

# 25 Years of Caring for our Coast

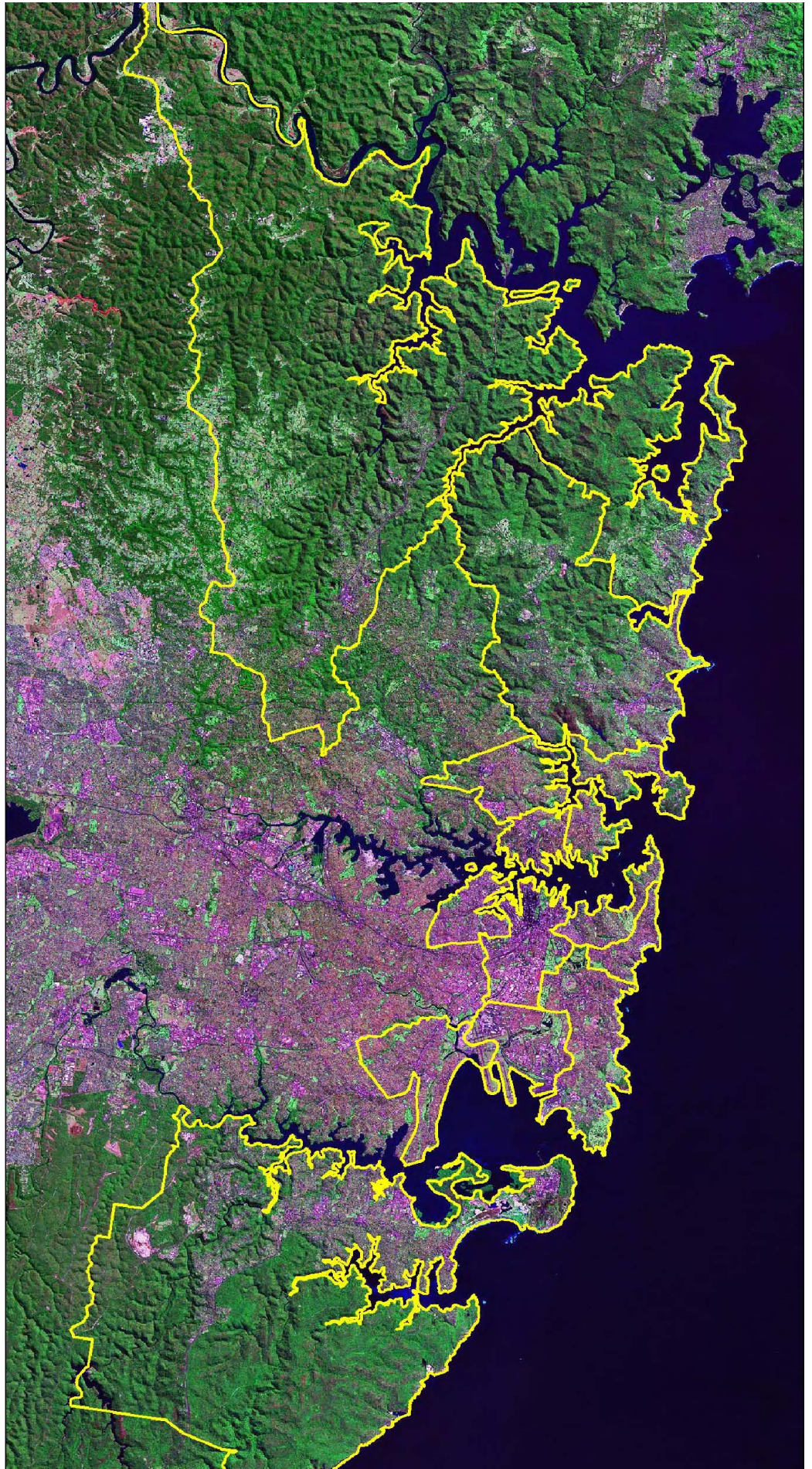
**SCCG 25 Year Anniversary Conference  
Outcomes Report**

Friday 29 August 2014  
Customs House | Sydney





Randwick City Council  
a sense of community



# Summary

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In 1989, Sydney coastal councils united with key government agencies to achieve one of Sydney's greatest environmental achievements - the cleanup of sewage from our beaches. Now, 25 years later, thanks to the continued involvement of Member Councils and ongoing collaboration with partners, the Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG) has evolved to become a leader in sustainable coastal management.

To celebrate this historic milestone we held a Conference at Customs House, Sydney on 29 August 2014. The event provided a unique opportunity to reflect upon the coast, unite Member Councils and key partners, both past and present, and promote engagement, dialogue, and visioning regarding future stewardship.

We canvassed 25 years of 'Caring for our Coast' from a range of perspectives - professional and personal, government and non-government, scientific and community. We traced the key historical issues and events that have shaped coastal management in Sydney and steered the work of our Group and our Member Councils over the last 25 years. A range of guest speakers, including coastal experts, council staff and representatives from Sydney Water and the Department of Planning and Environment, provided multiple insights. Participants also had the opportunity to workshop future directions for the next 25 years, drawing upon experiences and lessons learned to date.

