Terara Shoalhaven Sand C/- Ernest Panucci

River Stability Assessment -Proposed Expansion of Sand Dredging Operations at Terara Shoalhaven Sand, Pig Island, Terara, NSW







WASTEWATER



GEOTECHNICAL



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PROJECT MANAGEMENT



P1806743JR01V01 March 2019

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#### Head Office

Suite 201, 20 George Street, Hornsby, NSW 2077, Australia ACN 070 240 890 ABN 85 070 240 890 **Phone: +61-2-9476-9999** Fax: +61-2-9476-8767 Email: mail@martens.com.au Web: www.martens.com.au

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## 1 Overview

### 1.1 Background

Martens and Associates (MA) have been engaged to prepare a River Stability Assessment (RSA) for a reach of the Lower Shoalhaven River, to support a proposal to expand existing sand extraction operations in the river bed vicinity to the west and south west of Pig Island.

This assessment has been prepared in accordance with Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs ID No. 1234) dated June 7, 2018 and will form part of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) covering all aspects of the proposal and subsequent environmental impacts.

### 1.2 Scope

This report provides the following:

- Study Area Geomorphology (Section 2) Discussion of the geomorphology of the study area and assessment of historical channel/island changes from the late 1940's to present.
- River Assessment (Section 3) Analysis of historic and existing bank conditions, an assessment of recent bank changes, and likely velocity changes and impacts to the levee, tidal prism and seagrass beds.
- Conclusions (Section 4).

### 1.3 Proposed Development

Shoalhaven Sands Pty Ltd (the Client) propose to extend the existing dredging footprint around the western and north western portion of the Shoalhaven River mid-channel bar known as Pig Island. The proposed dredging expansion will allow for the extraction of up to 100,000 tonnes of river sand per annum, over a 29 year period. Figure 2, Attachment A shows the proposed extraction areas.

Previous consent to extend the sand extraction lease area was determined in 2014 (RA12/1001).



#### 1.4 Statutory and Regulatory Requirements

The Secretary of the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (NSW DP&E) has consulted with relevant government agencies and has provided environmental requirements for the project (EAR1234, 2018). They are summarised in Table 1.

 Table 1: Requirements from EAR1234.

	Rehabilitation Management Plan Requirements	Section of Report
Shoalh	aven City Council	
The EIS	must address:	
0	Include any known impacts occurred from the sand extraction under RA12/1001 such as; impacts to the seagrass beds within close proximity of dredging activities, water quality, and the integrity and stability of the riverbanks along Pig Island and give reference to any monitoring reports that have been produced to date.	Section 3, and Estuarine Water Quality Impact Assessment (MA, 2019b)
0	In terms of flood behaviour, the dredging may not have an effect, however this will be required to be addressed to demonstrate this. The main concern would be geomorphic effect of the dredging as it may cause erosion to the river bank which could cause further sedimentation. In addition, Council has a levee system along this stretch of the river which could be compromised. A detailed assessment is required to determine the geomorphic effects the proposed dredging will have to the river and the banks.	Section 3, and Flood Assessment (MA, 2019c)
NSW D	epartment of Primary Industries (Fisheries)	
EARs fo	r this proposed expansion include:	
0	An assessment of the likely impact of dredging what is effectively a deep channel around the western end and the north-western side of Pig Island, upon the distribution of tidal flows and the risk this poses to sand flat and riverbank stability in the general area over the long term including during flood events.	Section 3, and Flood Assessment (MA, 2019c)



# 2 Study Area Geomorphology

### 2.1 Site Setting

The Shoalhaven River Estuary Data Compilation Study (Umwelt Australia, 2005) described the lower Shoalhaven River as an infilled basin/floodplain complex. The estuary can be classified as a 'barrier estuary' at a mature stage of evolution, where the original water body has almost completely infilled with sediment, and fluvial sand is often discharged to the ocean during flood events.

The bedrock control for the River ends at Nowra. Seaward of Nowra, the river anabranches around various large alluvial deposits, one being Pig Island (Umwelt Australia, 2005). Here an extensive floodplain (approximately 120 km<sup>2</sup>) has formed, predominately through lateral accretion (i.e. point bar formation) which has been overlain by sediments deposited from suspension during flood events (Umwelt Australia, 2005). Currently, the large floodplain area is predominately used for agricultural purposes.

Figure 1 (Attachment A) provides an overview of the lower Shoalhaven River system with morphological features noted. A survey (Johnson Proctor Surveyors, 2018) of the proposed extraction area is provided in Attachment B.

