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**The NSW government will today unveil sweeping changes to how the state's coastline is managed, building on its insistence that local councils look at the science and evidence of individual beaches rather than blindly adopting UN predictions of climate change.**

In a major speech to be delivered today, Planning Minister Rob Stokes will announce what he says are world-first strategies that treat the 2007km NSW coast not as static fixed geography but as a constantly changing and evolving phenomenon.

The plan will divide the coastline into 47 "coastal sediment compartments" for the purposes of scientific investigation and management, covering the beaches and the adjoining seabed.

In an interview with *The Australian*, Mr Stokes said he would be announcing "a much more scientific and evidence-based -approach ... it reflects recognition that what is happening on the coast is a product of what is happening to the sand off the coast," he said.

"We will be integrating coastal management and planning with what is happening in the adjacent seabed."

Mr Stokes said the new strategy, legislation and guidance for local councils would replace a largely outdated mishmash built up over the past 35 years.

At a coastal planning conference, he will announce a draft bill for a new coastal management act, a revised coastal management manual, and proposals for a new coastal management state environmental planning policy.

The initiatives mark the second phase of the Coalition government's demolition of the previous Labor government's policy, which among other things directed local councils on the coast to enforce the climate change and sea level rise predictions of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Under that regime, councils in some cases included sea-level rise warnings on the planning certificates of some seaside properties based not on what was happening on the beaches concerned — including one that is acquiring sand naturally and pushing back the sea — but on IPCC predictions.

Many owners found that under this policy, their properties became almost unsaleable.

“It sterilised land from development because it was a very cautious approach,” Mr Stokes said.

The new strategy will employ scientists and engineers to look at what is happening in each of 47 coastal sediment compartments, and make that information available to councils through a new NSW coastal council.

Reflecting the view that coastal processes are dynamic rather than static, local coastal zone management “plans” will be replaced with coastal management “programs.”

“The problem is that we have developed solid, fixed planning and coastal management when we have a coast that constantly moves around,” Mr Stokes said.

He said he expected to soon receive advice upon which to decide whether to certify or reject a coastal zone management plan put in place by the Greater Taree City Council to deal with coastal erosion at the community of Old Bar on the mid-north coast.

The Taree council plan allows landowners to decide for themselves how long to stay in their houses, and what protection measures they take, individually or in groups, but requires them to accept the associated practical and legal risks themselves.