The Conference was followed by a Gala Evening, featuring presentations from Environment Minister the Hon Rob Stokes MP, author and historian Dr Ian Hoskins, ecologist and futurist Dr Steven Cork and founding SCCG Chairperson and former Waverley Mayor, Ms Barbara Armitage OAM. There was also an Awards Ceremony for each of our 15 Member Councils.

This report provides an overview of the Conference proceedings and outcomes. Further information on the Gala Evening is available on request.

We would like to acknowledge Sydney Water and the NSW Department of Planning & Environment for their sponsorship of the event.



Gold Sponsor



Silver Sponsor

# Conference snapshot

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## Objectives

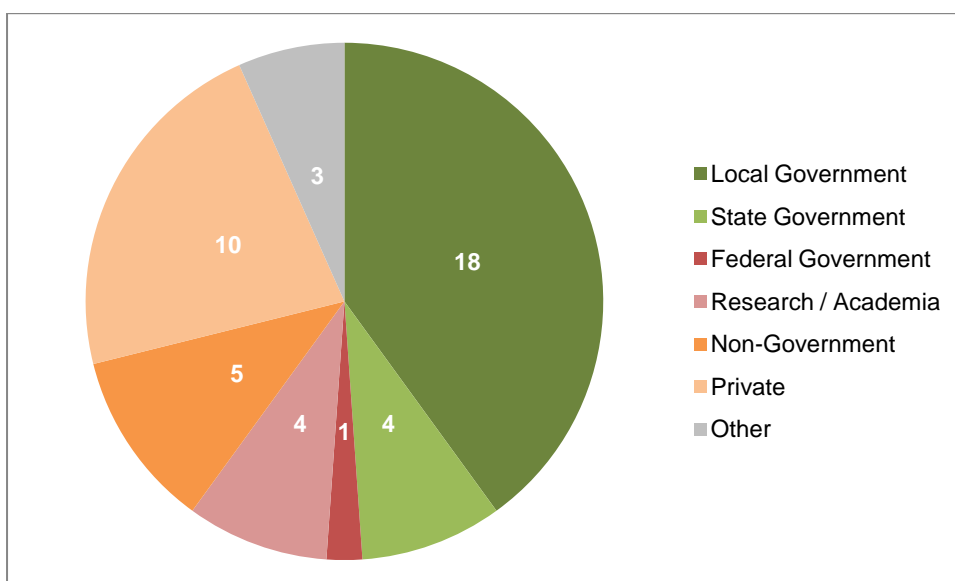
The objectives of the Conference were to:

1. Acknowledge, reinforce and promote:
  - a) the economic, social and environmental values of our coasts
  - b) the role of coastal stakeholders (government agencies and coastal management professionals members past and present, affiliates and key stakeholders) in the protection, preservation and conservation of our coasts.
2. Mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SCCG; and:
  - a) celebrate the contribution of the organisation and its fifteen Member Councils to caring for the coast
  - b) highlight key milestones, notably the interagency partnership to address the discharge of primary treated sewer at the shore
  - c) unite Member Councils and key participants in the SCCG, both past and present
  - d) provide a forum for discussion and propagation of ideas.
3. Harness and develop strategic linkages between SCCG and its strategic partners.

## Attendance

<b>13</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Organisations</b>	<b>SCCG Member Councils</b>	<b>Other councils</b>

Organisations in attendance:



# Agenda

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## 9.00 REGISTRATIONS

### **Welcome to Country**

Uncle Charles (Chicka) Madden

### **Introduction**

Mr Geoff Withycombe | Executive Officer, SCCG

### **Opening Address**

Cr Cathy Griffin | Chair, SCCG

### **Valuing Sydney's Coast**

*A youth perspective*

Miss Zara Harrison & Miss Alanna Reneman | Pittwater High School

*The coast of Sydney: past, present and future*

Prof. Bruce Thom AM | Honorary Member, SCCG

## MORNING TEA

### **Caring for the coast**

Mr Kevin Young | Managing Director, Sydney Water Corporation

### **Global perspectives**

Mr Allan Young | Manager, Coastal and Natural Resources Policy, Department of Planning & Environment

### **25 Years in Reflection**

Mr Michael Chanell | former Regional Coastal Environment Officer, SCCG

Dr Ross McPherson | Chief Environmental Scientist, Hornsby Shire Council

Mr David Dekel | Coordinator Environmental Strategist, Rockdale City Council

Ms Belinda Atkins | Manager Environment & Services, Mosman Council

Mr Doug Lord | Director and Principal, Coastal Environment Pty Ltd

## LUNCH

### **Swimming with your eyes open: ways to prepare for future possibilities**

Dr Steven Cork | Principal Consultant (futurist), EcoInsights

### **Workshop: Looking towards the next 25 years**

Facilitated by Dr Steven Cork

### **Wrap Up**

Mr Geoff Withycombe, Executive Officer, SCCG

## 16.45 EVENT CLOSE

# Speaker biographies & summary of presentations

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*in order of appearance*

## **Mr Geoff Withycombe**

Executive Officer, Sydney Coastal Councils Group



*Geoff has an Applied Science degree in coastal management and has been the Executive Officer of the Sydney Coastal Councils Group since 1998. In his role as Executive Officer, Geoff implements the Group's Strategic Plan and provides advice, policy development and decision making support for the 15 Member Councils. Geoff also holds other Director positions.*

Geoff canvassed key highlights over the 25 year history of the SCCG, including key projects, campaigns and resources developed by the Group. He also reflected on the contributions of Member Councils and key partners, noting that with their ongoing support and desire to see continuous improvement of Sydney's coast – the SCCG is well placed as an experienced and mature organisation eager and able to continue to appropriately support, engage and service its Member Councils and the coastal communities they represent.

