

Sand dunes

FACT SHEET #2

Council is developing a long-term strategy to help manage coastal erosion and flooding by sea water (known as coastal hazards). This will assist us to understand current and future coastal hazards and the impacts on our communities. One way you can do your bit is by protecting our sand dunes.

Sand dunes are the coastline's natural defence against coastal hazards.

What are sand dunes?

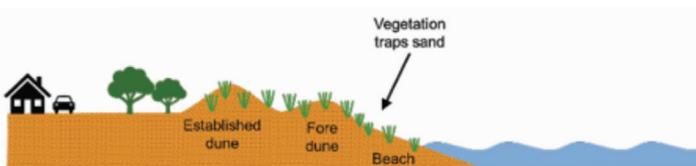
Sand dunes can be very fragile and are an essential part of the coastline.

Sand dunes are created when sand is blown inland from the beach, forming small hills. These hills can become covered by different types of plants. Their roots work together to trap sand and keep the dune stable over time.

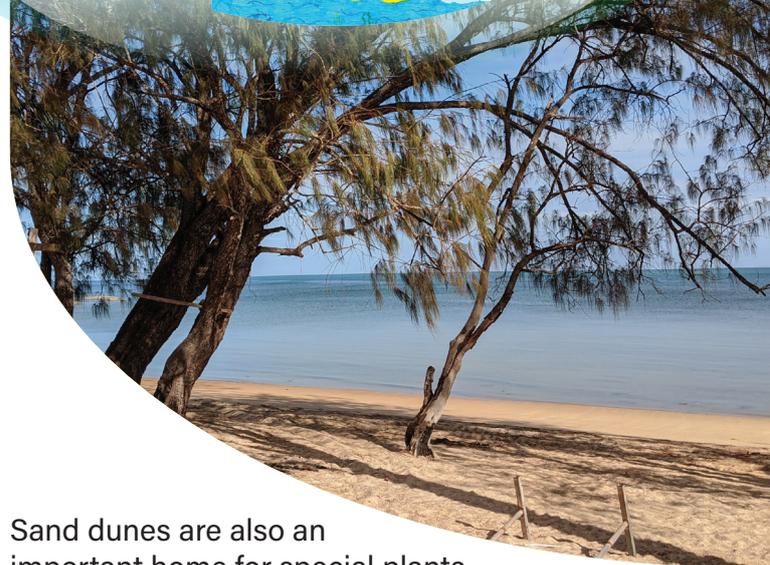
Why are sand dunes important?

Our coastlines and sand dunes are always changing as wind, tide and waves move the sand. Erosion and flooding can occur during storms and very big king tides.

In a large storm, sand dunes provide a protective barrier to the land behind. Sand is eroded from the dunes, but will re-build again afterwards. Native vines and grasses help to stabilise the dunes and larger trees help block big winds.



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Sand dunes are also an important home for special plants and animals. Shorebirds feed and nest in the dunes and crabs bury into the sand. Sea turtles also lay their eggs in the sand dunes.

Why do we need to protect sand dunes?

Even though sand dunes act as a natural barrier, they are very sensitive to certain activities such as 4WDing, fires, weeds and pests. People trampling the sand dunes can also kill plants leaving the fragile dunes unstable and exposed. Once this happens, strong winds and waves can eat away the dunes and remove the sand from the beach. This can also make it harder for the dunes to rebuild.

Many important cultural sites of significance such as very old burial grounds and cemeteries are also located on the dunes and will be damaged forever if driven over with cars or used as camping areas.



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How can we care for sand dunes?

Sand dunes are critical for a healthy and safe beach, and they provide benefits to both us and the environment.

Some tips for caring for sand dunes:



Only access the beach using marked and dedicated tracks through the sand dunes instead of walking over dune vegetation.



Don't drive on the dunes. Keep cars on the hard sand below the high tide line or behind the dunes. Don't camp on the fore dunes. Stay behind the dunes and remove all rubbish when you go.

If we protect and look after our sand dunes, they will also protect us.



Only plant native or local plants on or around the dunes. These plants can out-compete native plants that help to keep the dune stable. Instead we can plant native dune grasses and tree seedlings.



Leave large pieces of dead wood on the dunes, do not remove to light fires. Fallen trees and driftwood also play a role in stabilising the sand dune and creating homes for small animals.



For more information about Council's Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy go to:

nparc.engagementhub.com.au/coastlines

<http://www.qcoast2100.com.au>