



TWEED
SHIRE COUNCIL

Policy

Oxley Cove Canal Estate Flood Debris Removal

Version 1.0

Adopted by Council at its meeting on Tuesday 15 March 2011

Minute No: 143

Division:
Section:
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Community and Natural Resources
Natural Resource Management

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1.0 Introduction:

In times of flood and after high flows in the upper catchment, large amounts of woody debris, vegetation 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. The smell of rotting vegetation is a severe nuisance for some residents. 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.

2.0 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. Small amounts of debris in isolated locations, for example affecting a single property, will not be removed.

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.

3.0 Methods of debris removal:

- Debris is removed by Council staff and contractors by hand and transported to collection points in a boat.
- Debris is transported to a location where it is loaded onto trucks and transported to landfill.
- Excavators and bob-cats are used to load trucks, and to mechanically clean a small portion of accessible foreshore.
- Access to the canal system to undertake this work is very restricted, and usually creates impacts on private property.
- Access restrictions and the existence of pontoons makes extensive use of machinery impossible, increases the entrapment of debris and increases safety risk to staff and residents collecting debris.
- In most clean-ups, Council staff require access through private property.
- 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.

Council receives numerous requests from residents asking what they can or should do to assist in debris removal. Council does not request or encourage residents to assist in flood debris removal from public waterways. The following information is supplied for residents electing to undertake debris removal activities on their own property.

- Collecting and stacking large debris on foreshores will make its removal by Council staff more efficient.
- Removing debris entangled in private pontoons and stacking it on the foreshore will make its removal by Council staff more efficient.
- 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. Please be aware of wind and tide and possible impacts on neighbours when raking beaches clean.

4.0 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 and amenity 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. However, following completion of a major clean up, if required, a follow up will be made to recover significant accumulations of debris which are re-concentrated in problem areas.
- Rubbish will be targeted, as will dense rafts of vegetation such as waterweeds.
- Council will collect piles of debris voluntarily collected by residents and left above the high tide line. This does not include returning several times to recover increasingly small volumes of small sticks etc which are raked up after each tide.
- Council will collect bagged debris voluntarily collected by residents and left on the foreshore.