## **Cr Cathy Griffin**

Chairperson, Sydney Coastal Councils Group



*In her second term as a Councillor, Cathy brings a wealth of life experience to Manly Council. As a former officer in the Australian Regular Army, Cathy specialised in logistics, administration and facilities management. Cathy broke new ground during her 17 year career with her posting as the first female 'Barracks Commandant' of the historic Victoria Barracks in Paddington. Cathy has completed an MBA and was a successful small business operator for 10 years prior to her election to Manly Council in 2008.*

*The hallmark of Cathy's first term as a Councillor was her active advocacy for the environment. As a member and then chair of the Sydney Coast Council Group, as well as other committees with an interest in the Sydney coastal environment, she has advocated for continued resourcing to manage the coastal and natural areas in the best interests of the environment.*

Cathy welcomed participants and acknowledged dignitaries, including councillors and staff past and present, state agencies, partners and supporters of the Group. Cathy talked about the development of the group, key achievements during her involvement and opportunities for the future.

## **Miss Alanna Reneman & Miss Zara Harrison**

Pittwater High School



*Alanna and Zara are in Year 9 at Pittwater High School.*

Alanna and Zara talked about their connection to the coast growing up on Sydney's northern beaches. Alanna spoke of the value and influence that Sydney's coast has on community members of local beachfront towns in Sydney and the wider community, the role it plays in people's heritage and the connections people associate with our coastline. Zara then talked about the environmental impacts of previous dumping of waste into Sydney's oceans, the effects this has had on native wildlife and the importance that the beach plays in many leisure and sporting activities. They both described the sense of belonging that the beach provides for many Sydneysiders and the connection we associate with home. They also talked about the way the community is brought together under a common interest to protect and sustain our coastal environment for future generations.

### **Emeritus Professor Bruce Thom AM**

Honorary Member, Sydney Coastal Councils Group



*Formerly Vice-Chancellor University of New England, Professor Bruce Thom has held positions including Foundation Professor of Geography, Royal Military College, Duntroon, Professor of Geography University of Sydney and Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research, University of Sydney. He currently holds the title of Emeritus Professor from the University of Sydney. Bruce served as Chair of the Australian State of Environment Committee 1998-2002, and as Chair of the Coastal Council of New South Wales (1999-2004). He served as the Visiting Professor for Coastal Management and Planning at the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources in Sydney. He also formerly held the position of Visiting Professor in the NSW Department of Planning. Bruce is a member of*

*the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists, Deputy Chair of the Australian Coastal Society and Chair of the Federal Government's Coasts and Climate Change Council (2011). In 2010 he was awarded a member of the Order of Australia for his contribution to the ecological management of the coastal zone and as a contributor to public debate on natural resource policy. Bruce is an honorary life member of Surfrider Foundation Australia, and most importantly an honorary member of the Sydney Coastal Councils Group!*

Bruce provided a history of the geomorphology of Sydney's coastline. Sydney has inherited a coast from the time the Tasman Sea opened 60-80 million years ago. This geologic inheritance is critical in understanding its present biophysical character and how it offers an array of natural assets that help drive the lifestyles and livelihoods of the city. Bruce emphasised that projections of future changes to that character must capture the knowledge we possess of past and present conditions and forces that have determined that character.

### **Mr Kevin Young**

Managing Director, Sydney Water Corporation



*Kevin Young joined Sydney Water as Managing Director in 2011, after serving as Hunter Water's Managing Director. During his time at Sydney Water, Kevin has led key reforms across the organisation, underpinned by a fresh strategy and vision with Sydney Water as the life stream of Sydney. Under Kevin's direction, Sydney Water has focused on providing its more than 4 million customers with best-value water solutions in delivering water and wastewater services. Kevin has over 30 years' experience working for the private sector and Government authorities within Australia and overseas. He has served as Chairman of the Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA), whose members provide 17 million Australians with water and wastewater services. He is currently Chairman of WSAA's*

*Asset Management Committee. Kevin has a Civil Engineering degree with honors from the University of Newcastle and a Master of Business Administration. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Engineers and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.*

Kevin provided an overview of major works that Sydney Water has undertaken over the last 25 years. Deepwater ocean outfalls were constructed at Bondi, North Head and Malabar Wastewater Treatment Plants. The outfalls dispersed treated effluent about four kilometres offshore, considerably improving water quality at Sydney's beaches. Further environmental gains have been achieved through upgrading treatment, managing trade waste, reducing overflows from the sewer network and converting waste to resource. Kevin explained that Sydney Water has been active in partnering with Councils to improve water efficiency, reduce sewer leaks and drive efficiency in road closure. They are committed to being world class, delivering essential water that their customers need, in our great city.