### 2.2 Pig Island Morphology

Pig Island is a lowland riverine feature formed primarily through alluvial deposition. According to the Lower Shoalhaven River Floodplain Risk Management Study (Webb, McKeown and Associates, 2008) the Island has been actively accreting since European settlement and, as a result, has increased in width (650 m to 850 m approximately) and in length (1,680 m to 2,400 m approximately).

The shape of the Island can be attributed to the migration of sediment downstream, which has resulted in two distinct accretion points: a subaqueous portion where alluvial deposition has led to formation of extensive sand and mudflat areas which are partially exposed during low tide; and a subaerial portion, where aeolian deposits have built up the Island via processes similar to dune formation.



### 2.3 Channel Bed Morphology

Given the depositional nature of the estuary, the channel bed is largely flat and shallow. According to the Shoalhaven River Estuary Management Plan (Umwelt Australia, 2006) the deepest part of the channel (the thalweg) runs north of Pig Island and then migrates south to against the south bank, before migrating north again. Bathymetry data received from Allen Price and Associates (2011) confirms this description.

### 2.4 Bed Sediment Characteristics

Bed sediment characteristics of the lower Shoalhaven River have been influenced by altered flow regimes caused by upstream dams (Umwelt, 2005). As a result, bed character of the estuary can be attributed to catchment areas below these dams (i.e. the 'effective' catchment area. Hazelton (1992) notes that the dominant soil materials of the Shoalhaven landscape consist of fine sandy loam overlying light sandy clay loam and sandy clays and some light to medium clays.

Site soils comprise Shoalhaven alluvial material, a sequence of medium and coarse quartoze and lithic sands with varying proportions of fine sands, interlaid by silts, clays and carbonaceous matter that were deposited after periods of flooding. Subsurface investigation to a maximum of 3.7 meters below ground level (surface level of -3.9 mAHD) identified sand, medium and coarse grained, with varying portions of fine-grained sand, brown-grey to dark grey in colour.

Salinity investigations indicated that potential acid sulfate soils occur across portions of the proposed changed excavation area (MA, 2019a).

Encountered conditions are described in more detail in the Land Resources Assessment (MA, 2019d).

### 2.5 Sediment Supply

Coarse sediments from the upper Shoalhaven catchment are trapped by Tallowra Dam, while fine grain material (silt and clays) are transported over the spillway (Umwelt, 2005). Sands, muds and gravels found on the bed of the lower Shoalhaven River are therefore derived from downstream sub-catchments, totalling an area of approximately 2,460 km<sup>2</sup> (to Pig Island).

Only a fraction of gross erosion within a catchment is transported and delivered to downstream estuaries (CSIRO, 2003). The Sediment



Delivery Ratio (SDR) is used to account for this reduction in a catchment and is expressed as follows:

$$SDR = Y/E$$

Where Y = average annual sediment yield, and

E = average annual erosion rate.

The Soil Landscapes of the Kiama 1:100 000 Sheet (Hazelton, 1992) provides an erosion rate of 10 t/ha/yr for the Shoalhaven soil landscape.

CSIRO (2001) and CSIRO (2003) suggests that the SDR's for catchments of similar size to the lower Shoalhaven can vary between 0.05 and 0.20. The Australian Natural Resources Atlas (2009) notes that the SDR for the Shoalhaven River is 0.33. Based on these collective findings, a SDR of 0.2 was assumed to estimate annual sediment yield to the Shoalhaven River estuary (at Pig Island).

Based on the above, the average annual sediment yield equates to 2 t/ha/yr. Assuming a catchment area of 2,460 km<sup>2</sup> (246,000 ha) the supply of sediment to the lower Shoalhaven is in the order of 492,000 t/yr.

### 2.6 Active Depositional Areas

Due to the increase in channel width (approximately 600 – 700 m) downstream of Nowra, the river area surrounding Pig Island is a preferential depositional area. The upstream extent of Pig Island was noted during field works as actively accreting. This is most likely due to sediment falling out of suspension as it moves downstream, when flow velocity is reduced as the river anabranches around the Island. It is also noted that historical intermediate scale flood events also have had an influence on sediment transport and the deposition of sediment in the lower Shoalhaven estuary (Umwelt, 2006).



## 3 River Bank Assessment

### 3.1 Historical Channel Conditions

A series of historical aerials were obtained from the NSW Department of Lands and Nearmap to provide a means of qualitative assessment of channel change since the 1940's. Table 2 summarises the finding of this assessment, with aerials provided in Attachment C.

