



SYDNEY COASTAL COUNCILS GROUP INC.

councils caring for the coastal environment

Sustainable Coastal Management

Policy recommendations to political parties contesting
the 2015 NSW Election

Political Party Response Report

20 March 2015

SYDNEY COASTAL COUNCILS GROUP INC.
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Introduction

The March 2015 NSW State Election presents an opportune time for political parties to review and reaffirm their commitment to sustainably manage our coast.

We formulated eight key policy positions and associated recommendations that we believe will contribute significantly to the sustainable management of the NSW coast. These were summarised as:

- 1. Adaptive, integrated and participatory management of the coastal zone**
- 2. An independent coastal advisory body for NSW**
- 3. A NSW Strategy and Action Plan for climate change adaptation in the coastal zone**
- 4. A review of, and significant increase in, funding for coastal programs**
- 5. A strategy for Integrated Water Management throughout the Greater Sydney region, with a particular focus on infrastructure renewal**
- 6. Maintenance of public access and public ownership in the coastal zone**
- 7. Improved planning controls to restore, protect and enhance coastal biodiversity**
- 8. A strategy and supporting implementation programs for sustainable marine management**

In February 2015 we wrote to the following political parties contesting the 2015 election asking whether or not they supported the recommendations and the actions they will undertake to address the issues identified:

Australian Cyclists Party	No Land Tax Campaign
Australian Democrats (NSW Division)	No Parking Meters Party
Australian Labor Party (NSW Branch)	Outdoor Recreation Party
Australian Motorist Party	Shooters and Fishers Party
Christian Democratic Party (Fred Nile Group)	Socialist Alliance
Country Labor Party	The Fishing Party
Justice Party	The Greens
Liberal Party of Australia NSW Division	Unity Party
National Party of Australia - NSW	Voluntary Euthanasia Party (NSW)

A copy of our document can be downloaded, by clicking [here](#). The document articulates the context, policy recommendation(s) and requests specific information in response.

Responses were sought by close of business Friday 13 March 2015. Responses received up until 9.00 a.m. on Friday 20 March 2015 are included in this report.

Responses

Responses have been received from the following parties:

- Liberal Party of Australia NSW Division
- Australian Labor Party (NSW Branch)
- The Greens
- Christian Democratic Party (Fred Nile Group)
- Australian Democrats (NSW Division)

A copy of each response is attached.

Next steps

This report is provided to our Member Councils as well as other State and National coastal stakeholders.

Responses provide a benchmark for future coastal advocacy activities. This will include direct engagement with the government.

We will monitor and evaluate the government's performance against sustainable coastal management.

The Sydney Coastal Councils Group

We are a Regional Organisation of Councils (ROC) representing 15 councils in the Sydney coastal region. We are the peak NSW ROC for sustainable coastal management and represent the majority of coastal residents in NSW. We have 25 years' experience leading sustainable coastal management and we achieve this by harnessing the individual and collective knowledge of our Member Councils, a suite of technical and academic experts and other coastal stakeholders. Accordingly, we are able to provide unique insights drawing upon the technical, experiential and local knowledge of a range of practitioners in coastal management.

The next few years will see unprecedented change to our coastal communities, government services, industry 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 upon our institutional memory and lessons learned, while harnessing innovations in technology and management practices.

Contact information

If you have any queries or questions, please contact us:

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Baird Government response to the Sydney Coastal Councils Group pre election submission

1. Adaptive, integrated and participatory management of the coastal zone

The Baird Government believes that our coastal zone requires integrated management that provides for flexible approaches to accommodate regional and local circumstances and which reflect the aspirations of local communities. We have announced a comprehensive coastal management reform agenda that aims to deliver a modern, integrated and strategic coastal management framework.

Our coastal reforms will:

- provide certainty for local communities and councils about coastal management priorities, and put in place the tools and support services they need;
- enable vulnerable communities to better manage current risks from coastal hazards, minimise exposure to future risks, and make informed infrastructure decisions;
- reinforce and promote public access, use and enjoyment of the coast; and
- support the continued prosperity of the 'saltwater economy'

Our reforms have three key elements:

- A new *Coastal Management Act* to replace the current *Coastal Protection Act 1979* with new integrated coastal management legislation;
- new arrangements to better support council decision making, including an improved decision support framework, a new coastal management manual and improved technical advice; and
- more sustainable funding and financing of coastal management strategies, anchored by a new approach to identifying the public and private beneficiaries of coastal management actions and equitably sharing costs between them.

The reforms are being developed and delivered through a collaborative approach involving all relevant government agencies, coastal councils and key stakeholders. We envisage that the Sydney Coastal Councils Group will be a key stakeholder in developing and delivering our modern, integrated and strategic coastal management framework.