### **Mr Allan Young**

Manager, Coastal and Natural Resources Policy, NSW Department of Planning and Environment



*Allan is an urban planner specialising in coastal and marine policy. He is currently Manager, Coastal and Natural Resources Policy with the Department of Planning and Environment. He has previously worked in the NSW Parliament as a policy advisor and has held various policy management and planning positions in a range of public sector agencies. Allan holds a Master of Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Sydney. In 2013 his work was recognised through a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship.*

Allan talked about the range of global cities that are experiencing similar pressures faced

by Sydney. Being a coastal city puts us in great company. Across the globe, most cities over 4 million people are on the coast, and growing. They share a common set of interests and challenges, meaning that we have a great opportunity to tap into the knowledge and experience globally. We can perform better if we can learn from others and them from us. We began good global relationships through programs such as Sister Cities, and now cities are adopting a more sophisticated and strategic agenda, and are taking a leadership role. The C40 Group, of which Sydney is a member, is a great example. The 2000 Olympics are recognised as a turning point in Sydney coming-of-age as a global city. Now both the State and local governments are reaching out more and building global networks. It is the key to the next 25 years.

### **Mr Michael Chanell**

Senior Program Manager, Corporate Environmental Affairs, IBM



*Michael Chanell was the first Regional Coastal Environment Officer of the SCCG. Michael currently works for IBM as a Senior Programs Manager in the Corporate Environmental Affairs team. Michael has been working for IBM for over 15 years in various positions and was integral in establishing and driving implementation of the environmental management system for Australian and New Zealand operations and securing ISO14001 EMS accreditation. Michael also provides global oversight of the Water Conservation, Hazardous Waste and Nonhazardous Waste Management, and Product End-of-Life Management programs. Michael was actively involved in advocacy within the ICT industry in Australia to promote the introduction of the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme in*

*Australia and more recently was an industry representative for development of the Australian and New Zealand standard AS/NZS 5377: Collection, storage, transport and treatment of end-of-life electrical and electronic equipment introduced in 2013. Prior to this he worked in private environmental consultancies and NSW Government departments and local government, notably with the SCCG for almost nine years from 1990. Michael has worked as an environmental management professional for over 25 years.*

Michael talked about the early days of the Group and the issues that galvanised its formation. Over 25 years ago solidified grease as big as golf balls and debris such as cotton buds washed up on some of Sydney's most famous beaches. There was a united public outcry about the continued discharge of raw sewage from the three major cliff-face outfalls in Sydney that polluted the beaches and presented a health hazard. It was under this setting in the late 80's that the Sydney Coastal Councils was founded. With the commissioning of the Deepwater ocean outfalls and introduction of monitoring and public reporting of water quality by Beachwatch and later through the Harbourwatch program it was clear to the coastal councils that their cooperative effort was needed to address urban runoff entering our much loved waterways. Some key guidance documentation was prepared to assist in this task. With the securing of key funding, the Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG) was able to more effectively complete an engagement of local coastal communities in Sydney to galvanise the details of what mattered – which lead to the development of the Sydney Regional Coastal Management Strategy - finalised in 1998. The SCCG had developed from a collective of local councils tackling Sydney's dirty beaches to a coordinated and focused group whose goal was to achieve a regional and more sustainable approach to the overall management of Sydney's coastal zone.

### **Dr Ross McPherson**

Chief Environmental Scientist, Hornsby Shire Council



*Ross McPherson has been a member of the SCCG Technical Committee for over 15 years. Ross was first employed at Hornsby Council in 1994 as the Environmental Scientist responsible for water quality monitoring in the Water Catchments Team. Within 12 months he had been promoted to manager of the Water Catchments Team and was recently appointed to the position of Chief Environmental Scientist in the Environment and Human Services Division. One of Ross's major achievements since joining Hornsby Council has been the promotion of good science to underpin good management decisions. This is reflected in such areas as the Estuary Management Program and the Catchments Remediation Rate Program. Ross gained his Doctorate in Environmental Science in 2003*

*which represented the culmination of 23 years of part time study and further reflects Ross's commitment to the use of high quality science in environmental management.*

Ross discussed the experience of Hornsby Council as an estuarine member of the SCCG. In the early days, Hornsby was classified as a bushland shire and this hampered efforts to manage the unique ecology of its



estuarine environments. He discussed the programs that Hornsby has been involved in to promote sustainable estuarine management, noting the need to balance reactive management (for example, in response to algal blooms) with more strategic and proactive management efforts. He also noted the important role that the SCCG plays in providing information and support to the Council, as well as opportunities for information-sharing with other Member Councils.

**Mr David Dekel**

Coordinator Environmental Strategist, Rockdale City Council



*David Dekel has been involved with the work of the SCCG for many years. For the past 30 years David has been working in the pursuit of environmental and ecological sustainability throughout Australia, whether it be through an active life in the environment/social change movement, or a career spanning across local and state Government, as well as the private sector. Sydney's coastal zone and its catchments have featured prominently for David over this time, from managing the NSW Government's Water Reform Agenda in the Hawkesbury Nepean catchment in the late 90s, to delivering positive environmental outcomes at a local Government level at Parramatta and Rockdale Councils.*

David took an artistic approach to his presentation, likening the development of the SCCG to key historical periods of art. Describing the early days as the Renaissance period ('chartering into new worlds with hope, confronting adversaries and dark waters'), and the years following as Impressionist ('helping see our coastal zone in a more friendly and accessible light'), David suggested we are currently in the midst of a Post Modernist era, responding to the complexity of coastal issues facing Local Government. David noted that the success of the Group is now largely based on the collaboration between Councils in a conducive learning environment, working together to achieve common goals.

