

OUTCOMES REPORT:

Sydney Coastal Councils Group Policy Positions on the Key Coastal Management Issues for the 2011 NSW State Election

April 2011



The Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG) is a Regional Organisation of Councils representing 15 Councils in the Sydney coastal region. The Group is concerned with the promotion of cooperation and coordination to achieve the sustainable management of the urban coastal environment.

Protection of the NSW coastal environment and coastal communities requires policies and actions that address a number of issues. The futility of continuing to approve development and allow redevelopment in areas of identified hazards (without addressing the hazard) has been demonstrated through the devastating losses of infrastructure and private assets in recent flooding in Queensland and Victoria. Such planning failures must not continue to be repeated in NSW.

With dramatic increases in population, development and recreational pressures facing the NSW coastline there is an imperative need to increase State Government guidance, involvement and support on management on coastal management in NSW over the next four years.

In preparation for the 2011 NSW State Election the SCCG formerly resolved to requests that political parties contesting the election outline their policy positions on the following 9 key coastal management issues.

- An independent review into coastal management in NSW
- An independent coastal advisory body for NSW
- A consistent and coordinated approach to climate change adaptation in the NSW coastal zone
- Funding for Local Government and community coastal programs and initiatives
- Decision making based on local plans and regulation as well as public participation
- Maintenance of public ownership and public access to and along the coastal zone
- The delivery of total water cycle management for urban coastal environments
- Maintenance and enhancement of coastal biodiversity through the NSW planning framework
- A NSW Marine Management Strategy

In identifying these issues and developing the associated policy positions the SCCG Secretariat undertook extensive consultation with Councillor and staff delegates of SCCG Member Councils. This has ensured that the issues identified and policy positions represent the views all SCCG Member Councils. NSW Labor, the Coalition and the Greens responded.

On the 26th of March 2011 the NSW Coalition was elected as the Government of NSW. This document contains a summary of the Coalition's responses on the 9 key coastal management issues. Please note the responses provided for each issue have been taken directly from the Coalition's response to the SCCG and not edited by the SCCG in any way. Also contained in this document are:

Appendix 1: The Coalition response.

Appendix 2: NSW Government Cabinet as announced April 3 2011.

Appendix 3: Sitting Members in SCCG Member Council Electorates and Representation in the NSW Legislative Council

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An independent review into coastal management in NSW

Summary of SCCG Position

The SCCG believes an independent review into coastal management in NSW should be commissioned by the NSW Government. Such a review needs to focus on the following:

- Current and future use and values of the coastal zone;
- Coastal zone management activities in NSW including governance arrangements and funding;
- The implementation of objectives and principles of the NSW Coastal Policy;
- Review and improved integration of the NSW Coastal Policy into land use planning and development assessment;
- Increasing the capacity and resource availability of Local Government; and
- The role of communities and industries in integrated coastal management.

Desired Outcome

The delivery of an independent review into coastal management in NSW commissioned by the NSW Government.

Information Request

The SCCG requested the Liberal and National parties their position on the delivery of an independent review into coastal management in NSW commissioned by the NSW Government in 2011.

Coalition Response: No information was provided on this issue in the Coalition response

An independent coastal advisory body for NSW

Summary of SCCG Position

The SCCG believes the creation of an independent Coastal Advisory Body comprising the appropriate departmental, Local Government, community, industry and research representatives, would assist in providing guidance to the Local and State Governments and assist communication between coastal stakeholders including community and industry in NSW. The body incorporating the roles and functions of the NSW Coastal Panel could broadly assist in:

- Identifying emerging issues and research relevant to the NSW coastline;
- Advising on the development and direction of coastal policy and projects;
- Ensuring new planning instruments are consistent with the NSW Coastal Policy and the objectives of Ecologically Sustainable Development;
- Providing general and specific guidance to Councils on land use planning, infrastructure and population pressures;
- Development and implementation of coastline and emergency management planning; and
- Identifying opportunities to support stakeholder engagement and involvement in coastal zone management.

Desired Outcome

The establishment of an independent coastal advisory body for NSW.

