

# Sydney Coastal Councils Group Climate Change Forum: *For Councillors*

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<p>The handbook from the event is available for download from the SCCG Website and includes all presentations from the forum  <a href="http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au">http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au</a></p>	
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## Section 1 Aims, Methodology and Discoveries

### 1. Introduction

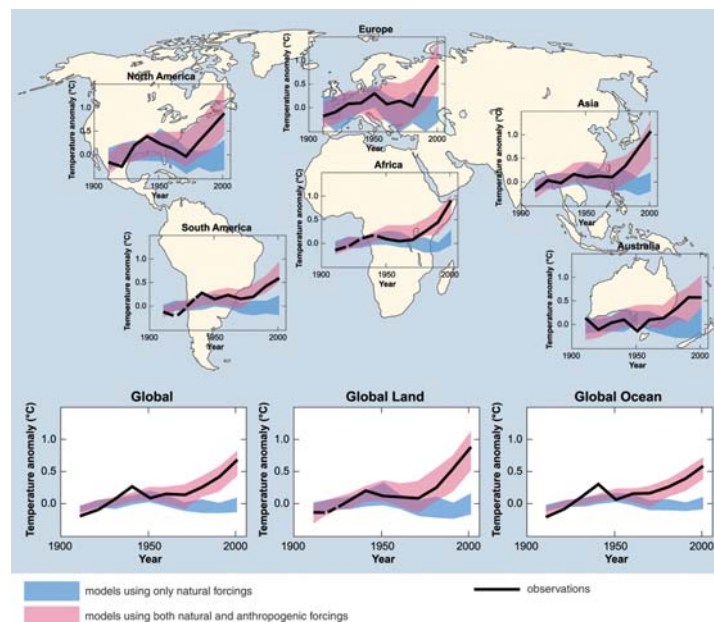
The Sydney Coastal Councils Group Member Councils have been at the forefront of understanding climate change science and initiating climate change action responses. It has been two decades since the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). During the IPCC's inception, terms such as greenhouse effect, and global warming were the common expressions used to label this phenomenon. Today the expressions of 'Climate Risk' and 'Climate Emergency' are frequently becoming the labels used to bring attention to this critically important challenge. In 2007, the IPCC released its Fourth Assessment Report that presented the science of climate change and the associated socio-economic implications and future scenarios. The Fourth Assessment Report stated that the world's climate is changing and that human's are playing a significant role of influence.

“Warming of the Climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice and rising global average sea level (Fig 1).”(IPCC)<sup>1</sup>

It is also recognised that a proportion of this change is being caused by humans.

“Global atmospheric concentrations of Carbon Dioxide CO<sub>2</sub>, Methane CH<sub>4</sub> and Nitrous Oxide N<sub>2</sub>O have increased markedly as a result of human activities since 1750...Global increases in CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations are due primarily to fossil fuel use...There is a *very high confidence* that the global average net effect of human activities since 1750 has been one of warming.”<sup>2</sup> (IPCC)

The Sydney Coastal Councils Group endeavoured to present an informative climate change forum featuring the topics of climate change adaptation, mitigation, risk assessment, case study analysis, vulnerability assessment identification and business case models for action. The Councillor Forum presented a diverse range of presenters and organisations to inspire discussions and actions to address the issue of climate change across the region.



(Fig 1)

<sup>1</sup> IPCC, 2007, Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid



## 2. Forum Overview

- **Origins**

To address the current and the potential impacts of climate change is an important action identified by the SCCG Member Councils. The SCCG Capacity Building Program proposed that a forum bringing together key experts from this field would be an efficient and effective means to present knowledge from the leaders in this field regarding the most up-to-date actions and research focusing on the socio-economic implications of climate risk.

- **In Brief**

The Forum held on the 30 August 2009, showcased the most up-to-date climate science, the SCCG's Eureka award winning method for assessing regional climate change vulnerability in cities, a business case model for addressing the issue, Climate action opportunities for Local Government, a climate mitigation case study, in-depth study of climate change risk assessment and the unique techniques used and outcomes from a community consultation.

- **Support**

The Sydney Coastal Councils Group would like to thank the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority and the City of Sydney for their generous support of the event. Many thanks also go to the presenters who invested much time and effort in making the event so informative and empowering for Sydney's elected representatives.