Aerial Year	River Channel change/description	Island change/description
1949	Both banks largely cleared for agricultural purposes. Dredging has not commenced.	Eastern and western tip of Island very thin with no vegetation/mangrove areas. Clear beach area surrounding most of the Island. Sub-tidal resource area appears to extend around entire western half of Island and halfway into northern and southern channel. Seagrass extent unclear due to photo resolution.
1961	Little channel change evident. No dredging activities.	Alluvial deposition at the Island's western tip. Possible erosion of resource to the Islands south – possibly due to recent flood event (6 months prior to aerial).
1970	Some deposition along the northern bank to the Islands north east. Some erosion noted along the southern bank to the Islands south east. No evidence of dredging.	Significant deposition to the Island's west, south west and south. Eastern end unchanged.
1979	Little change to channel form. First evidence of dredging activities.	Removal of some resource to the Island's south up to Island banks. Significant deposition of material to the Islands west and south, and deposition to northern, north eastern and south eastern banks.
1993	Little channel form change. Dredging has continued.	Deposit to the Island's west has vegetated. Smaller deposits further north west and south have also vegetated. Seagrass extent to the Islands south has been modified, however to the west and north west appears to have increased.
2001	Little channel form change. Dredging has continued.	Deposition has continued to the west and north west. Deposit has stabilised further with more vegetation. Western tip of Island has rounded. Seagrasses noted in inundated areas surrounding the sub-tidal deposit area.

 Table 2: Historical Channel Changes; lower Shoalhaven River and Pig Island.



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Aerial Year	River Channel change/description	Island change/description
2010	Little channel form change. Dredging has continued.	Resource accretions and seagrass extents have expanded west to in line with Bomaderry Creek. Increased deposit on northern and eastern banks of the Island.
2018	Little channel form change. Dredging has continued. Additional resource deposition to west of Pig Island and extending further north.	Increased vegetation on deposition at western end of Pig Island, and on banks surrounding Pig Island.

The aerial photograph analysis demonstrates the following:

- 1. Channel form has been largely stable over the past 70 years.
- 2. There has been significant ongoing accretion at the south western, western and north-western extents of Pig Island.
- 3. Actively accreting areas are migrating sub-aerially and in places becoming colonised with sub-aerial vegetation.
- 4. There is no evidence of major bank erosion or position changes in recent years as dredging operations have been undertaken.

#### 3.2 Observed Vegetation

The following observations were made with regards to vegetation within the study area:

- 1. Pig Island was predominantly vegetated with pasture grasses and some scattered trees.
- 2. The shallow aquatic environment surrounding Pig Island contained seagrass and seaweed species.
- 3. Intertidal zones contained mangrove and saltmarsh communities. Mangroves noted are mostly immature to juvenile, with various stands of uniform age, suggesting the area is prone to depositional events.
- 4. Casuarinas were noted at elevation on Pig Island and along some banks.
- 5. There was a lack of riparian vegetation, both on Pig Island and the mainland. Where vegetation had not been cleared, banks appeared more stable and erosion was minimal.



### 3.3 River Bank Conditions

A river bank photographic survey was undertaken of Pig Island. Bank features such as evidence of erosion, slumping and bank failure, existing protection works, riparian vegetation and depositional features were photographed and noted (refer to Figures 4 and 5, Attachment A). The survey is summarised in Table 3.



Table 3: Historical Bank Conditions: Mainland and Pig Island (2011 and 2018) (refer to Figures 4 and 5, Attachment A).