2. An independent coastal advisory body for NSW

I strongly support the restoration of the NSW Coastal Council. Since the abolition of the Coastal Council by Labor in 2002, there has been no integrated voice for the Coast within Government.

While the current *Coastal Protection Act 1979* establishes the NSW Coastal Panel, this body's limited advisory, development consent and referral role for coastal protection works is complicated by the existence of other bodies with responsibilities for different aspects of coastal management, such as the Natural Resources Commission, The Planning Assessment Commission, Joint Regional Planning Panels and the Ministerial Coastal Expert Panel, to name a few. The new Coastal Management Act will re-establish the NSW Coastal Council.

The NSW Coastal Council's role will be to provide independent expert advice to the Minister for the Environment on matters relevant to the operation of the Act, including the provision of

technical guidance on coastal matters, particularly in relation to coastal processes and geomorphology.

The Minister will be able to make the advice of the new body available to councils, together with any accompanying operational guidance. The new body will not have a development approval role for coastal protection works, as this duplicates existing processes under planning legislation. However, consent authorities will be able to seek advice from the new body when dealing with complex coastal development applications.

The new body will be appointed on the basis of relevant skills and expertise. A merit based selection process will apply and it will be subject to Cabinet consideration. Membership will be restricted to individuals external to Government to ensure that the advice of the body is independent.

3. A NSW Strategy and Action Plan for climate change adaptation in the coastal zone

The Baird Government has provided over \$6 million in funding for new science and research to understand and respond to the local impacts of climate change in NSW. This includes the release of high resolution, local scale climate projections as part of the NSW and ACT Regional Climate Modelling (NARClIM) Project. These fine-scale projections help local government, business and the community to understand the impacts of climate change in their local areas and prioritise actions that improve resilience to future extreme weather events.

As noted above, new funding mechanisms for climate change adaptation are also currently under development.

4. A review of, and significant increase in, funding for coastal programs

Our funding and financing reforms under our coastal reform package will establish agreed cost sharing principles to fairly and transparently identify the beneficiaries of proposed coastal management actions, and therefore who should contribute to the costs (and in what proportion). In many cases there is likely to be a mix of both private and public beneficiaries of coastal management activities.

A key element of our stage 2 coastal reforms is to establish more sustainable arrangements for the funding and financing of coastal management activities by making available to councils tools for identifying effective and affordable management options that deliver net benefits to the community.

To support the new approach to establish more sustainable funding and financing arrangements, we will review the various funding and financing mechanisms that exist to see if they can be better used by councils, and whether arrangements need to be put in place to make them more useful for councils' needs. A component of this review process will include the consideration of current State government coastal funding programs.

Information on the cost sharing principles and funding and financing mechanisms, together with any other relevant guidance, will be captured in a funding and financing 'tool kit' that will form part of the new coastal management manual to be made available to support local council decision making processes.

5. A strategy for Integrated Water Management throughout the Greater Sydney region, with a particular focus on infrastructure renewal

As part of the Baird Government's adaptive approach to integrated water management, the Metropolitan Water Plan 2010 is currently under review. This review, which has strong linkages with the Hawkesbury Nepean Flood Management Review, will provide a framework for balancing the demand for a secure water supply, flood risk mitigation and the needs of the environment.

In order to drive further innovation and efficiency in the water market, the Government passed the Water Industry Competition Amendment (Review) Act in October 2014. The Act removes barriers to entry for the private sector and enhances opportunities for partnerships between private providers and State-owned water businesses to deliver integrated water solutions that benefit both urban customers and the environment.

The development of integrated water cycle management plans in the Greater Sydney Region aim to harness the potential for public and private entities to work together to deliver new standards for water re-use and efficiency.

6. Maintenance of public access and public ownership in the coastal zone

The policy objectives underpinning the coastal reform agenda promote the maintenance of public beach access, use and enjoyment. During the development of the new Coastal Management Act, an interagency group will be commissioned to resolve current ambiguities around the effect of erosion on coastal property boundaries. A key focus of our reforms will be the fundamental principle that public access to our beaches must be free.

7. Improved planning controls to restore, protect and enhance coastal biodiversity

The Independent Biodiversity Legislation Review Panel has made 43 recommendations in support of an integrated package of reforms to facilitate sustainable development and conserve biodiversity while removing unnecessary red-tape. Many of these are consistent with the recommended policy positions put forward by the SCCG. The NSW Government is currently considering the Panel's package of reforms.

In addition, NSW is continuing to work with the Commonwealth to strengthen intergovernmental cooperation on the environment and minimise costs to business while maintaining high environmental standards through the NSW Bilateral agreements.

