



## From the Chair

Welcome to the first Coastal Currents newsletter of 2009. I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone back and let you know that the Group has been very busy in the first quarter of 2009. Already this year the Group has released the "Case Studies of Adaptive Capacity" report and participated in the "Strengthening Disaster Risk Management in East Asia and the Pacific Distance Learning Seminar Series". I, along with the Group's Senior Coastal Projects Officer also appeared at the Australian Government's Inquiry into Climate Change and Environmental Impacts on Coastal Communities. I am also very pleased to

announce the SCCG's Capacity Building Program is planning an "Alternative Energy for Coastal Cities Forum" on May 27. The rest of 2009 looks like being just as productive with the Secretariat being successful in gaining funding in excess of \$400,000 to beginning work on the projects Mapping and Responding to Coastal Inundation and Education and Empowerment of Landslide Risk Management Regulators and Practitioners recently approved through the Natural Disaster Mitigation Program.

Clr Wendy WcMurdo  
Chairpeson



## MAJOR PROJECTS IN 2008

### Natural Disaster Mitigation Program Funding Successes

In February the SCCG was informed that it had been successful in receiving two grants through the Natural Disaster Mitigation Program to undertake the following projects: Mapping and Responding to Coastal Inundation; and Education and Empowerment of Landslide Risk Management Regulators and Practitioners. More information on these projects will be provided in future updates. The

implementation of both these projects will assist SCCG Member Councils and Local Government more broadly respond to the impacts of climate change, coastal hazards and landslide risk management.

### Case Studies of Adaptive Capacity: Systems Approach to Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategies

The SCCG is pleased to announce the release of the "Case Studies of Adaptive Capacity" report, produced in partnership with researchers from the CSIRO, University of the Sunshine Coast, and WWF Australia. The report summarises an in-depth analysis of barriers to climate adaptation facing local governments in coastal Sydney, based upon interviews with over thirty council staff and Councillors. The case studies represent the final phase of a two year National flagship project "A Systems Approach to Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategies in Metropolises" funded under the Department of Climate Change (DCC) Adaptation Program. The project has sought to assess and build understanding about the potential implications of climate change at the local level while providing Local Governments with clear paths forward in the design of appropriate responses. The report is available from: [www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/system-approach-to-regional-climate-change-adaptation-strategies-in-metropolises/index.php](http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/system-approach-to-regional-climate-change-adaptation-strategies-in-metropolises/index.php)

### Sydney Beaches Valuation Project - Online Survey

The Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG) has partnered with the University of NSW to undertake a valuation of selected Sydney beaches, in order to inform both existing coastal management, and also the response to enhanced climate change impacts. As part of this project, you are invited to participate in an online survey, which asks questions about current beach usage and future management of Sydney beaches. Your responses will be used to assist Local and State Governments to make more informed decisions on how to protect coastal property, infrastructure, beach environments and amenity at threat of coastal erosion due to enhanced climate change impacts. This survey typically takes around 10 minutes to complete, and all responses are completely anonymous. To complete the survey, use the link below. [www.unipark.de/uc/](http://www.unipark.de/uc/)

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### SCCG News and Upcoming Events

#### Invitation for SCCG consultation with councils

In the interest of hearing from Member Councils and keeping the informed and actively engaged in SCCG activities, the SCCG Secretariat has written an invitation to provide interested Member Councils an opportunity to meet with the Executive Officer and the Executive to discuss work and current projects of the Group.

#### Rock Pool Antifouling Technologies Project

SCCG Member Councils are faced with a continual challenge of algae growth on foreshore areas resulting in needs to continual cleaning via a variety of applications to reduce slip risk. Approaches historically used include mechanical cleaning and use of various biocides, particularly chlorine based bleaches. The project will be run over the 2 years with 5-6 trials application sites in the summers of 2008/2009 and 2009/2010. Funding support for this project has been provided by the Department of Environment and Climate Change, Randwick and Sutherland Councils as well as the SCCG.