Information Request

The SCCG requested the Coalition outline their position on the establishment an independent Coastal Advisory Body for NSW, such as the NSW Coastal Council.

Coalition Response: No information was provided on this issue in the Coalition response

A consistent and coordinated approach to climate change adaptation in the NSW coastal zone

Summary of SCCG Position

To assist councils and the community adapt to the impacts of climate change in line with the six themes above the SCCG believes the following strategies, processes and frameworks should be developed and implemented through an endorsed action plan for managing the impacts of climate change in the coastal zone:

- Processes for the integration of climate change into the strategic planning process for coastal management;
- Consistent processes for gathering, storing and reporting information on climate change risks and vulnerability throughout NSW;
- The implementation of a risk management strategy for identifying and managing impacts;
- A framework that prioritises actions related to adaptation;
- Strategies for engaging all relevant stakeholders; and
- Coordination of NSW strategies with existing national and international strategies.

A consistent and coordinated approach to climate change adaptation in the NSW coastal zone must be supported by a commitment from the State Government to provide the necessary supporting funding and resources for councils to implement local actions that are consistent with State and Federal strategies.

Desired Outcome

A NSW Government strategy and funding commitment to the delivery of a consistent and coordinated approaches to climate change adaptation in the NSW coastal zone.

Information Request

The SCCG requested the Liberal and National parties outline their position on how it would achieve the delivery of a consistent and coordinated approach to climate change adaptation in the NSW coastal zone.

Coalition Response

The NSW Liberals & Nationals are committed to climate change and supporting adaptation to coastal communities. Disappointingly the Keneally Labor Government has reneged on its 2008 promise to produce and release the NSW Climate Change Action Plan.

This is why we will

- Establish a Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy to champion the development of renewable energy.
- Develop a 2020 NSW Renewable Energy Plan to provide a blueprint to increase the proportion of energy from 7% to meet the target of 20% renewable energy consumption by 2020.

Funding for Local Government and community coastal programs and initiatives

Summary of SCCG Position

SCCG strongly urges the allocation of funding for initiatives and activities that are specifically undertaken in coastal environments. Funding that supports management plan development and implementation, coastal monitoring programs, marine habitat protection, coastal planning and capacity building would enable councils to protect the threatened environmental, social and economic values of the NSW coastline zone.

Desired Outcome

A significant increase in funding for Local Government and community coastal programs and initiatives.

Information Request

The SCCG requested the Liberal and Nation Parties outline their position on a commitment to the allocation of funding for initiatives and activities that must be undertaken to assist councils and communities preserve threatened coastal assets and values.

Coalition Response

Supporting Local Governments

In relation to supporting councils, especially on the coast, the NSW Liberals & Nationals will unlock up to \$1 billion in funds for local councils to upgrade urban and economic infrastructure which includes coastal communities. In order to rebuild NSW and clear this infrastructure backlog, we recognise government needs to partner with councils who play such an important role in maintaining local amenities.

Rescuing our Waterways

Waterways are the lifeblood of many communities. The State's lakes, rivers, harbours and estuaries provide not only a variety of recreational activities, but are the basis for many jobs and economic development.

Yet under Labor, our waterways have been left to degrade. Many waterways have been left to silt up – damaging the environmental health of the waterways and damaging commercial fishing, tourism, oyster farming and boating industries. The environmental damage can be significant. The inability for the Myall River to flush effectively has seen thousands of fish die from various fungal-related diseases and dramatically low salinity levels from poor water flows. Labor has simply not done enough dredging of key waterways to ensure they remain safe for watercraft and are environmentally healthy.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals are committed to the ongoing sustainable use of waterways. We understand that dredging of estuaries, coastal rivers and harbour entrances is required to maintain safe and unrestricted navigation and to improve waterway conditions for boating enthusiasts.

A NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will commit \$1.5 million in funding to support urgent dredging projects across NSW. Our sustainable dredging strategy will deliver ongoing recreational boating access, the continued viability of commercial boating operations and support industries.