Reach Extent <sup>1</sup>	Mainland - Bank Conditions 2011	Mainland - Bank Conditions 2018	Pig Island - Bank Conditions 2011	Pig Island – Bank Conditions 2018	
Reach 1 (adjacent to existing	Localised rock protection along the bank. Bank generally 2 to 4 m high. Evidence of undercutting observed	Little change from 2011 conditions.	Bank 1-2 m high. Some undercutting of bank. Bank vegetation – grasses.	Bank 1 – 2 m high, stable and well vegetated. Mangroves and salt marsh areas in good condition.	
extraction area)	near Bomaderry Creek. Rock gabions adjacent to Shoalhaven Starches ethanol plant.			Bank vegetation – grasses, scattered trees and shrubs. Mangroves and salt marshes.	
	Bank vegetation – trees, shrubs, grasses. Some fallen and dead trees observed on bank slopes and on the river's edge.				
Reach 2	Bank generally 2 to 4 m high. Evidence of slumping and bank instability.	Little change from 2011 conditions.	Bank appeared stable and well vegetated. Some undercutting of bank.	Bank 1 to 2 m generally appeared stable and well vegetated. Localised undercutting.	
	Bank vegetation – trees, shrubs, grasses. Fallen and dead trees observed on bank slopes and on the river's edge.		Bank vegetation – grasses, scattered trees.	Bank vegetation – grasses, trees and shrubs.	
Reach 3	Bank generally 1 to 3 m high. Localised evidence of slumping.	Little change from 2011 conditions.	Bank appeared stable and well vegetated. Some undercutting of	Bank generally appeared stable and well vegetated. Localised bank	
	Bank vegetation – trees, shrubs, grasses, and mangroves. Some fallen		bank. Bank vegetation – grasses, scattered	undercutting. Mangroves in good condition.	
	and dead trees observed on bank slopes and on the river's edge.		trees.	Bank vegetation – grasses, trees and shrubs, and mangroves.	
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Reach Extent <sup>1</sup>	Mainland - Bank Conditions 2011	Mainland - Bank Conditions 2018	Pig Island - Bank Conditions 2011	Pig Island – Bank Conditions 2018	
Reach 4	Levee and localised rock wall protection works implemented along	Little change from 2011 conditions.	1 m high bank. Some undercutting and slumping.	Bank 1 to 3 m high. Slumping in some areas, other areas stable and well vegetated. Banks more stable and well vegetated further downstream.	
	reach.		Bank vegetation – grasses.		
	Bank well vegetated with grasses, shrubs, trees, and mangrove areas.			Bank vegetation – grasses, scattered trees and shrubs.	
Reach 5	Levee and localised rock wall protection works implemented along reach.	Little change from 2011 conditions.	1 – 2 m high bank. Some undercutting and slumping.	Bank 1 to 3 m high. Some slumping and bank instability. Portions of the bank stable and vegetated.	
	Bank well vegetated with grasses,		Bank vegetation – grasses, shrubs and scattered trees.	Bank vegetation – grasses, scattered	
	shrubs, trees, and mangrove areas.		sculleled liees.	trees and shrubs.	
Reach 6	Levee and localised rock wall protection works implemented along	Little change from 2011 conditions.	1 – 2 m high bank. Some undercutting.	Bank 1 to 2 m high. Slumping in some areas.	
	reach.		Bank vegetation – grasses.	Bank vegetation – grasses, scattered	
	Bank well vegetated with grasses, shrubs, trees, and mangrove areas.			trees and shrubs.	
Reach 7 (adjacent	Levee and localised rock wall protection works implemented along	Little change from 2011 conditions.	Bank relatively well vegetated. Bank 1 – 2 m high. Some undercutting.	Bank well vegetated. Mangroves and salt marsh areas in good	
to existing extraction	reach.		Bank vegetation – grasses.	condition. Bank 1 m high in some areas. Localised slumping.	
area)	Bank well vegetated with grasses, shrubs, trees, and mangrove areas.			Bank vegetation – grasses, scattered trees and shrubs. Mangroves and salt marshes.	

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Refer to Attachment A, Figure 5 for reach extents, and Figure 4 for bank condition photos.

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River Stability Assessment – Proposed Expansion of Sand Dredging Operations at Terara Shoalhaven Sand, Pig Island, Terara, NSW P1806743JR01V01 – March 2019 Page 14 The assessment indicates the following:

- 1. Whilst there is some evidence of bank instability, this has not changed between 2010 and 2018.
- 2. Banks are largely stable as demonstrated by their historical stable position.
- 3. Recent dredging operations do not appear to have had any material effect on bank stability.

#### 3.4 Likely Velocity Changes

Hydraulic modelling prepared for the flood study (MA, 2019c) calculated peak velocities for both existing and post dredging expansion river channel velocities (m/s) for seven observation locations (refer to Figure 3, Attachment A).

Table 4 indicates the percentage (%) difference for existing vs future channel velocity changes at 7 locations within the river channel for 1 in 10, 100, 200, 500 year average recurrence interval (ARI) and probable maximum flood (PMF) flood events.

Point	<b>10</b> <sup>1</sup>	100 <sup>1</sup>	<b>200</b> <sup>1</sup>	500 <sup>1</sup>	PMF <sup>1</sup>
1	0.4%	0.5%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
2	-0.6%	-1.8%	-1.5%	-0.8%	-0.2%
3	0.3%	7.3%	8.3%	7.9%	6.2%
4	-0.4%	2.0%	2.7%	3.2%	3.3%
5	-0.1%	1.3%	1.8%	2.5%	5.5%
6	-1.7%	0.0%	0.5%	1.3%	1.9%
7	0.8%	1.2%	1.4%	1.3%	1.3%

 Table 4: Hydraulic modelling – existing and proposed velocity changes (%).