**Ms Belinda Atkins**

Manager Environment & Services, Mosman Council



*Belinda Atkins has been a member of the SCCG Technical Committee for almost 10 years. Belinda has a Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental Management and Tourism), and a Bachelor of Applied Science (Honours) in protected areas management. Belinda has previously worked at the University of Western Sydney, as well as Sydney Olympic Park as an interpretive officer educating school groups about the wetland ecosystem and parklands. Belinda joined Mosman Council in 2002 as an environment officer focusing on water quality monitoring and has now been working at Council in various environmental positions for over 10 years. Belinda is currently responsible for environmental management, environmental policy and strategy, sustainability education and engagement, waste programs and environmental health.*

Belinda spoke about Mosman Council's experience as a founding member of the SCCG since 1989 and the many programs and initiatives it has been involved in over the last 25 years. Belinda described how the Group has developed over the years, adapting to address changing needs and shifting focus from specific issues to the coast in its entirety. She noted the importance of the Group's role in facilitating peer-to-peer learning between Councils. Belinda also talked about the challenges faced by the group today, including the unstable political climate, a lack of clear direction or leadership from higher levels of government and the changes underway to coastal management laws. She suggested this environment made the SCCG more relevant now than ever before, and that it was imperative that the Group continue its role in building partnerships and advocating on behalf of Member Councils.

**Mr Doug Lord**

Director and Principal, Coastal Environment Pty Ltd



*Doug Lord has worked with the SCCG for many years on various projects. Doug is the Principal of Coastal Environment, a small coastal consultancy. Doug has 40 years' experience in coastal zone management, working in the public and private sectors and lecturing at UTS in coastal management. He is a member and past chair of the National Committee on Coastal and Ocean Engineering of Engineers Australia, a member of the NSW Coastal Ocean and Port Engineering Panel, the Australian Coastal Society, PIANC*

*and is an Adjunct Research Fellow with the Griffith University Centre for Coastal Management.*

Doug provided an overview of the history of coastal management in NSW, divided into three stages - government/engineering dominated pre-1970s; government / multidisciplinary dominated 1970 to 1990; and government / community partnerships from 1990 to present. He noted that the SCCG was formed and operates within this latter framework, with more responsibility falling to Local Government and an aware community that insists on a role in managing the coast. The legislation, roles and responsibilities are continuing to evolve. He noted that the SCCG has made a major contribution by interfacing between Local and State Government, undertaking relevant research and supporting Local Government liaising with their communities.

**Dr Steven Cork**

Principal Consultant (futurist), Ecolnsights



*Steven is an ecologist and futurist. As an ecologist he spent 25 years in CSIRO researching the interactions between humans and the natural environment around the world. As a futurist he played a leading role in developing scenarios for the World's social-ecological futures for the United Nations' Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and has run similar projects with government and non-government groups around Australia. He has worked extensively as an advisor to governments on policy issues and as a government employee developing and implementing environmental policy. He now works privately as a futurist, strategist and ecological advisor as the Principal Consultant of Ecolnsights and leads a project on the resilience of Australia in the private sustainability*

*R&D organisation Australia21. He is also Director of Australia21. As an Associate of Interaction Consulting he facilitates workshops on strategic thinking for public servants. He is an Adjunct Professor in the Crawford School of Public Policy at the Australian National University. He was Deputy Chair of the committee that prepared the 2011 National State of the Environment Report.*

Humans need help thinking about the future. It's not that we can't do it. We do it all the time when planning our travel to work each morning, going on holiday, raising kids and most other things we do. But we have a terrible habit of ignoring things that we haven't experienced before or that are too complex for us to understand. Most of us know that the future is not predictable, but we act as if it is and that often gets us into trouble as individuals and as organisations and societies. In this presentation Steven briefly explained the psychology of futures thinking and the types of approaches we can use to improve our ability to explore multiple possible futures. He then provided some glimpses into what people using these approaches have identified as possible future challenges and opportunities.

# Workshop Overview

A key component of the Conference was a facilitated workshop to scope key coastal management issues for the future and potential actions to address them. Ecologist and futurist, Dr Steven Cork, guided participants through a series of futures-thinking exercises to contemplate possible scenarios for Sydney's coasts in 5 to 25 years time, and the implications these could have for organisations involved in coastal management.



## 1 Objectives

The workshop aimed to scope future visions of coastal management in Sydney by guiding participants through a series of futures-thinking exercises. Specifically, the objectives of the workshop were to address the following questions:

- What/who might be the key drivers of change over the next 5 to 25 years (and beyond)?
- What issues might the SCCG need to address over the next 5 to 25 years (and beyond)?
- What considerations/actions should be included in the next SCCG Strategic Plan (2015-2019)?
- What considerations/actions should be included in the SCCG's thinking for the next 5 to 25 years and when might these actions be required?
- How might stakeholders and their roles change (or not) over the next 5 to 25 years (and beyond)?