8. A strategy and supporting implementation programs for sustainable marine management

The new Marine Estate Management Act took effect on 19 December 2014. The objects of the Act are:

- (a) to provide for the management of the marine estate of New South Wales consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development in a manner that:
 - (i) promotes a biologically diverse, healthy and productive marine estate, and
 - (ii) facilitates:
 - economic opportunities for the people of New South Wales, including opportunities for regional communities, and
 - the cultural, social and recreational use of the marine estate, and
 - the maintenance of ecosystem integrity, and
 - the use of the marine estate for scientific research and education

- (b) to promote the co-ordination of the exercise, by public authorities, of functions in relation to the marine estate
- (c) to provide for the declaration and management of a comprehensive system of marine parks and aquatic reserves.

The Marine Estate Management Authority (MEMA) is conducting a Marine Estate Threat and Risk Assessment which will provide a better understanding of the most significant threats facing the marine estate and work towards the most effective and efficient actions to manage the threats. The Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel is contributing to this and other marine reform projects. The Panel was established to provide MEMA with independent expert advice spanning economic, social and ecological sciences.

MEMA is also currently undertaking the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion project, which covers the State's marine waters from Newcastle to Wollongong and includes Sydney Harbour. The project will deliver options to enhance conservation of marine biodiversity in the Hawkesbury Shelf bioregion.

The Baird Government announced its decision on the recreational fishing amnesty in NSW marine parks on 19 December 2014. Based on the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel's advice and further consideration of social values and use conflicts at some sites:

- the amnesty has now been removed from 20 sites and enforcement of sanctuary zone rules has recommenced; and
- a rezoning process will be undertaken for the remaining 10 sites involving further analysis and public consultation on the ecological, economic and social values to determine final arrangements.

MEMA has developed a Community and Stakeholder Strategy to support its commitment to stakeholder engagement, public participation and communication activities in managing the NSW marine estate. The Strategy identifies seven over-arching principles that MEMA will use to guide its approach to community and stakeholder engagement: participation, early involvement, communication, accessibility, proportionality, transparency and evaluation.

The management of each of NSW's six marine parks is also supported by a local advisory committee. Two of the six committees were recently re-appointed. Re-appointment of the other four committees will soon follow.



Labor



The Hon. Luke Foley MLC
Leader of the Opposition
Shadow Minister for Infrastructure
Shadow Minister for the Environment
Shadow Minister for Western Sydney

13 March 2015

Cr. Geoff Stevenson
Chairperson
Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc.
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Re: 2015 State Election Survey

Thank you for providing the NSW Opposition with Sydney Coastal Councils Group key policy recommendations. I provide for you the responses to the matters you have raised.

1. An independent coastal advisory body for NSW

NSW Labor is concerned that in recent years public policy has failed to properly consider our coasts. NSW Labor believes the disbanding of the previous coastal advisory body has not been replaced with adequate focus and integration when it comes to coastal planning and protections. NSW Labor will make further announcements in relation to ensuring we have adequate mechanisms to meet the challenges of bringing levels of government together to manage the linkages between coastal catchments, rivers, floodplains, estuarine and marine environments.

2. A NSW Strategy and Action Plan for climate change adaptation in the coastal zone

The previous state Labor Government was a world leader in identifying and responding to the threat of rising sea levels. A number of the Labor Government's sensible responses, including informing land holders of the latest modelling, have been wound back by the Baird Government.

NSW Labor will ensure that the Office of Environment and Heritage prepare appropriate advice and strategies to assist adaption within the coastal zone.

3. Adaptive, integrated and participatory management of the coastal zone

NSW Labor believes we must build both the institutional arrangements and the resourcing to ensure we can adequately manage the competing demands and the complex inter-linkages of the coastal zone. It is essential that local government and state government work together to manage development demands alongside the needs of our coastal environments.

4. A strategy for Integrated Water Management throughout the Greater Sydney region, with a particular focus on infrastructure renewal

Sydney Water has a strategic plan, and our position is to not privatise Sydney Water, nor cut 450 maintenance jobs from it like the Liberals did.

6. Maintenance of public access and public ownership in the coastal zone

NSW Labor believes that access to the coast is something that all citizens should enjoy. Wherever possible NSW Labor will defend public access and ownership of the coastal zone.

7. Improved planning controls to restore, protect and enhance coastal biodiversity

NSW Labor is committed to restoring the planning system to ensure we balance the needs for economic development with proper care for the environment and community. NSW Labor has announced a comprehensive marine conservation policy that particularly identifies sea bird nesting habitat as a priority for protection. NSW Labor will make further announcements concerning its comprehensive plans for biodiversity protection in NSW

8. A strategy and supporting implementation programs for sustainable marine management

Please see attached NSW Labor's Marine Conservation Policy announcement and our Sydney Marine Park announcement.