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Positive values indicate an increase in velocity; negative values indicate a decrease in velocity.

The assessment of velocity changes indicates that:

1. The proposed extraction works are not anticipated to have a significant impact on existing river bank erosion due to impact scour, as river velocities are not anticipated to be significantly changed as a result of the proposed expansion to extraction works.



2. No detrimental velocity impacts due to the proposed expansion to dredging operations, and no bank erosion due to impact scour are expected.

#### 3.5 River Bank Protection Works Impacts

Based on our riparian bank survey, existing bank and toe protection works are evident on left and right river banks of the lower Shoalhaven. Where in place, protection works generally appear to be successful.

Methods of bank protection works noted during field investigations included:

- Vegetated batters (levees);
- Sand sausage (sandbag);
- Gabion baskets;
- Rock walls;
- Rip-rap toe protection; and
- A mixture of gabion baskets and rip-rap.

No significant detrimental impacts are anticipated from the proposed dredging extraction works on the river banks or the bank protection works, based on the historically stable bank position and the ongoing success of the existing bank protection works.

#### 3.6 Tidal Prism Impacts

The tidal prism of the Shoalhaven River estuary at spring tide is around  $23 \times 10^6$  m<sup>3</sup> (Carvalho & Woodroffe, 2017). No impacts on the tidal prism, and therefore the tidal behaviour is expected because:

- 1. The majority of extraction occurs below low water spring tide level.
- 2. The intended volume to be extracted is very small, around 10<sup>4</sup> m<sup>3</sup>, or approximately 0.09%.
- 3. There would be no material change to the tidal penetration range experienced by the river.



### 3.7 Seagrass Beds

Seagrass beds are provided on the survey (Johnson Proctor Surveyors, 2018) in Attachment B.

A 25 m setback to seagrasses and 15 m setback to mangrove areas has been provided to mitigate against any potential environmental impacts of dredging operations. The setback was based on detailed slope stability modelling undertaken for consent RA12/1001, and approved on 28 August, 2114. This application does not seek to alter the previously approved setback.

The proposed dredging extraction works are therefore not expected to impact on seagrass bed areas.



## 4 Conclusions

The following conclusions are made regarding the potential impacts of the proposed dredging excavation works on river bank stability:

- 1. The impacts of proposed works on riverine vegetation are anticipated to be insignificant, based on assessment of historical dredging operations impacts.
- 2. Historical extraction works do not appear to have been a significant cause of existing bank erosion in the study area.
- 3. Flow velocity changes due to extraction works would be insignificant and are unlikely to lead to a change in sedimentation / erosion processes along the river bank.
- 4. The proposed expanded extraction area is outside of areas with significant existing aquatic vegetation (seagrass and seaweed) and works are not expected to impact on these areas. An adequate buffer will be applied.

A Rehabilitation Management Plan (RMP) has been prepared to provide a range of environmental management strategies to mitigate and protect the long-term environmental and ecological values of areas of the Shoalhaven River in the vicinity of the proposed resource extraction works (MA, 2019e).



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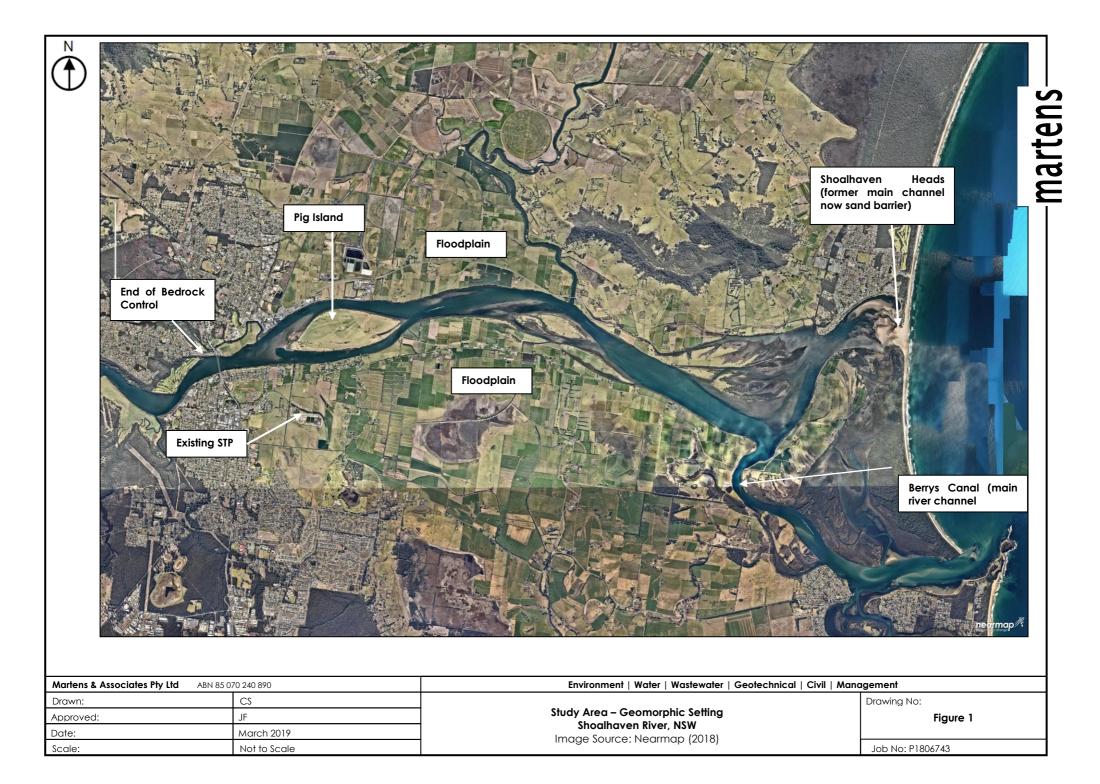