Decision making based on local plans and regulation as well as public participation

Summary of SCCG Position

Reforms to the NSW Planning framework significantly reduce the requirement for the consideration of local regulation and controls for major developments in NSW. The introduction of Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, the NSW Infrastructure State Environmental Planning Policy and the establishment of Joint Regional Planning Panels have resulted in the approval of number of developments in coastal and estuarine environments that are inconsistent with local planning regulations and strongly opposed by coastal communities.

These reforms significantly limit councils and the communities they represent from effectively participating in the development assessment process for large scale developments in the sensitive coastal zone.

Desired Outcome

Reforms to the NSW Planning Framework that ensure all major and state significant development assessment decisions are consistent with local plans and regulations as well as allow for meaningful public consultation.

Information request: The SCCG requested the Liberal and National Parties outline what actions they will take to ensure that:

1. Thorough, consistent and transparent environmental assessment for all development proposals occurring in the coastal zone taking into account local plans and regulations and policies will be undertaken.
2. Local Government and the community are provided with sufficient information and opportunity to meaningfully participate in strategic planning and development assessment. Especially in the decision make frameworks applied through Part 3A assessments as well as the decisions of Joint Regional Planning Panels and the Land and Environment Court.

Coalition Response

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will rewrite the State's planning laws. The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act came into force more than 30 years ago. Since then it has become dysfunctional. The planning system does not provide the certainty that communities deserve and our economy needs. Most other Australian states have modernised their planning laws while ours have stagnated.

In recent years more and more approvals have been taken out of community view and decided by politicians – a recipe for collapse of public confidence in the system, and a blow to our reputation as a good place to invest.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals are committed to returning local planning powers to local communities (through their councils). We believe that local residents – through councils – are best placed to make local planning decisions affecting their suburbs. After all, it is local residents – not Macquarie Street planners – who have to live with the results of these planning decisions.

We will scrap 'Part 3A' – one of the wide-ranging powers NSW Labor has given its Planning Minister to override local communities and a factor that ICAC noted had contributed to corruption risks in the planning process.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will commence an overhaul of the planning system soon after March 2011. We will remove the politics from planning decisions. Our review will:

- ensure our planning system centres on merit and the public interest and reempowers local communities on local planning issues;
create a system that enjoys public support – with a state government that respects people;
- create a system that is modern, takes into account sustainability, gives certainty to investors and makes NSW competitive again, including a reserve power for
- genuinely state significant developments; and
- deliver certainty about planning rules and decision making processes that are made transparently and in a timely way.

The review will be conducted by an independent expert panel, with the aim of enacting legislation around the middle of our first term.

Maintenance of public ownership and public access to and along the coastal zone

Summary of SCCG Position

Increasing population, development and recreational demand on the NSW coastline combined with the impacts of climate change such as sea level rise will place increased pressure on publicly owned land in coastal areas. The SCCG supports the retention of public land in the coastal zone and urges all political parties to support actions that protect coastal public lands in perpetuity and ensure the provision of adequate funds for their management. Additionally, SCCG is seeking a commitment for increased funding for the Coastal Lands Protection Scheme to assist with the acquisition of private properties of environmental, social and cultural significance in the coastal zone of NSW.

Public access to and along coastal and foreshore areas is necessary for a wide range of recreational, tourism and commercial uses. One of the stated objectives of the *NSW Coastal Protection Act 1979* and *NSW Coastal Policy* is to promote public access to and along the coastal region and recognise the public's right to access. To achieve this objective councils in NSW require assistance from the State Government through the development of policy and guidelines that balance a number of issues including appropriate types of access, public risk and the protection of sensitive the coastal environments. The SCCG opposes all coastal developments that deny or restrict responsible public access to and along coastal beaches, foreshores and waters.

Desired Outcome

A commitment to policies and programs that ensure the maintenance of public ownership and public access in the coastal zone.

Information request

The SCCG requested the Liberal and National Parties outline what actions they would take to:

1. Protect coastal public lands in perpetuity and ensure the provision of adequate funds for their management.
2. An audit of the impacts of sea level rise and climate change on open space in the NSW Coastal zone including the estuarine areas in Sydney.
3. Increase funding for initiatives such as the Coastal Lands Protection Scheme.
4. Ensure public access and use of foreshore areas is maintained and managed so that fragile ecosystems and habitats are preserved.
5. Oppose coastal developments that deny or restrict responsible public access to coastal beaches, foreshores and waters.

