



TUROSS ESTUARY & COILA LAKE

ESTUARY PROCESSES STUDY

VOLUME 1 - REPORT



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January 2001

SE6045-001 Rev 3

Foreword

Estuaries, their immediate catchments and associated wetlands are of immense environmental value in addition to providing places for a wide range of active and passive recreational activities.

The Tuross Estuary provides habitat for a wide diversity of aquatic and terrestrial organisms. The high visual amenity of the area attracts tourists and the Lake, river and many back channels are popular spots for both commercial and recreational fishermen.

Many of the uses of the estuary are in direct conflict with one another. Increased pressure to further develop the area conflicts with the need to conserve the ecological health of the estuary. Many human uses are also in conflict with each other.

The increasingly intensive use of estuaries and their catchments for a range of activities has generally degraded the estuarine environment. The major impacts have been deterioration of water quality, loss of mangrove and seagrass habitats, siltation, and loss of ecological diversity.

This Estuary Processes Study has been undertaken in accordance with the New South Wales Government's Estuary Management Policy as the third stage in a process to formulate an Estuary Management Plan which addresses resource planning and management on a catchment basis.

While the overall objectives of the Policy are to achieve integrated, responsible and ecologically sustainable use of the State's estuaries, the purpose of this Processes Study is to define the various estuarine processes of the Tuross Estuary and the interactions between them. The Study also focuses on key issues identified through community consultation.

Overview

The Estuary Management Policy is one of a suite of natural resource management policies being implemented by the NSW Government using the principles of total catchment management and ecologically sustainable development. A specific objective of this policy is to encourage preparation of long term management plans for each of the State's estuaries with the aim of achieving integrated, balanced, responsible and ecologically sustainable use.

The process by which the policy seeks to develop and implement estuary management plans is as follows:

- formation of an Estuary Management Committee;
- compilation of existing data;
- Estuary Processes Study;
- Estuary Management Study;
- draft Estuary Management Plan;
- draft Plan review;
- Plan adoption and implementation; and
- ongoing Plan review and improvement.

The Tuross and Coila Lakes Estuary Management Committee was set up by The Council of the Shire of Eurobodalla ("Council") in October 1993 for the purpose of preparing a management plan. This study, the Tuross Estuary and Coila Lakes Estuary Processes Study, constitutes the third stage in the implementation process.

The aim of this study is to provide an understanding of the interaction of the various estuarine processes with the characteristics of the drainage basins and the anthropogenic influences at work within the catchments. This understanding of processes is then used to assess the current ecosystem health and identify the cause of the issues threatening ecological, social and economic values held by the community for the Tuross and Coila systems.

This study should provide sufficient information to form the basis for the development of management options in the Estuary Management Study and finally assist in the formulation and implementation of the Estuary Management Plan.

To obtain a copy of the two books (A4 text and A3 diagrams) that comprise this report enquire with either the Estuary Project Officer at Eurobodalla Shire Council or any member of the Tuross Estuary Management Committee.