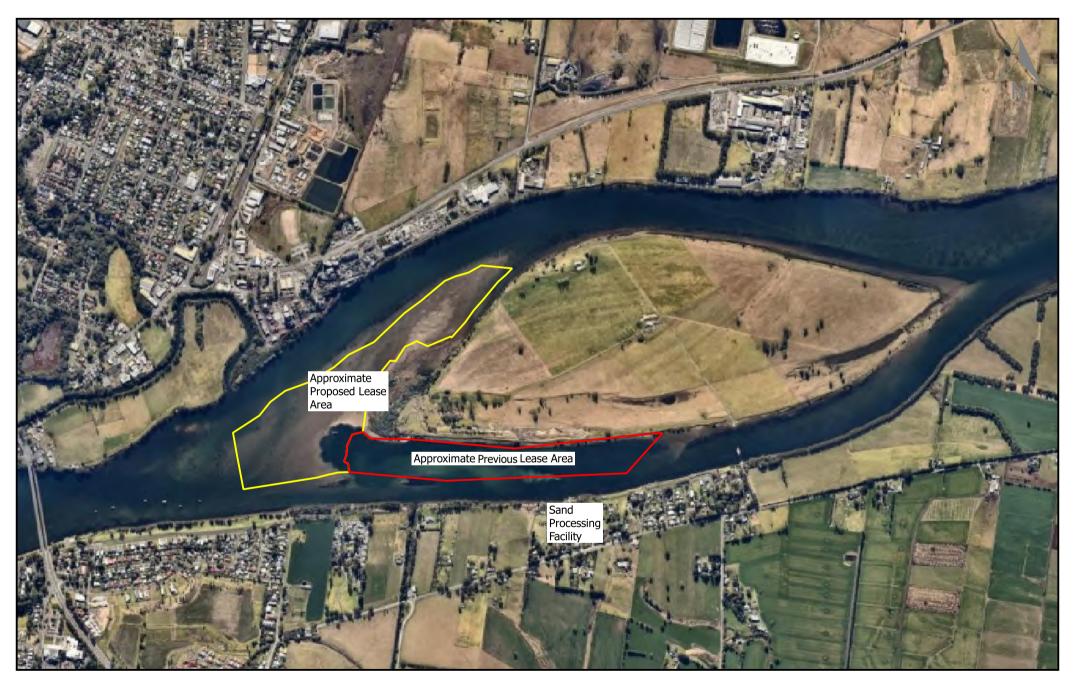
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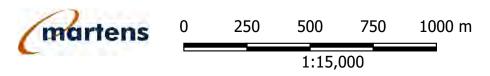


# 6 Attachment A - Figures



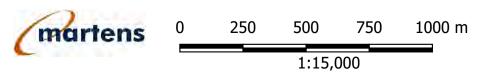






Approximate Extents of the Previous and Proposed Dredge Lease Areas Pig Island, Shoalhaven River, NSW 19/02/2019 Figure 2