#### January 12 2009 King Tide Event

On Monday January 12 the SCCG Secretariat ventured to three sites around the south eastern part of Sydney Harbour to capture the January 12 king tide (representing the biggest astronomical tide that will occur in 2009 during day light hours). The Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) asked members of the community along the NSW coast to assist in a volunteer photographic survey of the impact of the king tide. This photographic coverage is being used to create a statewide snapshot of vulnerable areas, many of which will not have been recorded before. DECC are currently compiling all the photos received and preparing a report and associated webpage.

#### 2009 SCCG Summer Activities Program

The SCCG Summer Activities Program has been completed for another year. The program which aims to promote coastal educational activities during January was a huge success. Over 2000 people enjoyed the 65 events offered. The 2009 program involved a number of interesting events including wetland tours, learn to surf lessons and bird watching. The SCCG would like to congratulate the 12 Councils who participated in the program and thank Coastcare for their ongoing support.

#### SCCG Annual Member Council Survey

The SCCG Annual Member Council Survey is undertaken in December every year to enable the Secretariat to identify activities that assist Member Councils and identify avenues and activities to further enhance the services provided to Member Councils. All respondents noted that the SCCG was significantly assisting to manage coastal and estuarine environments. As well as providing the service of facilitating coordination of councils within the region it was identified that the Secretariat were responsible for providing services in the following key areas: Leadership; Enhancing limited resources; Strategic projects and partnerships as well as facilitation of information exchange and raising stakeholder awareness.

### Matters of interest

#### Funding for community water and energy savings

Round 2 of the NSW Climate Change Fund Public Facilities Program is open for applications with an additional funding stream of up to \$40,000 for community organisations to make facilities more water and energy efficient. Applications close 30 April 2009. For more information [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/ccfpfp.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/ccfpfp.htm)

#### Climate Change Fund Local Promotion Program

The Department of Environment and Climate Change is offering councils up to \$5000 to promote the NSW Climate Change Fund rebates to their residents. The Local Promotion Program aims to tap into councils' strong communication links with residents and support existing sustainable living programs. Up to \$5000 is available for any promotional activity, nominated by the council, which encourages householders to take advantage of the rebates for rainwater tanks, hot water systems and/or insulation. For more information, please email DECC, at [amanda.kane@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:amanda.kane@environment.nsw.gov.au)

#### DECC Biodiversity Training Course for councils

The NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change commissioned Eco Logical Australia and the Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE to develop and deliver a 3-day Biodiversity Training Course specifically for Local Government. The course is designed to assist council to manage biodiversity and threatened species, particularly in relation to Council's legislative obligations. The course will be relevant to Council staff that deal with biodiversity issues, including staff in the areas of development control, strategic planning, bush land management, natural resources management, engineering, landscape assessment and parks management. For more information contact: [biodiversitytraining@ecoaus.com.au](mailto:biodiversitytraining@ecoaus.com.au)

#### Warringah Climate Challenge

Warringah Council is partnering with the NSW Nature Conservation Council in the Warringah Climate Challenge. The challenge aims to reduce Warringah's greenhouse emissions as well as help create a more sustainable community and was launched on 21 March at Dee Why Beach. The Climate Challenge provides tangible ways for the Warringah community to work together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and develop initiatives and solutions to climate change [www.climatechallenge.org.au](http://www.climatechallenge.org.au)

#### Regional Water Quality Monitoring Program

The SCCG is updating its Monitoring Program and Toolkit, launched as a CD-based version in 2000. The SCCG has engaged Dr Ian Armstrong to improve the usability and accessibility of the Toolkit, including the development of a revised web-based format to provide regular updates and information to users. The outcome will be a webpage that will assist councils undertaking water quality monitoring projects and utilising the data gathered to identify and implement projects. It is hoped to finalise and launch the web site mid year. The SCCG is inviting interested individual and organisations to provide comment on the draft webpage. For more information contact [geoff@sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au](mailto:geoff@sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au)



