



Adelaide beachfront housing 'facing erosion risks' like those at Collaroy, Sydney

891 ABC Adelaide

Updated Wed 8 Jun 2016, 2:20pm



PHOTO: Storm damage has left little access to West Beach in Adelaide. (Supplied: City of Charles Sturt)

Adelaide coastal residents are being warned some could face the same risk from storms and beach erosion as Sydney's northern beaches are currently facing.

"The councils and the Government know where the hazard lines are on the South Australian coast and they need to ensure that any new development is well behind those hazard lines so you don't have scenes like Collaroy happening on the Adelaide coast," Professor Andrew Short told 891 ABC Adelaide.

Professor Short, from the school of geosciences at the University of Sydney, said protecting vulnerable coastal housing was an expensive undertaking.

"Basically on the Adelaide coast, like Collaroy, the property lines went too close to the shoreline. That was exacerbated by the sand movement along the beach, leading to the problems we are seeing today," he said.

"The Adelaide metropolitan coast has been a problem since they allowed shacks to build on the beach and then they were replaced by expensive mini-mansions."

He said there were ongoing high costs in Adelaide to move sand, which drifted north, back to beaches further south, either via a pipeline or carting it by the truckload.

"It's very expensive and the community needs to decide just where it wants to put its dollars in terms of the management of that section of coast," he said.

A long-time Tennyson resident in Adelaide's north-west suburbs, Eddie, told 891 ABC Adelaide he could recall a massive storm during the 1960s having washed away many of the coastal dunes which had since been restored and now had houses on them.

"Some of those houses have got [property] rights right down to the water [but] there's not many of those left. The council has actually put sand in front of those houses as a precaution," he said.



PHOTO: At Tennyson, only sand replenishment keeps some coastal housing safe from high tide and storms. (ABC News)

Coastal buyback one option

Professor Short said one option to end the risk to current housing would be to buy back the most vulnerable properties.

He said Australians generally received more support than coastal residents overseas could expect.

"In the UK, if your house falls into the ocean you get nothing. In California, you have to pay for the cost of removal of debris," he said.

Recent storms and high seas eroded coastal areas including West Beach in Adelaide, where the local surf life saving club is in early discussions about shifting from its current site because the beach is disappearing.

"It's changed where we do our patrols, it's changed how we do our training, it's had a bit impact on the club. We just have to move along to where there is some beach," club president Peter Zuill said.

The club said it often had problems getting its equipment to a surf patrol outpost at nearby Holdfast Shores caravan park because sometimes there was no sand left to drive along.

Many of the access paths and steps to the beach also are blocked off because of severe erosion.

The Adelaide Living Beaches Project, a government program involving sand replenishment, said its current work was restoring some of the sand lost at West Beach.



PHOTO: Wide, sandy beaches such as at Henley Beach have disappeared at high tide recently. (ABC News)

Topics: environmental-management, environmental-impact, environment, urban-development-and-planning, adelaide-5000, sa, henley-beach-5022, tennyson-5022, west-beach-5024

First posted Wed 8 Jun 2016, 12:34pm