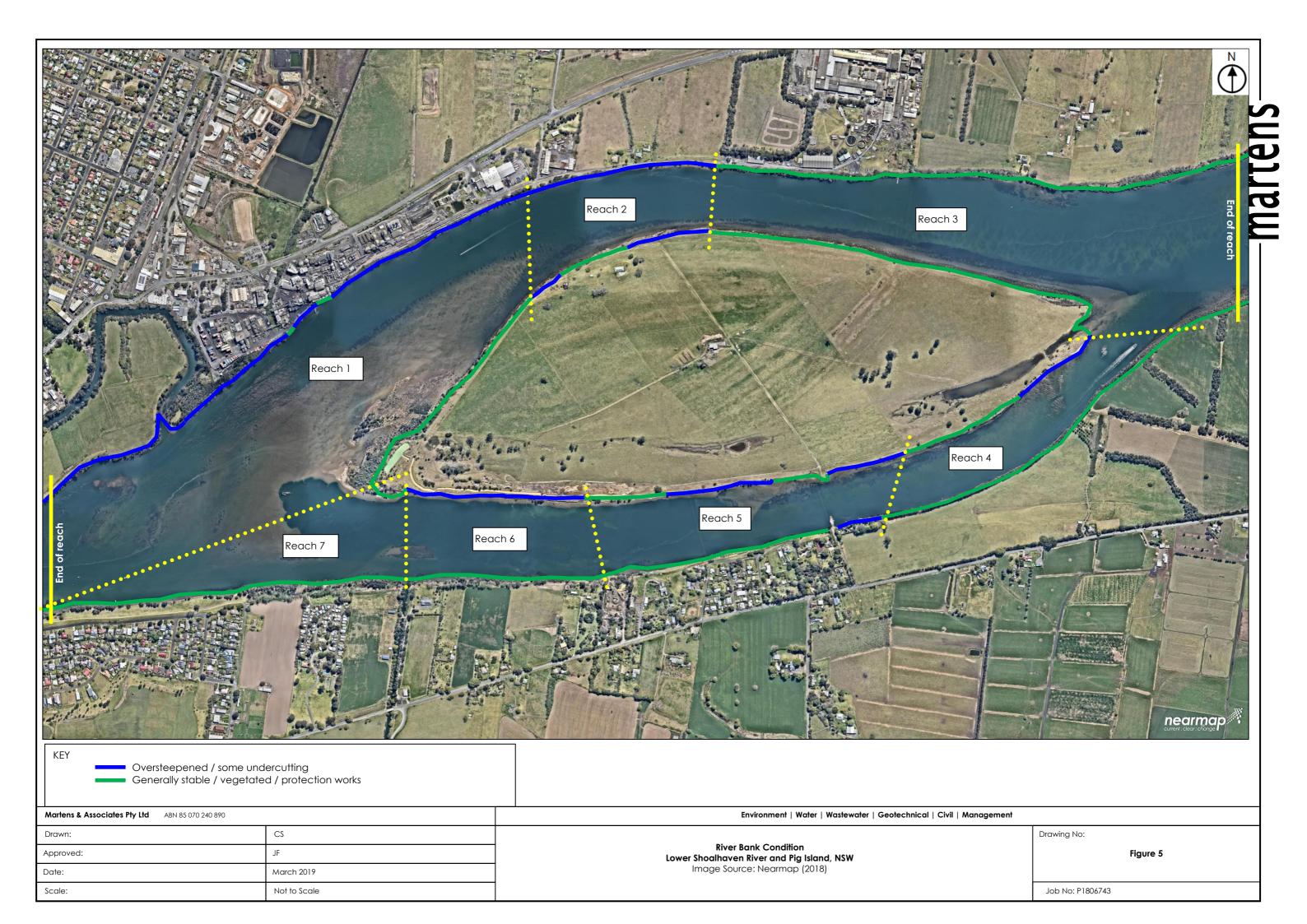




Hydraulic Modelling - Study Area & Velocity Observation Points Pig Island, Shoalhaven River, NSW 19/02/2019 Figure 3