Yours Sincerely



Luke Foley
NSW Labor Leader

Luke Foley MLC

Shadow Minister for the Environment



Saturday, 1 November 2014

LABOR RELEASES COMPREHENSIVE MARINE CONSERVATION POLICY – SIX POINT PLAN TO PROTECT OUR OCEANS, WATERWAYS AND MARINE LIFE

Shadow Environment Minister Luke Foley today announced that a Labor Government will implement a comprehensive plan to protect the State's oceans, waterways and marine life – and reverse the backwards steps the NSW Liberal/National Government has taken in just three and a half years.

Releasing Labor's Marine Conservation Policy at the Nature Conservation Council's annual conference today (**see full speech attached**), Mr Foley outlined a six point plan to protect our State's fragile marine environment.

"Labor is committed to protecting our marine environment – so that its precious beauty and diversity can be enjoyed by future generations, and our unique marine life can flourish," Mr Foley said.

A Labor Government will:

1. Establish a dedicated Sydney Marine Park to protect the jewel in Sydney's crown, the world renowned Sydney Harbour;
2. Lift the Liberal/National Government's moratorium on the creation of any new marine parks;
3. Return marine sanctuary zones to full protection, so they again become areas where wildlife and habitats are protected;
4. Prioritise protection of breeding areas such as the islands, headlands and beaches where seabirds nest and raise their young;
5. Ask the NSW Scientific Committee to consider the addition of the hawksbill sea turtle to the State's Threatened Species List, to give this rare and beautiful creature the protection it deserves; and
6. Immediately reinstate protections on the state's Mid North Coast for the labrador of the ocean - the critically endangered Grey Nurse Shark.

"The world's oceans have changed more in the last 30 years than in all of prior human history," Mr Foley said.

"The world's oceans have lost 75 per cent of their megafauna – large creatures such as whales, dolphins, sharks, rays and turtles. And worldwide fish populations are also in crisis."

"When last in office, Labor put in place strong measures to conserve the marine environment. These included creating a network of six multiple use marine parks, covering around one third of the NSW marine estate, and enacting strong laws to protect whales, dolphins and other marine mammals," Mr Foley said.

"Today I am proud to announce that the next Labor Government will build on this legacy – in clear contrast to the Liberals and Nationals hostility to marine conservation."

MEDIA CONTACT: LUKE FOLEY 0417 494 802

MEDIA RELEASE

John Robertson MP

NSW Opposition Leader

Luke Foley MLC

Shadow Minister for the Environment



Sunday, 28 September 2014

LABOR TO PROTECT SYDNEY HARBOUR FOR ENJOYMENT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS WITH CREATION OF A SYDNEY MARINE PARK

Opposition Leader John Robertson announced today that a NSW Labor Government will protect the jewel in Sydney's crown – the world renowned Sydney Harbour – by creating a dedicated Sydney Marine Park that will ensure its precious beauty and diversity will be enjoyed by future generations.

Marine parks are declared under NSW legislation, covering certain waters in order to maintain ecological processes, provide for sustainable use of fish and provide opportunities for public enjoyment of those waters.

The Sydney Marine Park will extend from Pittwater to Port Hacking, incorporating Sydney Harbour, Parramatta and Lane Cove Rivers, Middle Harbour, Pittwater, Narrabeen Lakes, Dee Why Lagoon, Botany Bay and Port Hacking. It will also extend three nautical miles off the coast to the limit of State waters.

Mr Robertson and Shadow Environment Minister Luke Foley were joined by a marine scientist and environmentalists on board the historic timber ship, the Yukon, to make the policy announcement on Sydney Harbour.

"Labor will permanently protect one of Australia's most internationally recognised icons – Sydney Harbour will be declared a marine park to ensure that we continue to benefit from this remarkable natural and economic asset for our city and state," Mr Robertson said.

"These waters are home to an astonishing array of marine life. Of the major city ports around the world, Sydney's is the most biologically diverse with 3,000 species documented in Sydney Harbour. Almost triple the number of fish species have been recorded in Sydney Harbour than from the entire coast of the United Kingdom.

"The assumption in the wider community has been that Sydney Harbour is already a protected asset – that has not been the case but Labor will move in government to ensure that it becomes reality.

"We are very lucky to have our city located on one of the world's greatest natural harbours – Labor will ensure that it remains that way.

"Sydney Harbour will always remain a working harbour. It will remain a well-loved and used recreational resource for the people of Sydney. Families will continue to be able to boat, swim and fish on Sydney Harbour and they will be able to do it in the knowledge that our great harbour is being looked after.

"The establishment of a Sydney Marine Park will ensure that a co-ordinated plan to protect Sydney's marine environment is delivered by the State Government in consultation with the community.

"With only six months to go until the state election, Labor is committed to building on our strong environmental record - protecting Sydney waterways through marine park status is the missing link in the network of marine parks in our state."

