

Policy

Oxley Cove Canal Estate Flood Debris Removal

Version First Draft

Adopted by Council at its meeting on XXX

Minute No: XXX

Division:	Community and Natural Resources Division
Section:	Natural Resource Management
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Introduction:

In times of flood and after high flows in the upper catchment, large amounts of woody debris and rubbish are transported down the Tweed River and washed into the Oxley Cove canal estate under the influence of wind and river currents. Debris is trapped and concentrated in a number of locations throughout the canal system.

Debris can form large and very dense rafts which obstruct vessel access and the ability to use canal beaches. Large logs are often stranded which require significant manpower to remove.

Due to tides and changes in wind direction, debris may move around within the canal system, some re-entering the river, but most re-stranding on beaches.

Council receives a significant number of calls for assistance from waterfront property owners who wish to free their foreshores from flood debris.

This policy sets out when and how debris will be removed from canal foreshores.

This policy will allow Council staff to provide affected residents with clear information on the level of service which will be provided in the removal of flood debris.

Rationale for debris removal:

Council will remove debris when a flood or other high flow event results in an accumulation of significant amounts of debris.

Debris is removed for the following reasons:

- To maintain the amenity of foreshores
- To allow reasonable navigational access to the waterways and foreshore
- To allow reasonable recreational access to beaches for residents

A campaign to remove debris will be commenced within 1 week following a major event, depending on the availability of staff. It must be recognised that following large floods there will be a large number of urgent jobs to attend to, throughout the Shire.

Residents should be aware that their property boundary extends 2 metres (on average) beyond their canal revetment wall. As such, it is the responsibility of property owners to undertake any maintenance in this area, beyond that which Council deems acceptable, at their own expense.

Methods of debris removal:

- Debris is removed by Council staff by hand using a small boat.
- Debris is transported to a location where it is loaded onto trucks and transported to landfill.
- On occasions when severe debris accumulations are present, a commercial vessel, excavators and bob-cats can be used.
- Access to the canal system to undertake this work is very restricted.
- Access restrictions and the existence of pontoons makes extensive use of machinery impossible, increases the entrapment of debris and increases safety risk to staff collecting debris.
- Occasionally a clean up campaign will be halted for a number of days to allow high tides and wind to either remove or re-concentrate debris.

Residents can assist by:

- Collecting and stacking large debris on foreshores where it can be more efficiently removed by Council staff.
- Removing large debris from deep water around pontoons and stacking it on the foreshore.
- If residents rake beaches clean and push debris into the canal, it may be taken out of the canal by wind and tide. However, it must be recognised that in many cases this debris will simply become stranded on another resident's foreshore.

Standard of service provided:

- It is impossible to remove all debris from the canal system, and debris will not be collected from the undeveloped south eastern foreshore.
- The objective of a clean up will be to remove the majority of large debris (sticks, branches etc approximately 1 metre and above) which is causing a significant problem to access as described in section 2.
- Council will not attempt to remove all small sticks and debris moving around the canal system under the influence of tide and wind.
- Rubbish will be targeted.
- Council will not collect piles of small debris (small sticks, leaves, grass etc) raked into mounds and left on beaches and above the high tide line by residents. This type of material may be bagged by residents and left on the footpath for Council collection.
- Council will collect bagged debris left on the foot path, two weeks after the commencement of a canal clean-up.