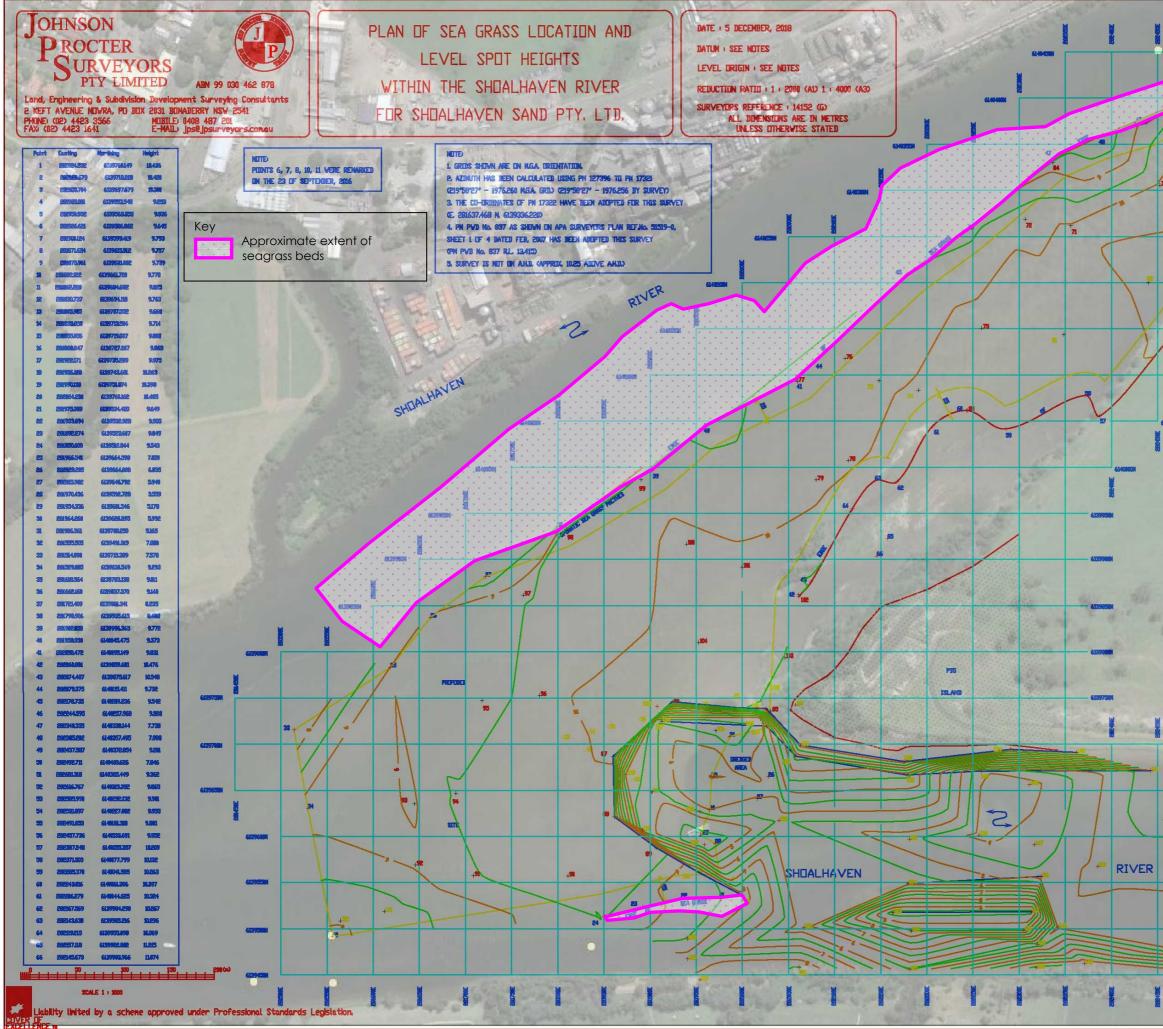


Martens & Associates Pty Ltd ABN 85 070 240 890		Environment   Water   Wastewater   Geotechnical   Civil   Ma
Drawn:	CS	
Approved:	JF	River Bank Condition Photos (2018 and 2011) Lower Shoalhaven River and Pig Island, NSW
Date:	March 2019	Image Source: Nearmap (2018) and MA
Scale:	Not to Scale	



7 Attachment B – Plan of Sea Grass Location and Level Spot Heights within the Shoalhaven River for Shoalhaven Sand Pty Ltd (Johnson Proctor Surveyors Pty Ltd, 2018)





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	15		6229567.435	514	71 202355023 72 202360451	EL4BEEL747	9.894
	107	ENEXIEAGE	6277310.129	9.66	73 202279.325 74 202190.031		19.268 19.72
	118	282304.332 282305.392	6129496.238 6529482.688	853 525	75 202140,875 76 202111,430	6148093.893	9.863 0.865
	121	2023(7.353) 2021(8.974	6139457.461	846 545	77 202039.472	6140092,850	9.650
	199	202302.539	6139457,233	843	78 202114.622 79 202090.015	614007.367 6139906.377	9,899
	123	202152.400 202152.400	6139542.669	9.72 5.85	8 202244.004		0.386
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	139	202907,274	6239748623	10.55	91 201705.688 92 201645.011	6139957,415	9.463
	136	202025.216 202062.473	6139738.414 6139698.657	1032 7129	<b>\$3 201644.397</b>	6139635.532	8.959
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## 8 Attachment C - Historical Aerials