Coalition Response: No information was provided on this issue in the Coalition response

The delivery of total water cycle management for urban coastal environments

Summary of SCCG Position

The delivery of total water cycle management in urban coastal environments requires a whole of government approach that assists coastal councils and their communities in the identification, delivery and resident involvement in water saving and recycling activities. Councils in highly urbanised coastal environments face a number of issues and barriers in delivering total water cycle management. These issues include:

- Working within the frameworks established by the Sydney Metropolitan Water Plan, Water Sharing Plans and Water Savings Plans;
- Delivering integrated sewer recycling and stormwater reuse projects with limited funding and support from the NSW Government;
- Managing groundwater systems with limited information and understanding of the interaction between surface and groundwater systems; and
- Undertaking education campaigns and demand management activities with limited resources and support.

The NSW Governments response to issues of water supply and conservation are articulated in the Sydney Metropolitan Water Plan and Water Sharing Plans. The SCCG believes that these plans are not underpinned by the necessary science or council and resident contribution to delivery of solutions to ensure that their implementation will result in the integrated management of Sydney's water resources or the promotion of water reuse and recycling projects.

Desired Outcome

Through the ongoing review and implementation of the Sydney Metropolitan Water Plan the increased identification, delivery and resident involvement in water saving and recycling activities.

Information request: The SCCG requested the Liberal and National Parties outline their position on:

1. A review of the effectiveness and implementation of the Metropolitan Water Plan and Water Sharing Plans in Sydney.
2. The development of a water re-use and recycling strategy for Sydney, incorporating:
 - The integration of environmental and social benefits during the economic evaluation of recycling and re-use projects.
 - Increased funding for water recycling and re-use projects.
 - Investigation of the interaction between surface and ground water and the associated management considerations.
 - Consistent communication and promotion of water recycling and re-use projects.

Coalition Response: No information was provided on this issue in the Coalition response

Maintenance and enhancement of coastal biodiversity through the NSW planning framework

Summary of SCCG Position

The NSW planning framework must be amended to ensure that the councils and the NSW Government have the tools to minimise the impacts of urban growth on biodiversity through land use planning and development assessment. This can be achieved through the following actions:

- The removal of Part 3A from the *NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* to ensure that environmental impact assessment is undertaken consistently and transparently for all development proposals;
- The requirement for the cumulative impacts of developments on a regions biodiversity to be considered in the strategic planning and development assessments processes;
- The strengthening of the biodiversity provisions within the Principal Local Environment Plan to provide stronger protection to biodiversity through the land use planning development assessment processes;
- Incentives for the protection and conservation of biodiversity on private land;
- A biocertification assessment process that ensures biodiversity is protected and not simply traded off;
- The appropriate funding to ensure that the goals of the NSW Biodiversity Strategy are achieved.

Desired Outcome

The strengthening of the NSW Planning framework that results in the maintenance and enhancement of coastal biodiversity.

Information request:

The SCCG requested the Liberal and National Parties outline what amendments they would make to the NSW planning framework to ensure that the councils and the NSW Government have the tools to minimise the impacts of urban growth on biodiversity through land use planning and development assessment

Coalition Response: No information was provided on this issue in the Coalition response

A NSW Marine Management Strategy

Summary of SCCG Position

The maintenance and enhancement of the NSW marine environment for present and future generations will only be achieved through a coordinated and well resourced management approach comprising the following:

- Identification and protection of natural values;
- Sustainable recreational use, tourism and visitor management;
- Use and extraction of marine resources consistent with the principles of ESD;
- Understanding and mitigating the impact of terrestrial land uses on the marine environment; and
- Environmental Research and Monitoring combined with education campaigns.

To achieve this, the SCCG recommends the NSW Government commit to the development and implementation of a NSW Marine Management Strategy underpinned by local and regional management plans. Such a strategy should focus on identifying appropriate and permissible uses within zones of the NSW marine zone and be combined with monitoring and research, education programs and appropriate levels of funding for enforcement and compliance.

