

Frequently Asked Questions

July 2026

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.

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 \$500,000 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.

What structural assessments have been undertaken?

Structural assessments were first undertaken in 2023 which highlight large cracks and voids in the concrete, as well as corroded steel and bracing which often falls from the jetty.

Further assessment in September 2025 found that the jetty had deteriorated considerably since the 2023 report.

As a result of consultation with the community in October 2025, further structural assessments were undertaken by BG&E between October 2025- July 2026 to understand if it was possible to retain any portion of the jetty. These investigations consisted of both desktop and visual inspections, including lowering cameras into the piles to assess the inside.

Three options were investigated:

- Option 1 (partial retention): Demolition of the landside portion of the jetty to the movement joint at Bent 17 and retention of the vertical circular hollow section piles without bracing.
- Option 2 (partial retention): Demolition of the landside portion of the jetty to the movement joint at Bent 17 and retention of the piles, primary steel, some bracing, and removal of the precast concrete deck.

- Option 3 (partial retention): Demolition of the landside portion of the jetty and seaside portion of the jetty until Bent 4. Retention of the piles, primary steel, bracing, and removal of the precast concrete deck for Bents 1, 2, and 3.

Cost estimates for each viable option, including full demolition, were produced. These cost estimates include annual maintenance and reflect a mix of costs at today's value, as well as expected future values.

What were the findings of the latest structural assessments?

BG&E's investigations found that:

- The only structurally feasible option to retain part of the jetty comes at a cost of \$38.36 million;
 - The jetty piles have an oil substance (bitumen oil with heavy hydrocarbons) inside them at various heights posing a substantial risk to the environment should the jetty be left to deteriorate in place; and
 - Demolition of the jetty in its current state would cost approximately \$11.09 million. Continued maintenance for another 25 years, followed by a demolition, would cost approximately \$38.36 million.
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What has the NSW Government decided as a result of the latest structural assessments?

The NSW Government has decided it is not feasible to retain the jetty.

The structural integrity of the jetty was just one factor that was considered in determining whether it was feasible to keep the jetty. Other factors included:

- **Cost:** The cost of work required to safely retain a portion of the jetty, plus additional yearly maintenance VS the cost of demolition. Cost escalation over future years was also considered;
- **Safety to the community:** Retention of a portion of the jetty in the ocean would make it harder to prevent unauthorised access and require substantial work to make the structure more visible for the boating community
- **Risks to the environment:** The piles contain an oil which would need to be removed for retention however, removal of these speeds up the process of corrosion and creates risk of ocean debris;
- **Long-term maintenance:** Increased maintenance required and the safety of employees undertaking maintenance on a structure in the ocean.

Before any work is undertaken on the jetty, we need to complete the planning approval process, confirm the best way to do the work and engage contractors. We expect this to take at least 12-18 months.

How were the costings developed?

BG&E used a Quantity Surveyor to look at the costs of retention and full demolition. A quantity surveyor specialises in working out in detail how much a construction project will cost, and allow for increases in construction costs over future years.

Is it possible for any part of the jetty to be retained?

BG&E found that it *may* be possible to retain bents 1 to 3, if bents 4 and 5 and the raked piles between are also retained. However, it's the non-structural considerations that make it unviable. Ongoing safety risks to people seeking to access the pylons, navigational, maintenance, environmental and on-going financial cost mean that it is not feasible to leave any combination of pylons in place.

Would the NSW Government consider building a new jetty?

There is no operational need for a jetty in Catherine Hill Bay.

Can the jetty just be left in place to deteriorate?

No, the current state of the jetty poses a safety risk to the public. Additionally, the jetty piles have an oil substance (bitumen oil with heavy hydrocarbons) inside them at various heights posing a substantial risk to the environment should the jetty be left to deteriorate in place.

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.

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 \$500,000 on safety assessments and risk management measures. This includes:

- 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

What happens next?

Before any work is undertaken on the jetty, we need to complete the planning approval process, confirm the best way to do the work and engage contractors. We expect this to take at least 12-18 months.

What sort of reports are produced as part of the planning process?

The planning process will involve undertaking further expert reports across a range of areas including a Heritage Impact Assessment, Aboriginal Due Diligence Assessment and Aquatic

Biodiversity Assessment. Studies will also be undertaken that assist in developing how the demolition will take place safely. This includes a demolition Plan which will include studies on erosion and sediment control and waste management.

Will you be talking to the community about how to commemorate the jetty before it is demolished?

Yes. Extensive consultation will be undertaken with the community on how to commemorate the jetty. Subscribe for project updates to receive information on how you can be involved by visiting www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/catherine-hill-bay-jetty.

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.

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.

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.

More information

A full copy of the Report, as well as supporting information, can be found on the Catherine Hill Bay Jetty Have Your Say website. You can also subscribe for updates on how you can be involved in future stages of the project by visiting www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/catherine-hill-bay-jetty.