

MyCoast NSW Study

Fact Sheet I: Community perceptions of coastal hazards

What are the hazards?

Various locations along the coast of New South Wales (NSW) are presently subject to amenity loss and infrastructure damage associated with erosion and inundation resulting from severe coastal storms. The continued occurrence of these storm events, as well as anticipated sea level rise, will only enhance the extent and cost of coastal erosion damage and lead to greater inundation of coastal zones throughout NSW in the future, particularly in low-lying estuarine areas.

About the MyCoast NSW Study

An important aspect of building community resiliency and preparedness to coastal erosion and inundation is knowing what coastal communities presently understand and perceive about these hazards and how these hazards will affect their interaction(s) with, and use of, the coast in the future. The MyCoast NSW Study took place in 2017-2018 with the aim to provide an evidence-based information platform to assist local governments and coastal management professionals in the future development of suitable and effective educational strategies and programs. The ultimate goal was to help improve the ability of NSW coastal communities to adapt sustainably to the risk of coastal erosion and inundation.

Key Findings

Sea Level Rise & Coastal Storms

- 15% of coastal users and 25% of accommodation businesses don't think/are unsure that sea level rise is occurring
- 50% of coastal users and 38% of coastal accommodation businesses think sea level rise will impact them directly
- >65% of coastal users think insurance companies should cover costs after a massive coastal storm

Coastal Hazard Experience

- ~40% of surveyed coastal accommodation businesses were affected by erosion/inundation with 32% of these events occurring once a year
- ~30% of the public don't associate storm surges with coastal inundation; 50% don't identify tidal influences with inundation

Community Engagement

- 33% of surveyed coastal management professionals think previous attempts at community engagement were ineffective
- Differences exist between perceived 'best communication mediums' and 'mediums previously used' by coastal management professionals
- 15% of coastal users have never seen any information about erosion; 24% have never seen any information about inundation
- Significant differences between what the public need to know and want to know



Future directions

The MyCoast NSW Study was broad in nature, both in terms of geographic data collection (NSW coast-wide) and subject matter: hazard understanding, risk perception, understanding and preference of coastal management options and sources of learned information. There are a number of ways that similar studies in the future could be conducted to build upon knowledge of coastal communities' understandings and perceptions, detailed in Figure 1.

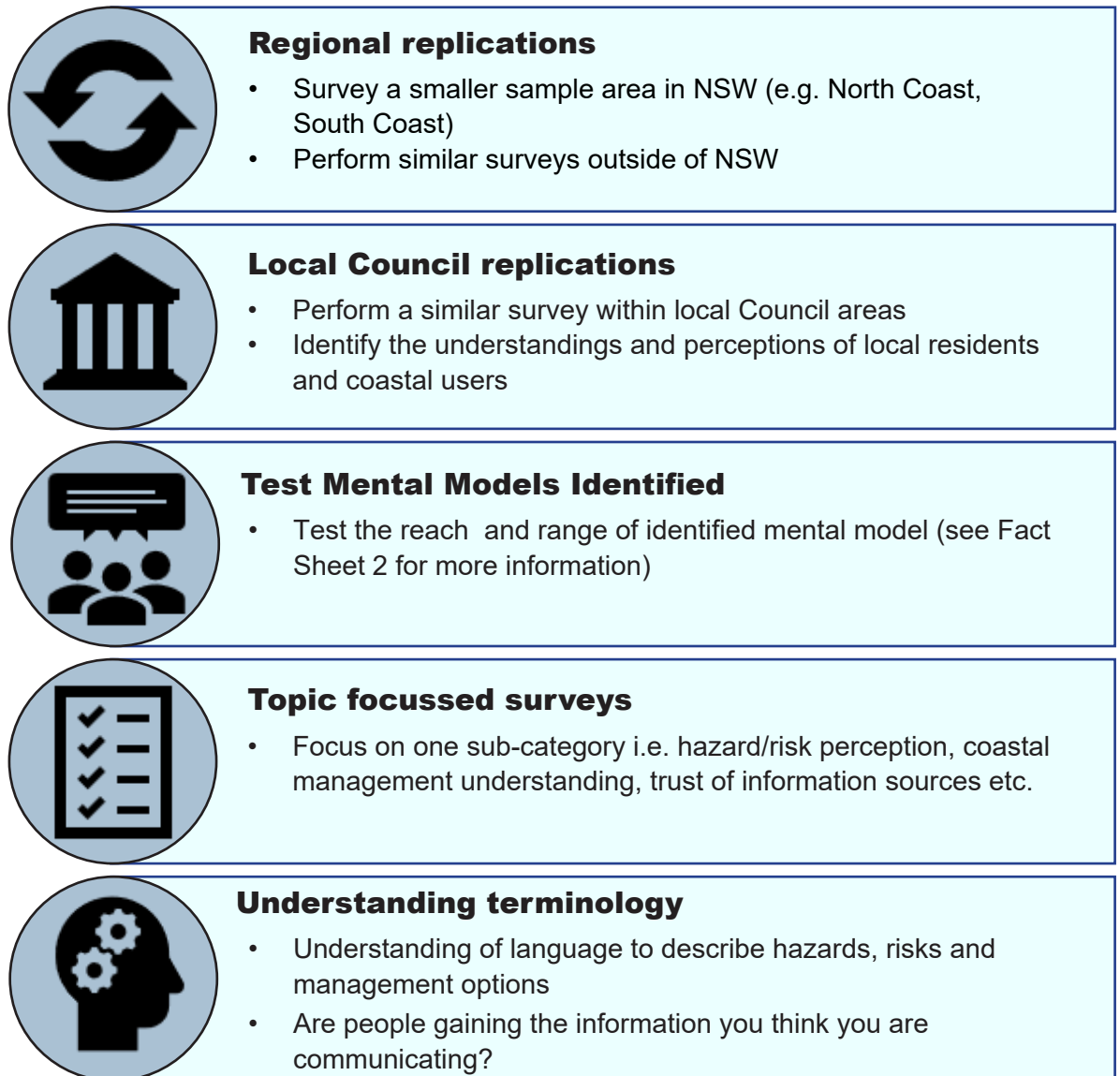


Figure 1. Possible future directions for further study, as identified in the MyCoast NSW Study.

The full My Coast Report and other Fact Sheets and resources can be found at:
www.bees.unsw.edu.au/nsw-my-coast-study

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