## RECENT SCCG AWARDS/ SUBMISSIONS / CONSULTATIONS

### SCCG Capacity Building Program

Recent activities undertaken as part of the SCCG Capacity Building Program that are aimed at increasing the capacity of SCCG Member Councils and those involved in Natural Resource Management include:

#### **The Natural Resource Management Grants List**

The SCCG has compiled an extensive grants list of all available grants and funding opportunities available for Natural Resource Management activities. The complete list can be found at [http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/documents/SCCGGrantsListMarch2009\\_000.pdf](http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/documents/SCCGGrantsListMarch2009_000.pdf)

#### **SCCG Capacity Building Direction Document and Survey**

To ensure the SCCG Capacity Building Program meets the needs of its Member Councils the Secretariat are currently seeking feedback on the programs direction, actions and deliverables of the program from Member Councils.

#### **Upcoming events:**

The SCCG Secretariat is currently planning a number of information and capacity building forums. These include:

**Alternative Energy for Coastal Councils Forum** 27 May 2009. 9am - 5pm the Marconi Terrace, Town Hall House City of Sydney.

**3 Climate Change Forums** on the impacts of climate change and opportunities for adaptation.

Adaptation Planning Forum for Councils (June)

Community Climate Change Information Forum (July)

Councillor Climate Change Information Forum (August)

**Estimating Sea-Level Extremes in an Uncertain Future workshop** 9 June 2009 (SCCG Member Councils Only)

### SCCG Submissions and Advocacy

Already in 2009 the SCCG Secretariat has sent correspondence to a range of stakeholders outlining its views or requesting information on the following issues:

- The Draft NSW Sea level Rise Policy
- A Sydney wide strategy for the storage of recreational boats
- Current NSW Government Climate Change Activities
- A New Biodiversity Strategy for NSW - Discussion Paper
- The New Zealand Household Energy End-Use Project (HEEP)

### **Inquiry into climate change and environmental impacts on coastal communities**

SCCG Chairperson, Wendy McMurdo, and Senior Coastal Projects Officer, Craig Morrison, appeared at the Australian Government Inquiry into climate change and environmental impacts on coastal communities. Clr McMurdo and Craig highlighted the desire of the SCCG for the Australian Government to take the lead in assisting councils address the impacts of climate change on coastal communities through the following actions:

The provision of information on the impacts of climate change on coastal communities;

The integration of climate change adaptation actions into strategic and land use planning

The development of tools and process to assist with the disclosure of climate change risks to coastal communities

### **Strengthening Disaster Risk Management in East Asia and the Pacific Distance Learning Seminar Series**

Recently the SCCG participated in a Strengthening Disaster Risk Management in East Asia and the Pacific Distance Learning Seminar focused on assessing tools to assist Local Governments adapt to climate change. The seminar, facilitated by the World Bank, focused on discussion of a document called the Climate Resilient Cities Primer. The Primer is a tool, developed for city governments in the East Asia Region that aims to help them better understand how to plan for climate change impacts and impending natural disasters through sound urban planning to reduce vulnerabilities. The SCCG's role in this forum was to outline the experience of Local Governments in adapting to the impacts of climate change in Sydney's coastal zone. Information about the forum and the primer can be found at [www.worldbank.org/eap/climatecities](http://www.worldbank.org/eap/climatecities).

### **SCCG presents to Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China delegation.**

SCCG Chairperson Clr. Wendy McMurdo, Executive Officer, Geoff Withycombe and Senior Coastal Projects Officer, Craig Morrison have presented on the aims and activities of the Group to a delegation of 12 from the Kunming City, Yunnan Province. The delegation was particularly interested in the activities of the SCCG relating to climate change, groundwater management, government coordination and communications.

### **Building the Resilience of Sydney's Salty Communities—Caring for our Country investment proposal**

The SCCG has recently submitted an investment proposal through the Caring for our Country program to undertake a project. The Building Resilience of Sydney's Salty Communities project will assess and improve the resilience of the Sydney regions nationally significant intertidal habitats (wetlands, saltmarsh communities, mangroves, rock platforms, dunes and sandy shores) to existing and future threats.



