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## 1. PREAMBLE

### 1.1 Background

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.

### 1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a consistent approach to the Community and also to ensure Council operates within the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

### 1.3 Scope

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

### 1.4 Definitions

Beach Wrack refers to 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 off shore seagrass beds, which are broken off and transported by

# BEACH WRACK (SEAGRASS) REMOVAL POLICY

natural processes such as the tides, wind and waves. Marine and land-based debris are also commonly found amongst beach wrack.

## 1.5 Strategic Reference

Environment: Protecting Biodiversity

Environment: Building an environmentally resilient city

Environment: Fostering an environmentally connected community

## 2. PRINCIPLES

2.1 The City of Holdfast Bay does not support the removal of beach wrack from its section of the metropolitan Adelaide coast for the following reasons:

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

2.2 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 of Environment and Water to ensure that the removal strategy is sustainable and does not negatively impact the surrounding environment and its inhabitants.

## 3. REFERENCES

### 3.1 Legislation

- *Local Government Act 1999*

### 3.2 Other References

Coastline Factsheet No. 38 (2017). What is beach wrack? Coast Protection Board.