The Entrance Channel Dredging Program 2026

Dredging to support flood preparedness and reduce flood impacts in the Tuggerah Lakes Estuary

What are we doing?

The commencement of the dredging project follows Council's June 2025 Council meeting resolution to allocate $1.2 million to fund dredging to support flood preparedness and reduce flood impacts in the Tuggerah Lakes Estuary.

Council commenced dredging works at The Entrance Channel on 16 February 2026. The program is scheduled to continue until mid-May and has the following objectives:

- realign and widen the channel
- provide sand for beach nourishment
- and improve access around Karagi Spit and the reserve carpark

These works will also support migratory Little Tern habitat by widening the area used by these threatened species in breeding season.

While dredging is only one part of broader flood preparedness measures, it responds to strong community interest and forms part of Council's ongoing commitment to managing the Tuggerah Lakes estuary.

For community safety, Karagi Reserve carpark will be closed from Friday 13 February until mid-May when the program wraps up. Picnic Point boat ramp will be used from Tuesday 17 February to support the program and will remain open to the public during this time.

As works progress:

please stay clear even when dredge is not in operation

please keep personal safety front-of-mind and remain behind any barriers Council crews have in place.

Where are we dredging in 2026?

The dredging program will focus on The Entrance Channel, targeting the sand shoals between the beach sand berm and The Entrance Bridge where the channel will be realigned and widened. You will also notice activity around Karagi Spit and the Karagi Reserve carpark area, where access improvements through sand nourishment will take place.

View preliminary map (Please note, this map is accurate as of 19 February 2026 and is subject to change.)

When does dredging start?

The dredging program will begin in 16 February, with site preparation and access changes occurring just before works commence.

Key dates:

Friday 13 February – Initial movement and activity will be visible around the Karagi Reserve carpark

Friday 13 February – Karagi Reserve carpark closes for the duration of the works

Monday 16 February – Dredging contractor team begins setting up on site

Mid May 2026 – Works are expected to be completed and the site reopened

How we are managing environmental harm

Council is committed to protecting the ecological health of the estuary. To undertake dredging Council must gain the necessary approvals from the NSW Government to ensure the operations are undertaken in the most environmentally friendly manner and that measures are put in place to prevent environmental harm.

These approvals include an Environment Protection Licence 3200 (EPL3200) issued by the NSW Environmental Protection Authority (NSW EPA) under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 (POEO Act). One of the conditions of the licence is to monitor water quality during dredging activities to ensure there is no negative impact on the environment.

Councils EPL 3200 stipulates that water quality monitoring is to occur daily between 1 hour and 6 hours of the dredge commencing and is be sampled 50 metres downstream from dredge (EPA Point 1), as well as 50 metres from the discharge to water site or beach nourishment site (EPA Point 3). These samples are not to exceed the concentration limits specified in the following table:

POLLUTANT	SAMPLING METHOD	LIMIT
Potential Hydrogen (pH)	Probe	6.5-8.5
Turbidity (NTUs)	Probe	22 NTUs

Water quality monitoring data (EPL3200)

Please find latest monitoring data from 2026 dredging program in the below table.

Date Sample	Dredge Start Time	Sample Time EPA Point 1	Sample Time EPA Point 3	Water Quality Monitoring EPA Point 1		Water Quality Monitoring EPA Point 3		Date Obtained
				pH	NTUs	pH	NTUs	
21/4/2026	7:00am	9:10am	N/A No discharge	7.9	3.0	N/A	N/A	21/4/2026
20/4/2026	7:32am	9:39am	N/A No discharge	8.0	3.0	N/A	N/A	20/4/2026

18/4/2026	7:02am	9:56am	N/A No discharge	8.2	3.7	N/A	N/A	18/4/2026
17/4/2026	7:05am	9:36am	N/A No discharge	8.1	2.8	N/A	N/A	17/4/2026
16/4/2026	7:02am	8:49am	N/A No discharge	8.2	2.5	N/A	N/A	16/4/2026
15/4/2026	7:02am	10:57am	N/A No discharge	8.1	2.1	N/A	N/A	15/4/2026
14/4/2026	9:00am	11:51am	N/A No discharge	7.0	4.3	N/A	N/A	14/4/2026
13/4/2026	7:00am	9:41am	N/A No discharge	7.9	4.3	N/A	N/A	13/4/2026

11/4/2026	7:00am	8:44am	N/A No discharge	7.5	5.0	N/A	N/A	11/4/2026
10/4/2026	7:02am	8:28am	N/A No discharge	7.5	4.1	N/A	N/A	10/4/2026
9/4/2026	7:00am	9:18am	N/A No discharge	7.8	4.7	N/A	N/A	9/4/2026
8/4/2026	7:00am	9:34am	10:25am	7.8	4.1	7.7	3.2	8/4/2026
7/4/2026	7:25am	8:49am	10:43am	7.7	3.7	7.7	3.2	7/4/2026
6/4/2026	No dredging							
5/4/2026	No dredging							
4/4/2026	No dredging							
3/4/2026	No dredging							
2/4/2026	7:00am	8:46am	9:02am	8.1	3.8	7.9	4.1	2/4/2026
1/4/2026	7:02am	9:32am	12:34pm	8.1	2.4	8.1	2.8	1/4/2026
31/3/2026	7:00am	8:58am	N/A No discharge	8.1	1.3	N/A	N/A	31/3/2026
30/3/2026	7:10am	8:54am	N/A No	8.1	3.0	N/A	N/A	30/3/2026