(Fig 2) Sponsors of the Event



### 3. Forum Presentations

The forum gave Councillor delegates the opportunity to hear from a range of speakers that covered many interesting and thought provoking climate change topics and issues.

#### Key Note Address: 1

Dr. Benjamin Preston, CSIRO Marine & Atmospheric Research, Climate Adaptation Flagship

- **Responding to Climate Change in the Sydney Region: From Assessment to Adaptation**

Dr. Preston highlighted that the Sydney metropolitan region is no stranger to climate variability and its potential consequences. He presented evidence that indicates that climate change as well as continued growth and development in the region will exacerbate the challenge of managing climate risk. He stated that Local Government was well-placed to take a leadership role in climate adaptation from working with appropriate experts to undertake risk assessments through to implementing reforms to planning policies. He also remarked that actions of Local Government must be supported by other levels of government if barriers are to be overcome and resources and capability are to be provided.

#### Key Note Address: 2

Mr. Ian Dunlop, Director, Safe Climate Australia

- **Climate Change, Peak Oil and the Transition to Global Sustainability - the business case for emergency action**

Mr. Dunlop presented an in-depth account of what he believes are warning signs that are signifying a need for climate emergency action initiatives. "The world is facing a sustainability emergency. Climate change and peak oil, along with water and food shortages, are the immediate pressure points. The manner in which we respond to these challenges will fundamentally alter society, business and government in the 21st Century. Rather than a problem, it is a unique opportunity to set humanity on a new course, built on sustainable principles, for our current way-of-life is not sustainable. The business case for emergency action is overwhelming, yet we continue to ignore the warning signs. Why?"

#### Additional Presentations

Ms. Amy Lovesey, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Project Officer,  
Local Government and Shires Association

- **LGSA Climate Change Initiatives**

Ms. Lovesey's presentation detailed the support available from the Local Government and Shires Associations to address climate change, including the NSW Mayors' Agreement and the Climate Change Action Pack website ( <http://www.lgsa-plus.net.au/climatechangeactionpack> ). Also presented was a new project that will deliver a workshop package for councils to use to facilitate workshops and develop local Climate Change Action Plans. These projects aim to provide an understanding of climate change and local vulnerability and develop a sense of responsibility and willingness to act. Ms. Lovesey noted that Councillors have an important role, providing leadership for their council and community, influencing values and shifting the culture toward taking responsibility for developing proactive solutions.



Mr. Nik Midlam, Manager Environmental Strategy, City of Sydney

- **Local Government Case Studies: Climate Mitigation**

Mr. Midlam outlined the drivers for an emissions reduction programs at the local level, and the recent outcomes and programs underway by the City of Sydney. The presentation had an overview of the key steps and processes undertaken when the City became the first carbon neutral council in Australia in 2008. Also presented were the energy and emissions aspects of Sustainable Sydney 2030 - the City's long term strategic plan - with an overview of the next steps in developing the City's decentralised energy master plan.

Mr. David Morrissey, Director, Sustainability Learning Institute, Sydney

- **Adaptation Using Systemic Practices**

Mr. Morrissey introduced the systemic approach used in recent applications: Climate Adaptation Planning in California, Dairy Australia's Climate Change planning and with some community groups and Councils in NSW. In particular, adaptation can be seen not just as a 'problem' but as an opportunity for social, commercial and environmental innovation. Mr. Morrissey demonstrated that within this context the use of systemics enabled people to create strategies which are based on the best available knowledge and the interconnectedness of cause-effect relationships and functions.

Ms. Donna Lorenz, Associate Director - Climate Change, AECOM, Melbourne

- **Towards a City of Melbourne Climate Change Adaptation Strategy: A Risk Assessment and Action Plan**

Ms. Lorenz presented the development of the City of Melbourne's adaptation strategy. The presentation detailed the potential climate change impacts and implications for Melbourne over time, combined with the likely changing dynamics of its population and industry into the future. Based on current known resilience levels and control measures, the strategy identified critical risks for Council and the municipality to address and provide the foundation of an adaptation plan for all city stakeholders to respond to them. Ms. Lorenz noted that an effective risk assessment provides a clear knowledge of the risks that can be tolerated and a system that minimises or addresses those risks that cannot be tolerated.