## 2 Workshop Structure

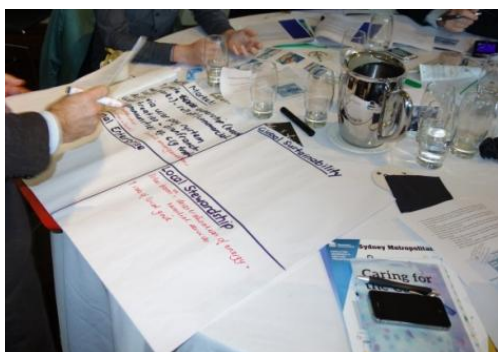
Participants were structured into groups and allocated one of four different approaches to futures-thinking. These approaches helped to encourage participants to overcome common thinking constraints that result in narrow views about future possibilities.

Groups were asked to use the approaches to generate a series of different 'futures' for Sydney's coasts and consider what factors (e.g., trends, events, people) might drive us towards these different futures. In particular, participants were encouraged to think about what factors might stay the same as today and what might change, and how social, technological, environmental, economic, political and legal factors might interact.

Based on these discussions, participants were then asked to identify challenges and opportunities for the SCCG over the next 5 to 25 years, and the role that different stakeholders might play in managing Sydney's coasts.

## 3 Outcomes

Each group generated a list of drivers of change for coastal management in Sydney and key challenges and opportunities for the SCCG. Although several groups said they struggled to get their heads around some of the approaches, a lot of good thinking 'outside the box' was apparent.



There were many common threads running through the responses, including concerns about population growth, over-development, over-crowding, access to beaches and over-reliance on technology to provide solutions after problems arise. These concerns regularly appear in scenarios for similar time horizons developed by groups in Australia and around the world.

There was a lot of thinking that seemed to assume the future will be a continuation of the present. Yet several of the presentations throughout the day and evening showed that Sydney's coasts have changed dramatically in social, economic, environmental and

other ways since the 1800s and even in the past 25 years. Therefore, the assumption that the trends we see now will continue should be seriously questioned - it might be right in some respects, but we should ask ourselves how and why these trends have emerged and what processes are needed to keep them going. It is also worth thinking about which of these concerns will really challenge organisations such as the SCCG and then ask 'what if the opposite happened?' In some cases the opposite might seem very unlikely but history shows that it is high-magnitude, highly improbable events that usually bring us undone.

More information on workshop outcomes is available on request: [info@sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au](mailto:info@sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au)



# Documenting our history

As part of our Anniversary celebrations we commissioned curator and author Ewen McDonald to document our 25 year history.

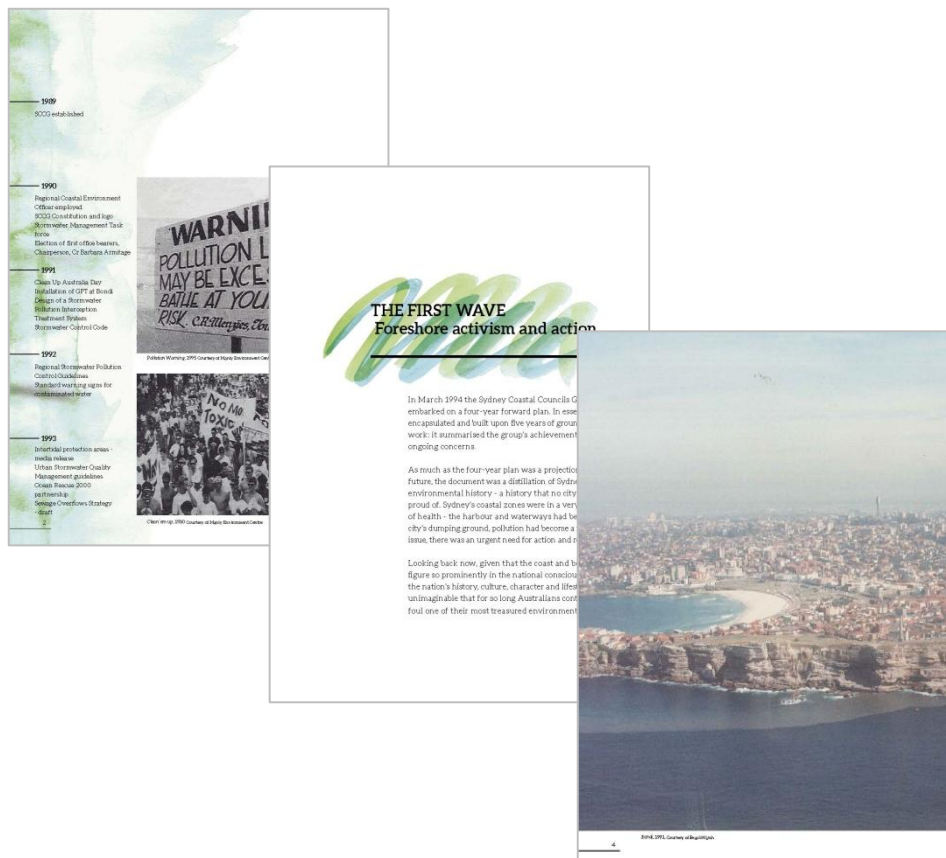
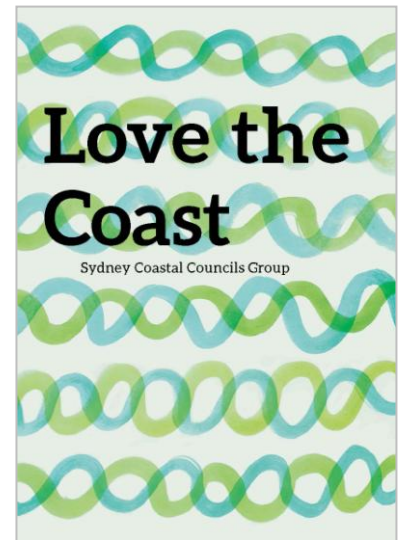
In the last 25 years we have had more than 90 Full Group (councillor) meetings and more than 120 Technical Committee meetings. Ewen has had the pleasure of reviewing the associated papers as well as all our annual reports and, somehow, in 30 odd pages has eloquently documented this journey.