Shadow Minister for the Environment Luke Foley said; "Under Labor's policy, for the first time, the NSW Government will take responsibility for the protection of Sydney's stunning marine environment – that protection cannot come soon enough.

"The pressures on Sydney Harbour are significant and growing. As well as the longer term threat posed by climate change, it is already suffering from contaminants and the inevitable development and pollution associated with a city of 4.8 million people. Invasive species threaten Sydney's marine life.

"The multiple use Sydney Marine Park will be open to the public and cater for a range of sustainable activities including fishing, boating, dolphin and whale watching, swimming, snorkelling and kayaking."

To make sure the new park is properly designed and effectively managed Labor will establish an advisory committee consisting of representatives from:

- marine conservation;
- marine science;
- Indigenous communities;
- Surf Life Saving Clubs;
- the tourism industry;
- recreational fishers;
- scuba divers;
- commercial fishers; and
- local councils.

"The committee will develop a long term zoning plan for the park and replace the existing ad hoc approach to the management of the Harbour's marine environment with one that is science-based," Mr Foley said.

"The marine park will include sanctuary zones – with protections equivalent to that of a national park - where fishing will not be permitted, leaving the marine life to breed freely and undisturbed, as well as general use zones open to fishing, and recreational fishing havens. The marine park will be good news for both conservation and fishers."

Mr Robertson said he was inviting Premier Mike Baird to join Labor in offering bipartisan support for the creation of a Sydney Marine Park.

"Mike Baird talks of his love for our ocean and harbour. He should turn talk into action, lift his Government's moratorium on new marine parks and join Labor in supporting the establishment of a Sydney Marine Park," Mr Robertson said.

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NSW LABOR'S SYDNEY MARINE PARK



Tasman Sea
SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN

Marine Park Zone





The Greens NSW Policy Response to the Sustainable Coastal Management Recommendations by the Sydney Coastal Council Group Inc. (SCCG)

1. Adaptive, Integrated and Participatory Management of the Coastal Zone

The Greens NSW support an adaptive, risk based approach to address and evaluate the issues and risks arising from the development and use of coastal areas. Climate change and the impact on sea level rise affecting coastal areas must be recognised and incorporated into all decisions relating to coastal management. The Greens NSW understand the NSW coast is a significant natural asset belonging to the people of NSW and that protection and sustainable use of such assets must be underpinned by the use of principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development, especially the Precautionary Principle.

The Greens NSW Coastal Management Policy (<http://nsw.greens.org.au/policies/nsw/coastal-management>) has the following policy points specifically reflecting the Greens position on SCCG recommendations:

- The NSW coastal zone is a significant natural asset belonging to the people of New South Wales and must be protected through ecologically sustainable management, the allocation of dedicated resources, and a comprehensive reserve system to protect these natural assets;
- The impact of sea-level rise and other consequences of global climate change, such as increased storm frequency and intensity, must be recognised and incorporated into all decisions relating to coastal zone management
- All development and policy decisions for the NSW coast should be based on the principles of ecologically sustainable development, including the precautionary principle, and deliver high quality outcomes for the natural and human modified environments;
- Activities that threaten the natural values of the coast must be curtailed, and new co-operative arrangements among all levels of government, community and industry must be devised, funded and implemented;
- The management of the NSW coastal zone should be underpinned by a State Coastal Action Plan aligned with a National Coastal Action Plan that takes into account the physical, ecological, cultural, economic, spiritual, and heritage value of the coast;
- The coordinated management and protection of the coastal zone, including estuarine, wetland and marine environments, is needed to encourage and promote orderly and balanced utilisation and conservation of the coastal region and its natural and man-made assets;
- A whole of catchment management approach should be used to manage coasts, estuaries and wetlands as an integrated system through the reinstatement of a catchment management authority

- Identified hazards associated with existing or future developments need to be evaluated within an assessments framework of values and risks that identify means for preservation and/or enhancement of values while reducing present and future risks to current and future generations;
- The recognition and involvement of the public (e.g. volunteer community groups such as Coastcare and Landcare, and school monitoring programs) in coastal zone planning and management including estuary and wetland management and protection is essential;
- Coastal regions are among the most prized and widely visited tourist destinations. The impact of tourism on our coastal environments needs to be closely monitored and evaluated to ensure it is ecologically sustainable while providing opportunities for sensitive eco-tourism;
- A NSW Coastal Protection Bill, which is based on ESD principles and a public review of laws to identify the most effective measures to protect coastal lands including estuarine, wetland and marine ecosystems;
- Measures to protect the coast that are informed by the most comprehensive scientific research and take into account the different needs of all stakeholders with no or minimal impact on the coastal environment;
- The use of comprehensive regional assessments to evaluate the natural values and resources of coastal lands and estuarine and marine ecosystems in all regions of the state. Such assessments must employ consultation with Indigenous Australians, public participation, periodic review and scientifically valid and publicly accepted methodologies;
- Action to ensure national and state coastal zone management objectives and policies align to protect coastal, estuarine and marine environments
- A comprehensive framework for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of strategies and programs in protecting and managing the NSW coastal zone;
- The development, funding and implementation by the NSW government of a range of community education and awareness-raising programs that highlight contemporary coastal zone management issues and promote policies addressing those issues;
- Recognition that estuaries represent the end point of an entire river catchment where problems have the capacity to accumulate. To ensure both river and estuarine health, total catchment management solutions are needed and whole of catchment management plans developed and implemented
- Reform for estuaries management to ensure there are clear lines of responsibility and that community involvement in all management decisions is sought, respected and valued;
- Ensure the protection and improvement of water quality in all coastal watercourses and coastal waters, through education, regulation and legislation including the measurement