Ms. Marnie Kikken, Climate Project Coordinator, Nature Conservation Council of NSW

- **NSW Community Climate Summit: Learnings from Meaningful Community Exchange**

The NSW Climate Consensus Project utilised the innovative approach of deliberative democracy to enable representative groups of everyday citizens in NSW to contribute to climate change policy and program development at both a Local and State Government level. Through a series of 12 local forums across NSW and a state-wide NSW Community Climate Summit, randomly selected citizens, who represented the wider community demographic, deliberated over the question 'How can we work together to respond to climate change?', to offer detailed recommendations to local and State government. Concurrently, this community engagement approach aimed to build resilient and adaptive communities through education for sustainability and collaborative action. The project was funded by the NSW Environmental Trust and delivered in partnership with 12 local councils.

Mr. Ragnar Haabjoern, Project Officer - Capacity Building, SCCG


- **SCCG Climate Change Community Forum Feedback Presentation**

Mr. Haabjoern presented a critique of the workshop findings from the recently held SCCG Community Climate Change forum. A key insight from the information provided by the participants was that the community is asking for climate change focused capacity building opportunities. In addition to planning their own successful climate change inspired initiatives, participants were asked to envision successful projects, opportunities or partnerships that Local Government could initiate or be a part of. From the responses four recurring themes emerged: Learning | Resources | Collaboration | Guidance.



## 4. Attendance

The table below (Table 3) shows just a snapshot of the Local Government areas that were represented at the forum.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manly</li> <li>• Willoughby</li> <li>• Leichardt</li> <li>• Hornsby</li> <li>• Warringah</li> <li>• North Sydney</li> <li>• Randwick</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pittwater</li> <li>• Woollahra</li> <li>• Kiama</li> <li>• Waverley</li> <li>• Liverpool</li> <li>• Mosman</li> </ul>
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(Table 3)

## 5. Conclusion

The 'SCCG Climate Change Forum: For Councillors' provided an opportunity to present the extensive progress of admissible climate change evidence and the growing quantity of actions currently available. From the numerous positive comments from the attendees, the forum provided quality information and a great opportunity to discuss with fellow Councillors and the presenters the current and future needs brought on by the climate change challenge.

The SCCG Capacity Building Program is looking forward to building on from the insights and outcomes from the experience of presenting the SCCG Climate Change Forum for Councillors.

The SCCG Capacity Building Program will continue to endeavour to provide an ongoing series of information sessions and workshops on emerging issues relevant to Member Councils and in a format and structure that suits Member Council staff and Councillors.



## Section 2: Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Event Presentations

The handbook from the event is available for download from the SCCG Website and includes all presentations from the forum

<http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au>

### Appendix 2

#### Event Assessment

## Evaluation

The following are the results from the individual Feedback forms delegates were asked to submit at the conclusion of the day's proceedings.

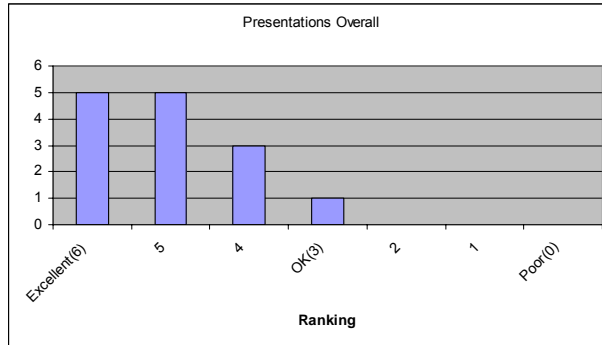
### Summary

Delegates were asked to Rank on a Scale from (6) Excellent through to (0) Poor on a range of aspects of the forum's proceedings including:

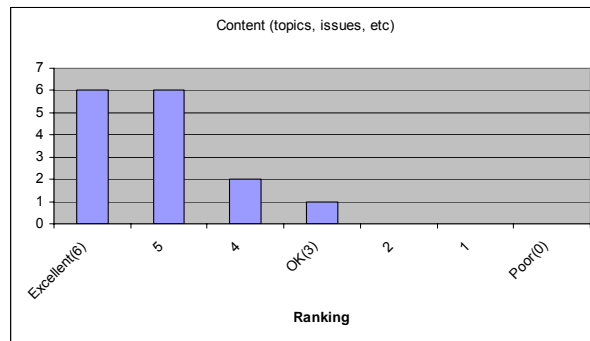
- Presentations Overall
- Content (topics, issues, etc)
- Additional Resources (Handouts)
- Registration Process
- Venue
- Catering
- Time of day
- Overall