With artistic formatting and design from UTS design student Eva Kiss, the resulting publication, *Love the Coast*, provides a wonderful history of the Group and the social and political climate in which it was born and has since matured. It is structured under the following chapters:

- 1) The First Wave: Foreshore activism and action
- 2) Keeping Watch: 'The future of water is in our hands'...
- 3) The Second Wave: Consolidation, research and projection
- 4) 25 Years: Recognition, acknowledgement ... a celebration

We were extremely fortunate to have secured Ewen's time and expertise and we thank him very much for his hard work and editorial independence in putting the publication together. We would also like to acknowledge the hard work of Eva Kiss in designing the publication.

*Love the Coast* is available on our website:  
[www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/sccg25years](http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/sccg25years)

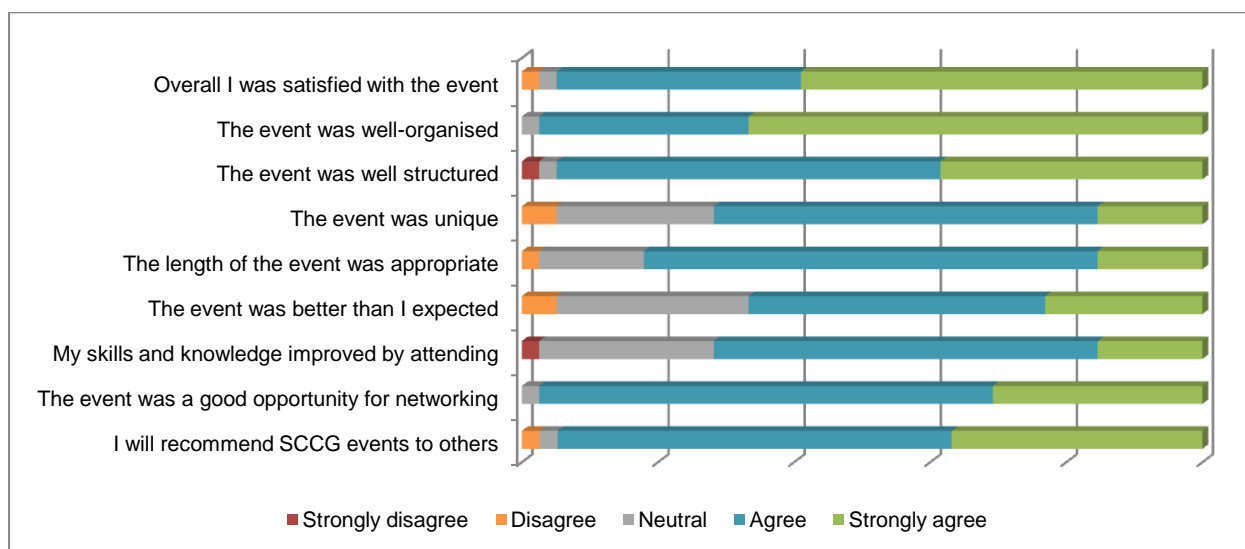


# Evaluation feedback

We are keen to keep doing the things we do well and to work on those that can be improved. To assess the success of the Conference against the objectives, and to enable us to deliver informative, relevant and engaging events, a post-event online survey was conducted. Forty-six percent of participants completed the online evaluation.

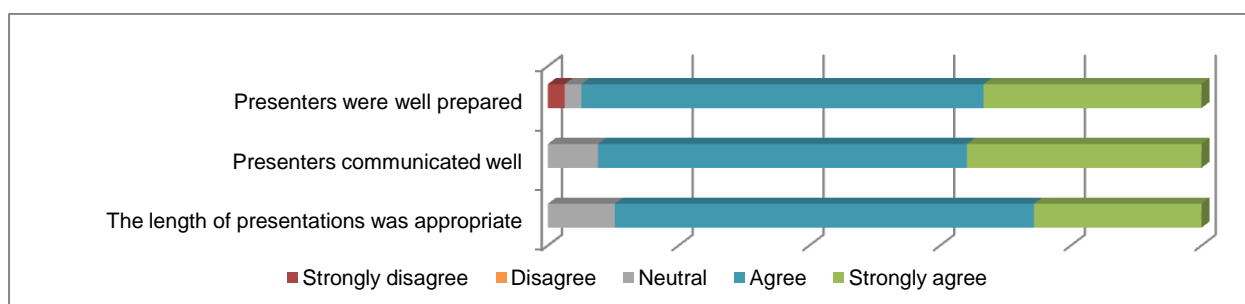
Overall feedback on the event was overwhelmingly positive, with 95 per cent of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing they were satisfied with the event. Key event highlights identified by participants included the diversity of speakers, the opportunity to meet with former colleagues and network with new ones, and the workshop component facilitated by Dr Steven Cork.

