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The Channel – better by design

Design work will commence this week on the partial closure of the constructed southern entrance into Swan Bay in Lake Macquarie following the appointment of environmental consultants WBM Oceanics Pty Ltd.

The project, valued at over \$90,000, is funded by the Office of the Lake Macquarie & Catchment Coordinator.

"Since the entrance was constructed by a private sand mining operator in 1996 there has been significant interference with the flow down the main navigation channel, causing the infamous 'dog leg' hazard for boat users. While the 'dog leg' was removed last year with major dredging works, it is likely to return unless further works are carried out. The opening has also eroded significantly and is currently eroding the shoreline at Naru Point and causing loss of vegetation," said Councillor Greg Piper, Chairman of Lake Macquarie Project Management Committee.

The proposal to partially close the constructed opening was raised as part of the longer term strategy for the navigation channel. A draft outlining the recommended strategy was placed on public exhibition for comment late last year.

"Computer modelling will be used to assist in determining the optimum size of the opening to ensure that water quality in Swan Bay is maintained and to reduce interference by sand shoaling in the main channel. The draft designs prepared by WBM Oceanics Pty Ltd will be subject to peer review by third party coastal engineering experts Gary Blumberg and Associates", he said.

The engagement of WBM Oceanics Pty Ltd followed a rigorous selection process that involved both internal and external assessment of all proposals.

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