Desired Outcome

The development and implementation of a NSW Marine Management Strategy.

Information request

The SCCG requested the Liberal and National Parties outline their position on:

1. The development and implementation of a NSW Marine Management Strategy; or
2. In the absence of such a strategy how it would ensure that the NSW Marine environment is managed in a coordinated and sustainable manner.

Coalition Response:

Maine Parks: Restoring the Balance

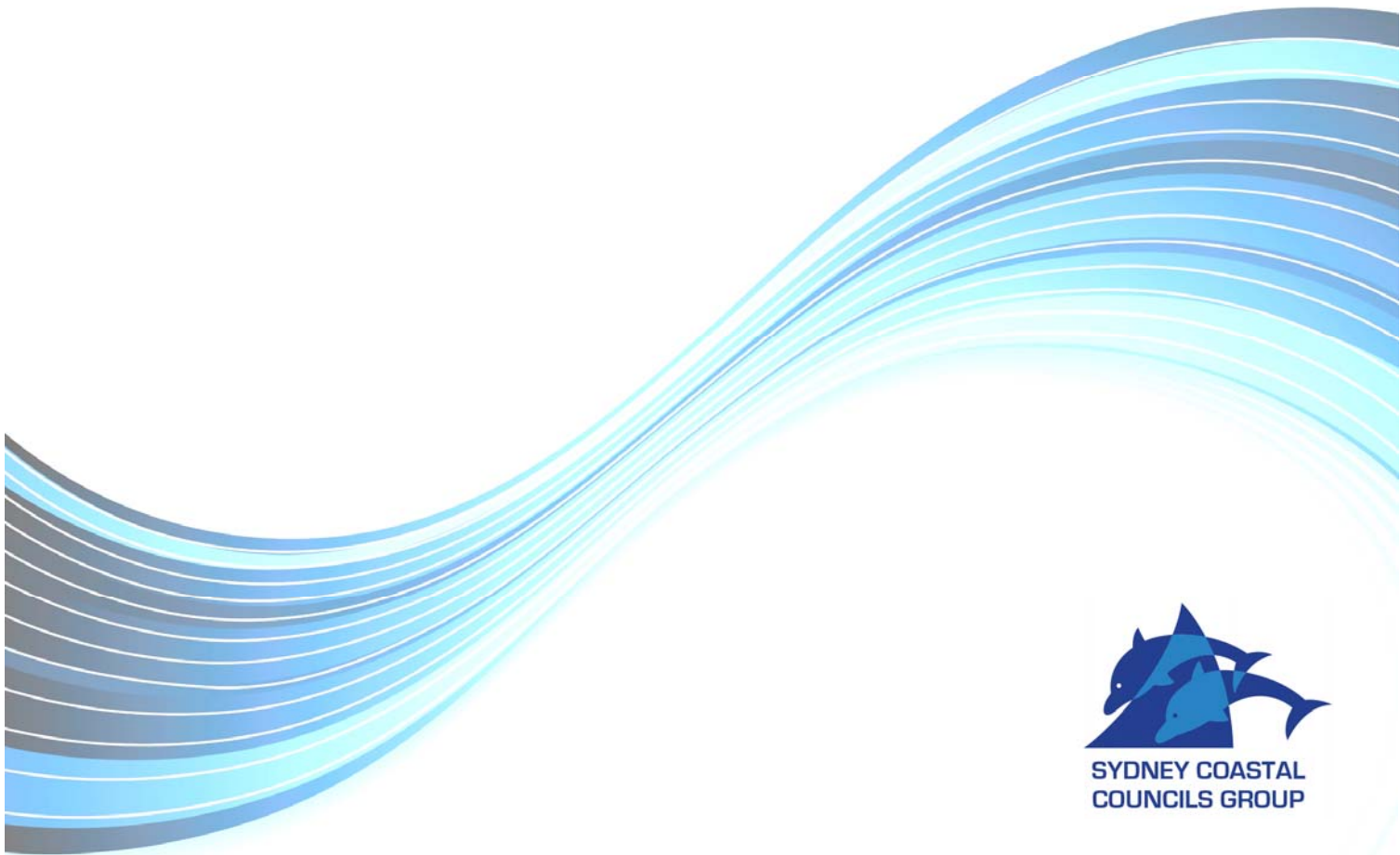
In relation to marine parks, the NSW Liberals & Nationals Marine Parks policy, 'Restoring the Balance' outlines our positive, practical plans based on independent, scientific evidence to give local communities a proper say in decisions that affect their livelihood and lifestyle. Our policy will:

- maintain the existing six marine parks and continue our moratorium on the creation of new marine parks and fishing closures, pending the outcome of our independent scientific audit;
- immediately commission an independent scientific audit of the effectiveness of existing zoning arrangements in meeting domestic and international commitments to the conservation of marine biodiversity;
- examine which lead agency (Fisheries or the Department of Environment and Climate Change) is more appropriate to manage Marine Parks;
- as part of the scientific audit, initiate a comprehensive trial of environmentally friendly recreational fishing techniques in areas under review;
- expand the current Habitat Protection Zones within marine parks subject to the results of the scientific independent audit;
- include Local Community Social and Economic Impact Statements in the audit;

- commit to removing pressure on our fish stocks and marine environment through a \$16 million, 4-year commitment for a commercial fisherman buyout policy;
- audit the current management of NSW Fishing Trust funds and the process by which trust funds are allocated;
- create a new Joint Recreational and Commercial Fishing Advisory Committee including stakeholders from the fishing industries;
- improve the awareness of anglers of zoning arrangements so fines are not handed out to unsuspecting people drifting into restricted areas, and
- review the current system of inspection by Fisheries compliance staff.

We firmly believe Marine Parks do not have to be established at the cost of recreational fishing; and conservation campaigners do not have to be pitted against fishing families.

Appendix 1



18 March 2011

Cr Wendy McMurdo
Chairperson
Sydney Coastal Councils Group
GPO Box 1591
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Cr McMurdo

Thank you for writing to the NSW Liberals and Nationals about the important issues and policies facing your members.

We are pleased to respond to your survey and the issues you have raised. Please find our response attached.

The NSW Liberals and Nationals have a clear goal - **Making NSW Number One Again.**

We have a strong Five Point Action Plan for government:

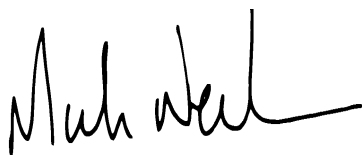
1. **Rebuilding the NSW economy:** through lower taxes and business growth;
2. **Returning quality services:** we will return quality services in areas such as health, transport, education and community safety;
3. **Renovating Infrastructure:** we will renovate the infrastructure that makes a difference to both our economy and people's lives;
4. **Restore accountability to government:** by giving people a say on issues that affect their lives; and
5. **Protect our local environment** and return planning powers to the community.

Throughout the election campaign we will be announcing further plans and policies to Make NSW Number One Again.

Find out more about our Action Plan at www.startthechange.com.au

Thank you again for providing the opportunity to outline our plans and policies.

Yours sincerely



Mark Neeham
Campaign Director - Liberals

Yours sincerely



Ben Franklin
Campaign Director – Nationals

COALITION CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS

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Response to Sydney Coastal Councils Group

The NSW Liberals & Nationals want to encourage greater community participation in decisions that affect their local environment.

Issues such as water management, air quality and waste management should be considered with community input and ideas. On national and global environmental issues, the NSW Liberals & Nationals will lead by example where possible to promote and support innovations in transport-related emission technology, planning to encourage public transport and bicycle use and measures to encourage renewable and lower-carbon energy technologies.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will act to constrain politics in decision-making, including on environmental and planning issues and ensure our policy approaches on any issue are backed by evidence and are sustainable.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals are committed to climate change and supporting adaption to coastal communities. Disappointingly the Keneally Labor Government has reneged on its 2008 promise to produce and release the NSW Climate Change Action Plan.

This is why we will:

- Establish a Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy to champion the development of renewable energy.
- Develop a 2020 NSW Renewable Energy Plan to provide a blueprint to increase the proportion of energy from 7% to meet the target of 20% renewable energy consumption by 2020.