			discharge					
29/3/2026	No Dredging							
28/3/2026	7:21am	8:51am	N/A No discharge	8.1	7.9	N/A	N/A	28/3/2026
27/3/2026	7:00am	10:13am	N/A No discharge	7.9	5.6	N/A	N/A	27/3/2026
26/3/2026	7:02am	9:06am	N/A No discharge	7.6	5.4	N/A	N/A	26/3/2026
25/3/2026	7:00am	9:01am	N/A No discharge	7.6	4.4	N/A	N/A	25/3/2026
24/3/2026	7:15am	9:03am	N/A No discharge	7.7	5.0	N/A	N/A	24/3/2026
23/3/2026	7:00am	10:57am	N/A No discharge	7.8	3.9	N/A	N/A	23/3/2026
22/3/2026	No Dredging							
21/3/2026	7:00am	8:29am	N/A No discharge	7.7	3.4	N/A	N/A	21/03/2026
20/3/2026	7:02am	8:52am	N/A No discharge	7.7	3.3	N/A	N/A	20/03/2026
19/3/2026	7:00am	12:53pm	11:55am	7.9	3.9	8.1	1.3	19/03/2026
18/3/2026	7:12am	8:56am	9:11am	8.1	2.0	8.0	1.6	18/03/2026
17/3/2026	7:00am	8:48am	9:25am	8.1	2.5	8.1	2.5	17/03/2026
16/3/2026	7:02am	9:40am	10:05am	8.1	1.0	8.0	1.3	16/03/2026
15/3/2026	No Dredging							
14/3/2026	7:00am	8:10am	9:03am	7.9	4.4	7.7	5.4	14/03/2026
13/3/2026	7:05am	11:18am	9:45am	7.7	4.9	7.9	5.7	13/03/2026
12/03/2026	7:02am	8:12am	8:35am	7.6	4.8	7.8	5.1	12/03/2026

11/03/2026	7:05am	9:23am	9:28am	7.7	5.2	7.6	11.6	11/03/2026
10/03/2026	7:02am	8:19am	8:36am	7.6	3.7	7.6	3.4	10/03/2026
09/03/2026	7:03am	12:10pm	12:03pm	8.1	2.9	7.9	3.9	09/03/2026
07/03/2026	7:01am	8:47am	8:58am	7.8	3.7	7.8	3.2	07/03/2026
06/03/2026	7:03am	9:16am	9:33am	7.7	3.7	7.7	3.6	06/03/2026
05/03/2026	7:00am	8:26am	8:48am	7.7	4.3	7.8	3.7	05/03/2026
04/03/2026	7:00am	8:58am	9:35am	8.0	1.5	8.0	1.7	04/03/2026
03/03/2026	7:02am	10:37am	11:08am	8.1	1.6	8.0	1.6	03/03/2026
02/03/2026	7:05am	8:18am	9:09am	8.0	2.7	8.1	2.5	02/03/2026
01/03/2026	No Dredging							
28/02/2026	7:04am	9:28am	9:54am	8.0	1.3	8.1	1.5	28/02/2026
27/02/2026	7:03am	9:40am	10:18am	8.1	1.3	8.0	1.4	27/02/2026
26/02/2026	7:14am	8:44am	9:16am	8.1	1.2	8.1	2.3	26/02/2026
25/02/2026	7:03am	8:31am	9:21am	8.0	2.7	7.7	3.5	25/02/2026
24/02/2026	7:07am	9:24am	9:19am	7.9	2.3	7.5	2.8	24/02/2026
23/02/2026	7:09am	8:52am	10:48am	7.8	7.3	7.7	3.3	23/02/2026
22/02/2026	*No Dredging*							

21/02/2026	7:10am	9:22am	N/A No discharge	7.6	3.3	N/A	N/A	21/02/2026
20/02/2026	7:04am	8:38am	N/A No discharge	7.8	4.0	N/A	N/A	20/02/2026
19/02/2026	7:13am	9:29am	N/A No discharge	8.1	2.0	N/A	N/A	19/02/2026
18/02/2026	3:03pm	4:30pm	N/A No discharge	7.9	7.2	N/A	N/A	18/02/2026

Dredging History

Council has been dredging The Entrance channel since 1993, with past campaigns differing slightly in scope, frequency and purpose as management approaches evolved. Before 2009 dredging occurred roughly every 12 months whereas updated environmental requirements set out in the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) has resulted in a change in the way dredging is conducted and thus a longer time between dredging programs.

Detailed assessments now lead to fewer, more focused campaigns conducted every two to three years.

Recent programs such as those in 2015, 2018 and in 2020–21 have included significant beach nourishment works, use of advanced surveys (hydrographic, drone, LiDAR), and enhanced environmental monitoring to meet modern regulatory standards. Each campaign responds to the environmental conditions and community needs of its time, meaning objectives vary slightly depending on whether the priority is flood mitigation, sand management, beach nourishment, environmental protection or recovery from storm and flood events.