## National and International Coastal News

### Climate change may wake up 'sleeper' weeds

Climate change will cause some of Australia's potential weeds to move south by up to 1000km, according to a report by scientists at CSIRO's Climate Adaptation Flagship. The predicted move south by both native and introduced plants would produce a 'vacuum' in northern Australia so, to prevent lurking species from invading, a new list of alert and sleeper weeds for this region needs to be developed. [www.csiro.au/news/Climate-change-may-wake-sleeper-weeds.html](http://www.csiro.au/news/Climate-change-may-wake-sleeper-weeds.html)

### Indian Ocean linked to Australian droughts

The research shows Australia's major droughts over the past 120 years all coincide with fluctuations in ocean temperature known as the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD). Researchers from the University of New South Wales (UNSW) say their study explains why a series of La Nina weather events, which usually bring Pacific rains to Australia, have failed to break the current drought, the worst in 100 years. When the IOD is in a negative phase it creates cool Indian Ocean water west of Australia and warm Timor Sea water to the north. This generates winds that pick up moisture from the ocean and sweep across southern Australia, delivering wet conditions. In a positive phase, the pattern of Indian Ocean temperatures is reversed, weakening the winds and reducing the amount of moisture picked up and transported across Australia. For more information <http://enviro.org.au/eneews.asp>

### Fish seen shifting 200 kms by 2050 due to warming

Global warming will push fish stocks more than 200 km toward the poles by mid-century in a dislocation of ocean life, a study of more than 1,000 marine species projected. Tropical nations were likely to suffer most as commercial fish stocks swam north or south to escape warming waters, the report said. Alaska, Greenland and Nordic nations would be among those to benefit from more fish. Some species could die off, such as fish that thrive in cold waters and would have nowhere to go if the oceans warmed. [www.planetark.com/enviro-news/item/51590](http://www.planetark.com/enviro-news/item/51590)

## Conferences

**Melbourne Planning Summit, 28th - 29th April, Melbourne.** The Summit will provide an opportunity for discussion and review of latest developments in urban planning in Melbourne, as well as facilitating the exchange of ideas on how to achieve sustainable planning objectives. More information can be found at [www.halledit.com.au/mps](http://www.halledit.com.au/mps)

### National Emissions Trading Summit, 7 - 8 May 2009, Sydney Harbour

Past reviews supported an active agenda on emissions reduction, but now faced with a global economic crisis the Government has taken a reactive approach, proposing a 5-15% cut as opposed to the 25-40% cut recommended by climate change experts. The conference will discuss if these targets meet emissions reduction objective and how will the policy meet the needs of the various industries, while also ensuring the least cost to households? More information can be found at [www.informa.com.au/conferences/Environment/national-emissions-trading-summit](http://www.informa.com.au/conferences/Environment/national-emissions-trading-summit)

**2009 Queensland Coastal Conference - Waves of Change, 13-15 May, Gold Coast.** The Conference program will feature a number of outstanding speakers, several concurrent sessions, workshops and poster presentations. Delegates will include Commonwealth, State and Local Governments, Natural Resource Management regional bodies, leading research and education organisations, coastal and marine industries, coastal and marine consultants, managers, planners and engineers, NGOs, user groups, indigenous groups and many other community organisations. More information can be found at [www.iceaustralia.com/qldcoast09/](http://www.iceaustralia.com/qldcoast09/)

The SCCG consists of 15 member councils with sea and harbour frontages in Sydney, including, Botany, Hornsby, Leichhardt, Manly, Mosman, North Sydney, Pittwater, Randwick, Rockdale, Sutherland, Sydney, Warringah, Waverley, Willoughby and Woollahra. Collectively we represent over 1.3 million Sydneysiders. The Group is concerned with the promotion, cooperation and coordination of member councils to achieve the sustainable management of the urban coastal environment. **Sydney Coastal Councils Group Contact Details: Website: [www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au](http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au) Email: [info@sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au](mailto:info@sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au)**