and monitoring of the condition of coastal and marine water in estuaries through a system of standard indicators;

- Development of management and recovery plans for all degraded estuarine environments with associated funding to ensure the plans are implemented
- The establishment of funding for specific programs to address acid-sulphate soil management;

2. An Independent coastal advisory body for NSW

The Greens NSW support the creation of a lead agency to coordinate the protection of the coast through public participation and stakeholder consultation, and to identify and monitor problem areas, enforce strict land-use zoning and develop and implement an appropriate shared-responsibility framework for the ongoing maintenance and protection of our coastal regions. The NSW Greens also believe that measures to protect the coast should be informed by the most comprehensive scientific research that considers the needs of all the stakeholders with minimal impact to the coastal environment.

The Greens NSW Coastal Management Policy (<http://nsw.greens.org.au/policies/nsw/coastal-management>), with the following policy points identifying specifically reflecting the Greens position on SCCG recommendations:

- The management of the NSW coastal zone should be underpinned by a State Coastal Action Plan aligned with a National Coastal Action Plan that takes into account the physical, ecological, cultural, economic, spiritual, and heritage value of the coast;
- A whole of catchment management approach should be used to manage coasts, estuaries and wetlands as an integrated system through the reinstatement of a catchment management authority;
- The establishment of a lead agency to coordinate the protection of the coast through public participation and stakeholder consultation processes to identify and monitor problem areas, enforce strict land-use zoning and develop and implement an appropriate shared-responsibility framework for the ongoing maintenance and protection of our coastal regions
- Measures to protect the coast that are informed by the most comprehensive scientific research and take into account the different needs of all stakeholders with no or minimal impact on the coastal environment;
- The use of comprehensive regional assessments to evaluate the natural values and resources of coastal lands and estuarine and marine ecosystems in all regions of the state. Such assessments must employ consultation with Indigenous Australians, public participation, periodic review and scientifically valid and publicly accepted methodologies;

3. A NSW Strategy and Action Plan for climate change adaption in the coastal zone

The Greens believe that NSW must become a leader in strong action on climate change. Our policies mainstream climate change and we recognise the need to grow within the limits of planetary boundaries and ecological constraints. In order to achieve this, the Greens have a plan move away from fossil fuel energy production and transform to 100% renewable energy by 2030 (<http://nsw.greens.org.au/energy>). We are also committed to phasing out coal fired power stations, banning new coal mines, a timetable to phase out existing coal mines, and a transition package for effected workers and small business (<http://nsw.greens.org.au/sites/nsw.greens.org.au/files/Phase%20out%20coal%20policy.pdf>).

The Greens NSW believe that the impact of sea level rise and other consequences of global climate change such as increased storm frequency and intensity must be recognised and incorporated into all decisions relating to coastal zone management. The Greens NSW recognise the management of the NSW coastal zone needs to be underpinned by a State Coastal Action Plan which takes into account the physical, ecological, cultural, economic, spiritual and heritage value of the coast. Additionally, the Greens NSW would reinstate IPCC sea level rise predictions as the sea level rise planning benchmarks. In line with our Coastal Management policy, the Greens NSW will work towards a NSW Coastal Protection Bill, which is based on ESD principles, and a public review of laws to identify the most effective measures to protect coastal lands including estuarine, wetland and marine ecosystems.

