

BEACH WRACK (SEAGRASS) REMOVAL

Council Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Beach Wrack (Seagrass) Removal Policy is to provide a consistent approach to the Community and also to ensure Council operates within the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

2. Scope

This policy applies to beach wrack on all beaches within the City of Holdfast Bay.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Council Members	Adopt a policy outlining Council's position with regards to the removal of beach wrack.
Chief Executive Officer and General Manager Assets and Delivery	Assist in the administration of the policy.
Manager Engineering	Assist in the administration of the policy.
Team Leader Environment & Coast	Accountable for maintaining, reviewing and updating the policy.

4. Policy Statement

Beach wrack is a naturally occurring process and is an essential component of coastal ecosystems. It provides a source of recycled nutrients for living seagrass beds, provides shelter and food for a variety of organisms and acts as a barrier for coastal erosion. Its abundance is largely based upon wave and tide action, thus making it highly seasonally variable. Build-ups and natural removal of the wrack can occur very rapidly.

As well as having significant environmental impacts, such as providing habitat for invertebrates upon which shorebirds (e.g. hooded plovers) feed, chemicals from washed up seaweeds are used in many products such as toothpaste, flavoured milk, fertiliser and aquaculture food. As a result commercial harvesting of seaweed from beaches is a small industry in temperate Australia. Commercial harvesting in South Australia is regulated by PIRSA and is generally restricted to Victoria, Tasmania and south-eastern South Australia.

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The Beach Wrack (Seagrass) Removal policy affirms Council's position in not supporting the removal of beach wrack from its section of the metropolitan Adelaide coast.

4.1 This position is taken for the following reasons:

- Increased risk of beach erosion
- Vehicular damage to coastal ecosystems
- Depletion and degradation of near-shore marine environment and
- Loss of micro-habitats within beach wrack
- Aesthetic, nuisance, safety, risk management concerns surrounding seagrass removal process.

4.2 Exceptions to this policy:

May include the removal of waste matter and litter caught up in the beach wrack for reasons of public health and safety. Seagrass may be shifted from some areas for reasons of accessibility, but every attempt should be made to retain the material within the coastal ecological system. In cases where seagrass needs to be removed for accessibility or safety, Council must work with the Coast and Marine Branch of the Department for Environment and Water to ensure that the removal strategy is sustainable and does not negatively impact the surrounding environment and its inhabitants.

5. Definitions

Key term or acronym	Definition
Beach Wrack	The accumulated piles of seaweed, seagrass, and terrestrial plants and animal remains that wash ashore naturally and is found at the high tide line. Wrack within the City of Holdfast Bay is mostly composed of seagrass leaves, from offshore seagrass beds, which are broken off and transported by natural processes such as the tides, wind and waves. Marine and land-based debris are also commonly found amongst beach wrack.

6. Administration Use Only

Reference Number:	Document Set ID: 4825644
Strategic Alignment:	<p>Council's vision for 2050+ is, in part, to create "a welcoming and healthy place for all in South Australia's most sustainable city".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We carefully manage our resources for the benefit of future generations while maintaining our quality of life.

	- We preserve resources and minimise our individual and collective environmental footprint.
Strategic Risk:	Poor or ineffective management of the impacts of climate and environmental change
Responsible Officer(s):	General Manager Assets & Delivery Manager Engineering Team Leader Environment & Coast
First Issued / Approved:	25/09/2007
Last Issued / Approved: Minutes Date and Council Resolution Number:	09/06/2020 (C090620/1925 – August 2023)
Last Reviewed:	26/09/24 approved by SLT in the new template
Next Review Date:	26/09/27
Applicable Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1999</i>
Related Policies:	Environment Strategy
Other Reference Documents:	Coastline Factsheet No. 38 (2017). What is beach wrack? Coast Protection Board.