



Sydney's Salty Communities

OCTOBER 2015 NEWSLETTER

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The year has been busy for *Sydney's Salty Communities*. A robust community of practice has been established. Highlights have been the completion of a *Literature Data and Practice Review* and the awarding of eleven high quality on-ground projects in the Main Round Grants.

Community of practice

Sydney's Salty Communities has developed a community of practice which extends beyond the usual participants. Through combined workshops our Expert Reference Group and Working Group have formed partnerships to work together on biodiversity management within and beyond the life of this project. We have involved a cross section of sustainability, biodiversity and bushland staff in workshops, webinars and meetings, along with academics, scientists and experts in fields such as community engagement, indigenous involvement and monitoring. Collaboration has been a key focus for the project overall.

PROJECT BACKGROUND.

Sydney's headlands, harbours, bays and foreshore environments support a range of salt-dominated and salt-influenced ecosystems with unique biodiversity and carbon sequestration rates equivalent in parts to tropical rainforests. *Sydney's Salty Communities* will allow SCCG and partners to support on-ground projects at local and sub-regional scales to address pressures from pollution, weeds, feral animals, degradation, neglect, inundation and erosion. Coastal land managers (especially councils and their local communities) will restore, enhance and maintain biodiversity values and functions in these critical areas.



Working Group

All SCCG member Councils and other Councils in the Commonwealth designated Rivers and Coasts Sydney Metro area were invited to join our Working Group. The Group provides practical advice and input to guide the program. This group has been key in providing information for the *Literature, Data and Practice Review* and has formed the basis of the community of practice, providing input into areas where, as practitioners, they see the need for further focus or research.

Expert Reference Group

The Expert Reference Group members comprise academics, scientists and other leading experts in the coastal biodiversity sphere. The group is responsible for providing strategic direction to the program as well as providing expert advice and input. Representatives come from Sydney, Macquarie, Wollongong and Australian Catholic Universities, as well as Greater Sydney Local Land Services, CSIRO, Sydney Weeds Committee, NPWS, Australian Museum, Sydney Water, CSIRO, the Aboriginal Heritage Office and OceanWatch Australia. In addition to these experts we have also been fortunate to secure further specialist advice on issues such as feral animal control and salt marsh to assist projects be better targeted and more effective.

Literature, Data and Practice Review

To assist in developing a tighter focus for Salty projects a *Literature, Data and Practice Review* was commissioned. The *Review* identified gaps in how Councils in the Sydney Region deal with biodiversity. One finding was that the intertidal zone is poorly represented in biodiversity strategies. Another was that adaptation of biodiversity to climate change was generally not addressed in Council strategies. The study also found that opportunities exist for creating partnerships between scientists and Local Government to provide

monitoring and to improve understanding of projects in salty communities. Councils were found to be the key facilitators of community engagement and volunteering in biodiversity. The *Literature, Data and Practice Review* is available [online](#) and a [summary fact sheet](#) is also on the project website. *Sydney's Salty Communities* worked on the findings of the Review with the Expert Reference Group and the Working Group and looked for ways to encourage more partnerships between academic and scientific institutions and practitioners working in biodiversity, both during the *Sydney's Salty Communities* funding period and beyond.



Managing Coastal Communities in the Face of Rapid Change – The CSIRO Climate Ready Tool

A key project of *Salty Communities* has been the CSIRO Climate Ready Tool. This tool will serve to assist Councils identify adaptation challenges and near term actions to prepare a pathway for this. To develop this, CSIRO have run a series of workshops with Councils (and other interested parties). The team has worked with Councils on possible project ideas for the Supplementary Round of grants, and more generally to reframe issues for a longer term view. The tool will be available to member Councils in late 2016.

Grants

Main Round (underway)

Themes from the Commonwealth Government determined the focus of the Main Round Grants:

- Protecting and enhancing existing native vegetation
- Managing invasive species in a connected landscape
- Biodiverse plantings

Twenty Local Government Areas across Sydney were successful in obtaining funding from *Sydney's Salty Communities'* Main Round Grants. In total [eleven grants](#) worth \$948,550 were awarded for projects valuing \$2,031,869. Successful applications

include projects ranging from building aquatic corridors and fox control south of the harbour, to dune rehabilitation in Pittwater, and oyster reef and coastal health restoration in between. Visit the [website](#) for more information.



Supplementary Round

Submissions to the Supplementary Round are now closed. Many excellent applications were received. In this round we have worked closely with grant applicants to ensure that aspects such as indigenous involvement, collaboration and climate change adaptation were more strongly addressed. Invitations were extended to all relevant Councils, ROCs and through umbrella channels such as LGNSW. Preparation for these grants included a Marketplace event where practitioners were teamed with experts. Most applicants also attended one of several Climate Ready workshops

lead by CSIRO, which were received very positively. These grants will be announced later this year and projects will run throughout 2016.

Expert Reference Group members

- Mr Mark Beharrell (Pittwater Council)
- Mr Jeffrey Bell (Natural Resources Commission)
- Assoc Prof Melanie Bishop (Macquarie University)
- Prof Gee Chapman (University of Sydney)
- Prof Ross Coleman (University of Sydney)
- Mr Dan Cunningham (Sydney Water)
- Mr Bill Dixon (Greater Sydney LLS)
- Dr Michael Dunlop (CSIRO)
- Ms Erin Fardy (Sydney SW Regional Weeds Committees)
- Mr Ben Khan (NPWS)
- Dr Richard Major (Australian Museum)
- Mr Michael Miller (Department of the Environment)
- Dr Kerrylee Rodgers (University of Wollongong)
- Mr Simon Rowe (OceanWatch Australia)
- Dr Jennifer Taylor (Australian Catholic University)
- Mr David Watts (Aboriginal Heritage Office)
- Mr Geoff Withycombe (SCCG)

PROJECT MANAGEMENT.

FIONA SHADBOLT Project Manager
 Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc. Ph: 02 9288 5974
 Email: fiona@sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au



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