General feedback on the organisation, structure and outcomes of the event is shown in Figure 1 below.



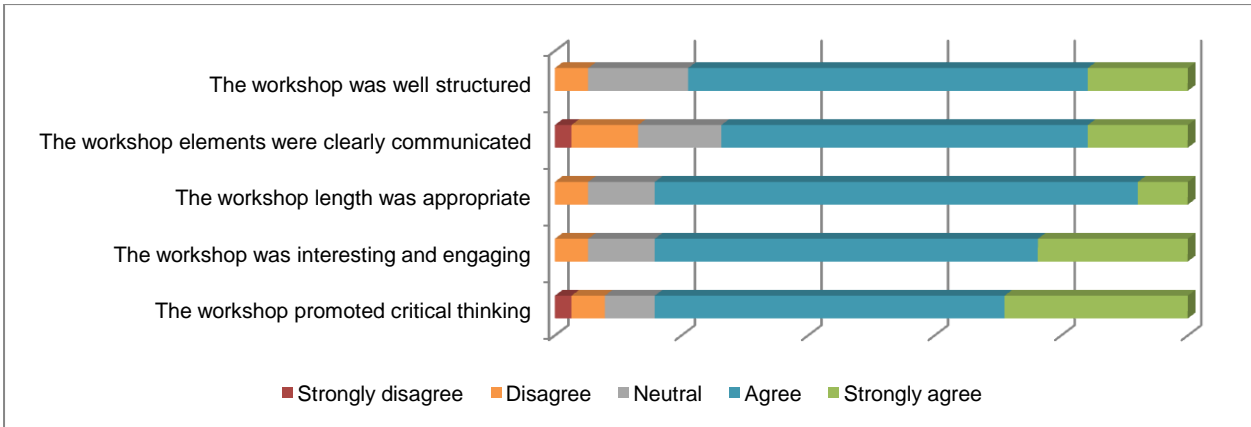
**Figure 1: General feedback**

Feedback on presenters was also very positive, with respondents generally agreeing or strongly agreeing that presenters were well prepared and communicated well, and that the length of presentations was appropriate (see Figure 2). Some participants suggested more time could have been devoted to interactions with the speakers, through a facilitated Q&A session or similar.



**Figure 2: Feedback on presentations**

The final component of the survey assessed participants' views on the workshop component (Figure 3). Again, feedback was generally strong, although some participants expressed difficulty in understanding the instructions, leading to less time being available for the actual group work. This is an issue that we commonly face in designing group activities and something we will improve at future events.



**Figure 3: Feedback on workshop**

We greatly appreciate those who completed and survey and will carefully consider how we can act on the feedback, particularly those comments in relation to the structuring of the day and workshop sessions. The results also contribute to our baseline data, against which future performance can be judged.

# Next steps

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It is a tenuous climate for coastal zone management. With major reforms underway for coastal management, the planning system and local government, there is a sense of uncertainty within the coastal management community. At the same time, there is growing consensus on the risks facing coastal areas and the need for a coordinated and adaptive response.

There is no doubt that over the few next decades we will see unprecedented change to our coastal communities, governments, government services, commerce and indeed to the physical entity that is the coast that we are all trying to manage. It is critical that our response to these developments builds on our institutional memory and lessons learned, while harnessing innovations in technology and management practices. The exercise in 'futures-thinking' undertaken during the Conference encouraged us to think creatively about the future and our collective roles within it. This provided 'food for thought' for us as we look forward the next 25 years and beyond.

We are currently reviewing our Strategic Plan for the period 2015-2019. Outcomes from the Conference – both looking back and looking forward – will inform our planning for the 5 years ahead. We also recognise the opportunity to position ourselves for the next 25 years and beyond.

Our strengths lie in our collaborative approach, our non-partisan standing and our partnerships. We will build on these strengths and look for new opportunities to harness the collective knowledge and skills of our members and many partners into the future. With our history and a new Strategic Plan to be finalised with our Member Councils by the end of the year, we are confident we will have the right vision, principles, objectives and defined pathways to get us to the destination to which we all aspire.

What started as a coalition of concerned councillors and staff, now comprises 15 Councils, representing 1.4 million Sydneysiders. We are proud to be able to celebrate with our partners a cleaner coastal environment and a history of leadership in sustainable coastal management. This legacy forms the foundation upon which we will confront the challenges and opportunities that the future holds.





# Thanks

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The SCCG would like to thank the following people for their contribution to the day:

- the speakers, for their insightful contributions
- the sponsors, for continuing the partnership
- the City of Sydney, for making available their historic harbourside venue
- Ewen McDonald, for distilling 25 years of history into a thoughtful and engaging read, 'Love the Coast'
- Eva Kiss, for her evocative design work on 'Love the Coast' and your Conference programs
- and last but not least, all our members, past and present.



**Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc.**  
councils caring for the coastal environment

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