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HARRY BENNETT PARK RIVERSIDE INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Following significant damage to public infrastructure along the Taree riverside due to historic flooding, MidCoast Council identified the need for durable, safe, and low-maintenance replacements for the park's damaged riverside decking and handrails. DM Composites was appointed to replace the timber system with our proprietary DM WOOD WPC Decking system and matching FRP handrail solution – designed to be flood-resilient and visually consistent with the local environment.

The project formed part of CLIRP 012 – focusing on restoring critical recreational assets. The existing decking, which projected partially over the Manning River, was structurally compromised and presented safety risks to the public. DM Composites proposed a full FRP system to address these concerns while complying with waterway and ecological constraints.

LOCATION:
Taree, NSW

CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION:
2025

SCOPE OF WORK

- Demolition and safe removal of damaged timber decking and balustrades.
- Partial demolition of deteriorated concrete elements extending over the waterway.
- Design, supply, and installation of a custom FRP decking and handrail system.
- Returfing and stabilisation of any disturbed areas following completion.
- Environmental controls to ensure no impacts to marine or foreshore vegetation.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Harry Bennett Park is located on Crown Land adjacent to the Manning River – a mapped Key Fish Habitat and a biodiversity-sensitive riparian corridor. The project footprint was carefully planned to avoid direct impacts to aquatic vegetation or habitats, with no in-stream works undertaken.

Although adjacent to mapped proximity zones for Coastal Wetlands and within reach of local heritage overlays (including Martin Bridge and St John's Church), the construction methods were chosen to ensure minimal disturbance. Sediment and erosion controls were applied per "Blue Book" standards, and noise mitigation practices were enforced throughout.

KEY CHALLENGES

PROXIMITY TO WATERWAY

All works occurred on and over water, requiring non-invasive methods and contingency against riverbank disturbance.

PUBLIC INTERFACE:

The site remained in a publicly accessible area throughout construction. DM Composites implemented clear safety barriers and staging to protect park users.

STRUCTURAL INTEGRATION:

The FRP components needed to align with existing concrete interfaces and slope tolerances of the original structure.

OUTCOME & BENEFITS

The new FRP decking and balustrade solution revitalised the riverside walkway, enhancing safety and accessibility for park visitors. Unlike timber, FRP offered long-term reliability with zero corrosion and no need for repainting or sealing – key for riverside installations exposed to constant moisture and UV exposure.

KEY OUTCOMES INCLUDE:

- Structural renewal of a flood-prone public asset using non-corrosive materials.
- Environmental compliance through careful design and waterway protection measures.
- Improved aesthetics and functional usability of the park's river-facing edge.
- Future-proof design capable of withstanding flood recurrence and reducing maintenance liabilities for Council.

DM Composites' DMWalk solution delivered significant community value through this essential upgrade, providing a safe and enduring infrastructure outcome aligned with the broader CLIRP recovery strategy.

POST-COMPLETION RESILIENCE

Following installation, the Taree riverside precinct experienced another significant flood event which inundated the newly upgraded area. Despite these extreme conditions, the entire DM WOOD WPC Decking and balustrade system withstood the floodwaters without any defects or damage. This performance validated the durability and water-resistant design of DM Composites' solution, confirming its reliability in harsh and unpredictable flood-prone environments.

DM COMPOSITES

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