70-metre seawall to be built at Portsea

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A new 70-metre seawall and walking track will be built on the Portsea foreshore in time for the summer peak after pummelling waves caused major erosion at the popular holiday spot.

The state government is also funding a new 12-month wave monitoring survey off Portsea to determine the cause of the new wave pattern that has seen much of the beach washed away and necessitated large sandbagging and rock barriers to protect the area.

A tender for the seawall released recently calls for the "construction of a rock revetment and incorporated walking path at Portsea front beach of approximately 70 metres. The rock revetment will be located from the Portsea pier access road to the eastern edge of the existing masonry seawall".

An existing seawall at the site has been smashed by waves and the nearby bank is collapsing from erosion.

The new path built above the seawall will allow visitors to access nearby beaches without having to wade through the water.

A previous track has been inundated from the heavy erosion and shifting sand.

President of the Nepean Ratepayers Association Colin Watson said the new seawall was needed to prevent further damage to the Portsea foreshore.

He said if the work was not carried out "the public toilet in the park would soon fall into the ocean".

Mr Watson said a long-term solution had to be found to the wave swell causing the damage in recent years at Portsea.

He said studies indicated some of the wave swell entering Port Phillip Bay was deflecting off the bottom of the bay towards the Portsea foreshore, causing the erosion damage and shifting beach sand.

He said the beach would not return until the wave swell pattern was altered.

The loss of the beach at Portsea has occurred since 2009.

In 2008 the $717 million channel deepening project began with 657 days of dredging moving nearly 23 million cubic metres of sand and silt. Rock was also removed from the top of plateaus within the shipping channels at the entrance to Port Phillip Bay.

Mr Watson said he was focused on fixing the erosion problem at Portsea and not on what caused it.

Environment Minister Ryan Smith said beach environments were dynamic and required new infrastructure over time.

"I am confident this project will benefit the local environment and community, with its completion in time for the peak summer period," he said.

"The Victorian government is investing over $44 million in protecting coastal assets, renourishing beaches, rejuvenating park and tourism facilities and improving access and safety along our coast. The Victorian government is committed to preserving one of Victoria's most beautiful natural assets."

This story was found at: http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/70metre-seawall-to-be-built-at-portsea-20140905-10cweb.html