

# MANAGING COASTAL HAZARDS IN MANUS AND NEW IRELAND: BRIEFING NOTE

## The Coastal Zone

- Provides coastal communities with most of their livelihood needs
- Influences the development, activities and culture of coastal communities
- Presents chronic (e.g. erosion) and episodic (e.g. flooding) threats to coastal livelihoods and communities

## Coastal Communities

- Live very near the shoreline, sometimes within the high tide line and are highly exposed to coastal hazards including erosion, tidal flooding and flooding by extreme surge events
- Rely on coastal ecosystems and habitats such as mangroves, seagrass beds and offshore coral reefs for food and several other services, including a degree of coastal protection
- Do not currently prioritise erosion or flooding within their development and management plans
- Mostly lack the capacity to plan, design and execute effective solutions to coastal hazards
- Some communities show a high degree of adaptation to frequent tidal flooding

## Coastal Hazards and Solutions

- The dominant coastal hazard is erosion due to strong tidal currents and waves
- Rising sea levels are causing more frequent and more severe tidal flooding in low-lying island communities in both Manus and New Ireland
- All coastal communities are vulnerable to flooding from episodic extreme surge events
- One common solution is seawalls made of local timber and stone to protect specific assets from erosion and flooding
- Mangrove planting to reduce erosion is another solution that is easily and effectively implemented by trained locals
- Several coastal communities benefit from the coastal protection provided by offshore coral reefs though these are not explicitly recognised within coastal management or coral habitat management plans
- Awareness of different coastal protection options, their benefits and their drawbacks is generally low which precludes sustainable long-term planning for coastal protection



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