

Research reveals paralysis of leadership in NSW coastal zone management

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Concerns about the future impact of climate change have paralysed management of the coastal zone in New South Wales according to a paper published in the Australian National University journal *Agenda*. Researchers from Macquarie University's Risk Frontiers state that Byron Bay has become a flash point for a collision between local politics, environmental ideology and property rights.

"This pre-emptive focus on future climate change has allowed both sides of politics to defer solutions for present coastal management issues," says Associate Professor in Climate and Coastal Risk Ian Goodwin.

"Much of the leadership paralysis that has occurred has not just been

based on ideological differences but on a lack of knowledge of natural sand supply, transport and wave climate."

The *Agenda* article covers the Risk Frontiers team's contributions from a scientific and policy perspective, including:

- Analysis of the underlying drivers of persistent erosion trends
- Policy outlines of recent and historical planning instruments and studies
- A proposed case for medium term solutions, where landowners and policy makers can arrive at a compromise.

"Parts of the present coastline may well need to be abandoned," says lead author Dr Roche of Risk Frontiers, "as certain areas become impractical and too expensive to protect from [climate change](#). However, that time is not yet here, and a visionary approach balancing both environmental needs and private property protection is needed now, as we move into more frequent La Nina conditions."

"To date there have been no announcements on the next stage of coastal reform for permanent [coastal protection](#) works, two and a half years after the election of the Coalition in NSW, which vigorously opposed the regime established by Labor and the Greens whilst in opposition."

More information: epress.anu.edu.au/titles/agenda-20-number-1-2013

Provided by Macquarie University

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