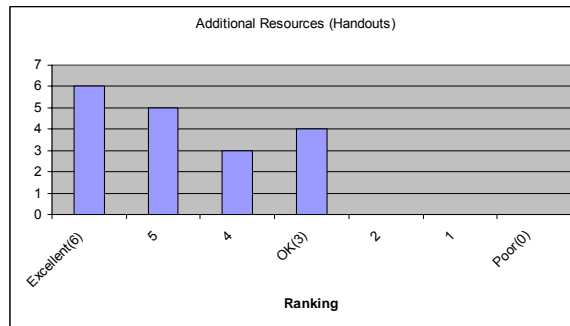
**(a) Presentations Overall**



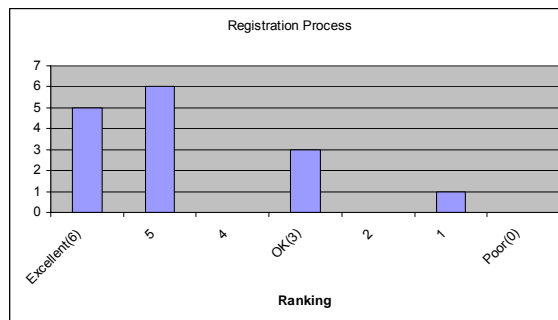
**(b) Content**



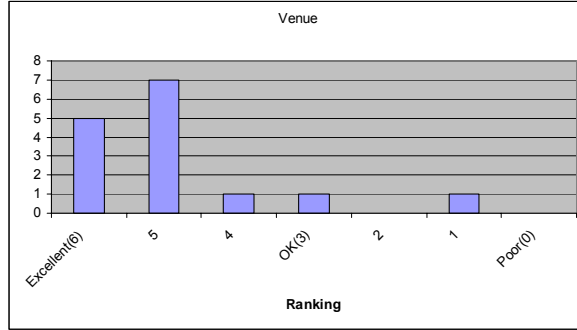
**(c) Additional Resources**



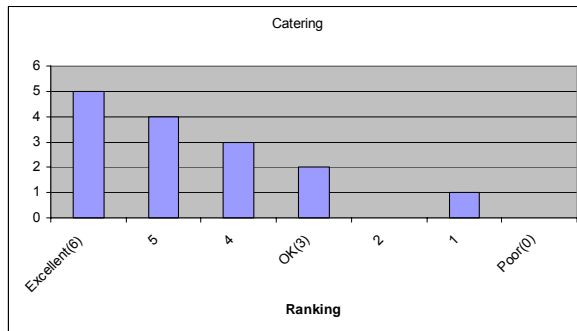
**(d) Registration Process**



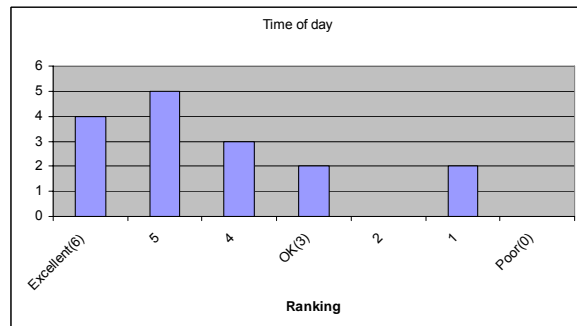
**(e) Venue**



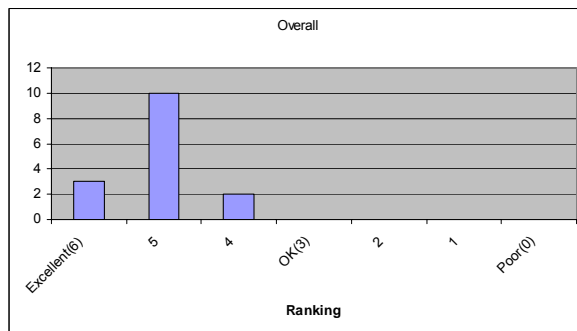
**(f) Catering**



**(g) Time of Day**



**(h) Overall**









*The SCCG Capacity Building Program aims to discover, integrate and develop best practice thinking, learning and action for its Member Councils and relevant stakeholders to be more effective and efficient with coastal and estuary natural resource management, climate change responses and emerging sustainable development issues and needs by;*

**Raising Awareness  
Transferring Information and knowledge  
Increasing Skills and Training  
Facilitating Coordination and Supporting Member Councils**

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