Re-writing NSW Planning Laws

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will rewrite the State's planning laws. The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act came into force more than 30 years ago. Since then it has become dysfunctional. The planning system does not provide the certainty that communities deserve and our economy needs. Most other Australian states have modernised their planning laws while ours have stagnated.

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The NSW Liberals & Nationals are committed to returning local planning powers to local communities (through their councils). We believe that local residents – through councils – are best placed to make local planning decisions affecting their suburbs. After all, it is local residents – not Macquarie Street planners – who have to live with the results of these planning decisions.

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- create a system that enjoys public support – with a state government that respects people;
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The NSW Liberals & Nationals are committed to the ongoing sustainable use of our waterways. We understand that dredging of estuaries, coastal rivers and harbour entrances is required to maintain safe and unrestricted navigation and to improve waterway conditions for boating enthusiasts.

A NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will commit \$1.5 million in funding to support urgent dredging projects across NSW. Our sustainable dredging strategy will deliver ongoing recreational boating access, the continued viability of commercial boating operations and support industries.

Appendix 2

NSW Government Cabinet as announced April 3 2011

Minister	Portfolio
The Hon. Barry O'Farrell, MP	Premier Western Sydney
The Hon. Andrew Stoner, MP	Deputy Premier Trade and Investment Regional Infrastructure and Services
The Hon. Jillian Skinner, MP	Health Medical Research.
The Hon. Adrian Piccoli, MP	Education
The Hon. Michael Gallacher, MP	Police and Emergency Services The Hunter Vice-President of the Executive Council
The Hon. Duncan Gay, MP	Roads and Ports
The Hon. Brad Hazzard, MP	Planning and Infrastructure Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW
The Hon. Chris Hartcher, MP	Resources and Energy Special Minister of State The Central Coast
The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, MP	Transport
The Hon George Souris, MP	Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing The Arts
The Hon. Mike Baird, MP	Treasurer
The Hon. Greg Pearce, MP	Finance and Services The Illawarra
The Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson	Primary Industries Small Business
The Hon. Andrew Constance	Ageing and Minister for Disability Services.
The Hon. Greg Smith, MP	Attorney-General Justice
The Hon. Don Page, MP	Local Government The North Coast.
The Hon. Pru Goward, MP	Family and Community Services Women
The Hon. Anthony Roberts, MP	Fair Trading
The Hon. Kevin Humphries, MP	Mental Health Healthy Lifestyles Western NSW.
The Hon. Robyn Parker, MP	Environment Heritage
The Hon. Victor Dominello, MP	Citizenship and Communities Aboriginal Affairs.
The Hon. Graham Annesley, MP	Sport and Recreation.

Appendix 3

Sitting Members in SCCG Member Council Electorates and Representation in the NSW Legislative Council

Electorate	Elected Member	Party
Balmain	Jamie Parker	The Greens
Coogee	Bruce Notley-Smith	Liberal Party
Cronulla	Mark Speakman	Liberal Party
Davidson	Jonathan O'Dea	Liberal Party
Hawkesbury	Ray Williams	Liberal Party
Heffron	Kristina Keneally	Labor Party
Hornsby	Matt Kean	Liberal Party
Kogarah	Cherie Burton	Labor Party
Manly	Mike Baird	Liberal Party
Maroubra	Michael Daley	Labor Party
North Shore	Jillian Skinner	Liberal Party
Oatley	Mark Coure	Liberal Party
Pittwater	Rob Stokes	Liberal Party
Rockdale	John Flowers	Liberal Party
Sydney	Clover Moore	Independent
Vaucluse	Gabrielle Upton	Liberal Party
Wakehurst	Brad Hazzard	Liberal Party
Willoughby	Gladys Berejiklian	Liberal Party

Table 1: Sitting Members in SCCG Member Council Electorates

Party	Total Number of Representatives
Liberal/Nationals	19
Labor/Country Labor	14
The Greens	4
Shooters and Fishers	2
Christian Democratic Party (Fred Nile Group)	2

Table 2: Parties represented in the NSW Legislative Council