The Greens NSW Coastal Management Policy (<http://nsw.greens.org.au/policies/nsw/coastal-management>) has the following policy points specifically reflecting the Greens position on SCCG recommendations:

- The impact of sea-level rise and other consequences of global climate change, such as increased storm frequency and intensity, must be recognised and incorporated into all decisions relating to coastal zone management
- All development and policy decisions for the NSW coast should be based on the principles of ecologically sustainable development, including the precautionary principle, and deliver high quality outcomes for the natural and human modified environments
- The management of the NSW coastal zone should be underpinned by a State Coastal Action Plan aligned with a National Coastal Action Plan that takes into account the physical, ecological, cultural, economic, spiritual, and heritage value of the coast
- The coordinated management and protection of the coastal zone, including estuarine, wetland and marine environments, is needed to encourage and promote orderly and balanced utilisation and conservation of the coastal region and its natural and man-made assets;
- Identified hazards associated with existing or future developments need to be evaluated within an assessments framework of values and risks that identify means for preservation and/or enhancement of values while reducing present and future risks to current and future generations

- Measures to protect the coast that are informed by the most comprehensive scientific research and take into account the different needs of all stakeholders with no or minimal impact on the coastal environment
- The use of comprehensive regional assessments to evaluate the natural values and resources of coastal lands and estuarine and marine ecosystems in all regions of the state. Such assessments must employ consultation with Indigenous Australians, public participation, periodic review and scientifically valid and publicly accepted methodologies;
- A comprehensive framework for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of strategies and programs in protecting and managing the NSW coastal zone
- The development, funding and implementation by the NSW government of a range of community education and awareness-raising programs that highlight contemporary coastal zone management issues and promote policies addressing those issues
- The immediate allocation of adequate funds through a NSW Coastal Acquisition Fund to coastal-land-acquisition schemes to permit the public acquisition of significant coastal lands currently in private ownership at the earliest possible opportunity
- Ensuring that coastal lands in public ownership are maintained as public assets and are managed effectively as such, through co-operative arrangements under publicly agreed plans of management
- Ensuring any development in coastal cities, towns and villages be underpinned by ESD principles and takes into full account sea-level rise predictions
- Supporting communities who responsibly plan through their local governments to effectively adapt to the impacts of climate change by ensuring public funding is not disproportionately reallocated to ameliorate the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise on private properties that have been developed since New South Wales released its sea-level-rise predictions in October 2009
- Supporting communities who responsibly plan through their local governments to effectively adapt to the impacts of climate change by ensuring public funding is not disproportionately reallocated to ameliorate the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise on private properties that have been developed since New South Wales released its sea-level-rise predictions in October 2009

4. A review of, and significant increase in funding for coastal programs

The Greens NSW will commit to a public review of laws to identify the most effective measures to protect coastal lands including estuarine, wetland and marine ecosystems including a review of government funded coastal programs. The present funding model for the NSW Coastal and Estuary Management Program should be reviewed to investigate pathways whereby local government councils can equitably access funds to prepare coastal and estuarine studies, coastal zone management plans, assess the health of estuaries and investigate, design and implement management actions to reduce coastal erosion risks, restore degraded habitats and improve access

to beaches and public reserves. Funding models should also be investigated to assist local government councils to undertake coastal hazard mapping.

The Greens NSW Coastal Management Policy (<http://nsw.greens.org.au/policies/nsw/coastal-management>) has the following policy points specifically reflecting the Greens position on SCCG recommendations:

- The development, funding and implementation by the NSW government of a range of community education and awareness-raising programs that highlight contemporary coastal zone management issues and promote policies addressing those issues
- Ensuring environmental legal aid is made available so that members of the community can take legal action in the public interest to ensure that environmental laws are implemented or complied with
- The immediate allocation of adequate funds through a NSW Coastal Acquisition Fund to coastal-land-acquisition schemes to permit the public acquisition of significant coastal lands currently in private ownership at the earliest possible opportunity
- The establishment of funding for specific programs to address acid-sulphate soil management
- The establishment of funding for specific programs to address acid-sulphate soil management

5. A strategy for Integrated Water Management throughout the greater Sydney region with a particular focus on infrastructure renewal

Management of water is multidimensional and complex. There is a need to move away from the fragmented traditional approaches of the past that have led to environmental degradation, pollution and water scarcity. Innovative and creative approaches using total water management within a framework of catchment management has to become widespread practice.

The Greens NSW recognise the need to employ a whole of catchment management approach, promoting the use of integrated water-cycle management including reusing and recycling rainwater, wastewater, stormwater and sewage. Urban water supply, drainage and sewerage systems are interrelated parts of natural water catchments and must be sustainably managed within these catchments.

Rather than massive investment in large-scale centralised infrastructure projects, integrated water cycle management tools such as water conservation, water sensitive urban design and planning, utilisation of roof runoff, stormwater, greywater and wastewater, source control and pollution prevention and non-structural tools such as education should be more fully developed.

The Greens NSW will establish an inter-agency approach covering both wastewater and stormwater to coordinate the reduction of sewage overflows by minimising stormwater infiltration and will

maintain public ownership and control of all water and sewage infrastructure and services including maintenance. The Greens NSW will also support the reinstatement of a NSW Catchment Management Authority and reform the management culture of all NSW water supplies to prioritise environmental and social objectives. The renewal of infrastructure is very important, especially to ensure water efficiency. For example, The Greens NSW have recently announced a twenty billion dollar infrastructure package that includes more than \$550 million for storm water works.

