

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Proposed removal of Catherine Hill Bay Jetty

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#### Why is the government proposing to remove the jetty?

The 50-year-old jetty has reached the end of its service life. A lack of maintenance since 2009 and impacts from a fire in 2013 have resulted in its state of disrepair. The jetty poses a considerable risk to public safety due to failing structural elements and falling debris.

It is not practical to repair the jetty and there is not a viable future use that would support replacing it. As such, the government propose to remove the jetty.

The mining lease over the site expired in 2017 with the holder of the lease disclaiming liabilities in 2019. Management of the jetty defaulted to NSW Government as the landholder, who now hold the security deposit for the removal of the jetty.

In recent years the NSW Government has spent more than \$350,000 on safety assessments and risk management measures. It is now proposed to remove the jetty as a long-term solution to address the ongoing safety risk.

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#### Why is the jetty considered unsafe?

Recent structural assessments highlight large cracks and voids in the concrete, as well as corroded steel and bracing which has fallen or is at risk of falling from the jetty. Failing structural elements and falling debris pose significant risk to people on and under the jetty.

The risk of the jetty collapsing onto the beach and waterway below is an increasing public safety risk and environmental hazard the longer it remains in place. Moreover, if the jetty did start to collapse, an emergency demolition would cost more and cause more disruption than planned removal work.

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#### What is the consultation for?

The NSW Government is consulting with residents, businesses, and stakeholders to share information about the proposed removal timeline, method and memorialisation of the jetty. The community is invited to provide feedback, raise concerns, and suggest ways to commemorate the jetty.

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## Is the jetty heritage listed?

The jetty is recognised as a local heritage item in the Lake Macquarie LEP 2014. While the broader Catherine Hill Bay Cultural Precinct holds State Significant status, the jetty itself is excluded from this designation. Comprehensive heritage assessment and documentation will be conducted prior to its demolition.

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## Was keeping the jetty considered?

Yes. The NSW Government assessed various options including retaining and repairing the jetty. The cost of building and maintaining a new jetty would be prohibitive, and there is no viable future use that would support replacing it.

The estimated cost to completely restore the jetty exceeds \$15 million and is not considered a cost-effective use of NSW Government funds.

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## Was partial removal considered?

The engineers who completed the structural condition assessment in 2023, suggested removing the most deteriorated part of the jetty as part of a staged approach working toward the complete removal of the jetty.

Removing the part of the jetty near the cliff, would help to manage the immediate safety risk and discourage access. The rest of the jetty could then be removed at a later date once further funding became available.

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## What has the NSW Government done since taking on ownership of the jetty?

Since taking over responsibility for the jetty, the NSW Government has spent more than \$350,000 managing safety risks including

- Multiple visits to remove beams, bracing and large pieces of steel at risk of falling from the underside of the jetty
- Multiple visits to remove handrails, pipes and fixings at risk of falling from the deck
- Removing supports from along the front of the retaining wall
- Ongoing upgrades to restrict access
- Ongoing monitoring and structural assessments

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## What happens next?

Before we start any work to the jetty, we need to complete the planning approval process, confirm the best way to do the work, and organise a contractor.

Once we have confirmed our approach, we expect it will take about 12 – 18 months to complete the planning process. We plan to start work to the jetty in 2027. In the meantime, we will continue to monitor and inspect the jetty to manage safety risks.

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## How will you manage the impact of the work on the environment?

We will carry out various assessments including environment and heritage assessments as part of the planning process. These assessments will help to inform the method and measures the contractor takes to manage the impact of the work, such as containing debris, avoiding sensitive periods or habitats where practical, and ensuring the safe handling of materials.

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## What will happen to the jetty materials?

We intend to explore salvage and reuse opportunities for some elements (e.g. for sculptures and memorials) during the detailed planning phase. Whether we can salvage materials will depend on structural integrity, contamination testing, and the contractor's removal method and safety obligations.

The process for allocating any salvaged material will be developed transparently and communicated ahead of the works. Remaining material will be disposed of and recycled wherever possible.

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## Will the work impact access to the beach?

We cannot confirm the detail of the work at this stage. We will aim to maintain beach and foreshore access wherever it is safe to do so, with temporary closures or detours in place during high-risk activities. We also expect there will be temporary traffic and parking changes during certain phases of the work.

We will write to local residents before we start work to inform them about any impacts to traffic, parking and beach access.

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