have inevitably resulted in the replacement of the existing geobags with a rock groyne was deferred in favour of a commitment to undertake a more appropriate community consultation process before making a decision.

To the credit of the Council the consultation process they developed, and adopted, has proved a good one and is an excellent model for how genuine community engagement should be undertaken.

OSCAR participated in the consultation process as a member of the Maroochy River Estuary Consultative Group (MRECG) which the Council established. Susie Chapman, who represented OSCAR, commented that "the Group had received presentations that were well researched and informative from experts and community groups. The MRECG had explored the new geo fabric textiles currently available, and given the original and existing bags were the first experiment of its kind, there is optimism that the design has become more efficient and effective in terms of durability and stability."

"The MRECG members were unanimous in their appreciation that the Council had listened to the strong call from the community to follow the geobag option. The written and oral presentations from a range of individuals, groups and viewpoints were very well received by the group, and demonstrated an informed and engaged community that was very passionate about the Maroochy River in general and its relatively natural mouth in particular".

OSCAR President Greg Smith commended "the work of the MRECG and the Sunshine Coast Regional Council's willingness to engage the community to come up with a solution that was, in the end, unanimously adopted by the Councillors at Thursday's meeting."

Mr Smith further commented that "It is good to see a democratic system working well with the Council accepting the option recommended by the MRECG. It is hoped that this approach will be adopted in future with other major Council driven initiatives."

ENDS

For further information/comment:

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