The Greens NSW Coastal Management Policy (<http://nsw.greens.org.au/policies/nsw/coastal-management>) has the following policy points specifically reflecting the Greens position on SCCG recommendations:

- A whole of catchment management approach should be used to manage coasts, estuaries and wetlands as an integrated system through the reinstatement of a catchment management authority
- Promoting the use of integrated water-cycle management including reuse and recycling of rainwater, wastewater, stormwater and sewage;
- Requiring local councils and the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure to incorporate Water Sensitive Urban Design principles in all relevant planning instruments
- The introduction of measures to stop polluting industrial, agricultural and domestic discharges from entering water bodies
- Recognition that estuaries represent the end point of an entire river catchment where problems have the capacity to accumulate. To ensure both river and estuarine health, total catchment management solutions are needed and whole of catchment management plans developed and implemented. Promoting the use of integrated water-cycle management including reuse and recycling of rainwater, wastewater, stormwater and sewage

In addition to the Greens NSW Urban Water Policy (<http://nsw.greens.org.au/policies/nsw/water-urban>) clarifies the Greens NSW position and approach to urban water management.

6. Maintenance of public access and public ownership in the coastal zone

The Greens NSW believe that the NSW coastal zone is a significant natural asset belonging to the people of NSW. The Greens NSW would ensure that coastal lands in public ownership are maintained as public assets and are managed effectively as such, through co-operative arrangements under publicly agreed plans of management. Further, the Greens NSW would allocate adequate funds through a NSW Coastal Acquisition Fund to coastal-land-acquisition schemes to permit the public acquisition of significant coastal lands currently in private ownership at the earliest possible opportunity, and protect publicly owned and operated infrastructure that exists along the coast such as surf lifesaving clubs, vital utilities (including electricity and water assets and port facilities) against the impacts of climate change, and, where possible, relocate vulnerable government assets.

The Greens NSW Coastal Management Policy (<http://nsw.greens.org.au/policies/nsw/coastal-management>) has the following policy points specifically reflecting the Greens position on SCCG recommendations:

Policy Points (4), (11), (17), (18), (23), (25), (26), (27), (28), (29), (30), (31)

- Activities that threaten the natural values of the coast must be curtailed, and new co-operative arrangements among all levels of government, community and industry must be devised, funded and implemented
- Coastal regions are among the most prized and widely visited tourist destinations. The impact of tourism on our coastal environments needs to be closely monitored and evaluated to ensure it is ecologically sustainable while providing opportunities for sensitive eco-tourism
- The creation of a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system for coastal lands and estuarine and marine ecosystems with certain sensitive areas being reserved as no-take sanctuary zones in marine parks and national parks
- Implementation of an immediate moratorium on development (including re-zonings and subdivisions) or new commercial operations in coastal lands and estuarine and marine ecosystems identified as being likely to be required for a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system
- The development, funding and implementation by the NSW government of a range of community education and awareness-raising programs that highlight contemporary coastal zone management issues and promote policies addressing those issues
- The immediate allocation of adequate funds through a NSW Coastal Acquisition Fund to coastal-land-acquisition schemes to permit the public acquisition of significant coastal lands currently in private ownership at the earliest possible opportunity
- Ensuring that coastal lands in public ownership are maintained as public assets and are managed effectively as such, through co-operative arrangements under publicly agreed plans of management
- Protecting publicly owned and operated infrastructure that exists along the coast such as surf lifesaving clubs, vital utilities (including electricity and water assets and port facilities) against the impacts of climate change, and, where possible, relocating vulnerable government assets
- Ensuring any development in coastal cities, towns and villages be underpinned by ESD principles and takes into full account sea-level rise predictions;
- Protecting the visual amenity of the NSW coast, including by prohibiting the building of high-rise and other inappropriate development adjacent to the shoreline;
- Developing and implementing planning controls that include restrictions on building height and bulk, require quality and character to match existing architecture, be unobtrusive on

view scapes, and include buffer zones to protect foreshores and allow for coastal retreat as a result of predicted sea-level rise;

7. Improved planning controls to restore, protect and enhance coastal biodiversity

The Greens NSW recognise the significant ecological value of the NSW coastal assets and support the coordinated management and protection of the coastal zone, including estuarine, wetland and marine environments which is needed to encourage and promote orderly and balanced utilisation and conservation of the coastal region and its natural and human-made assets. The Greens NSW would ensure that any development in coastal cities, towns and villages would be underpinned by ESD principles, genuine community consultation and planning controls that include restrictions on building height and bulk and include buffer zones to protect foreshores as well as allow for coastal retreat as a result of predicted sea-level rise.

The Greens are opposed to Federal Government handing environmental approval powers in the EPBC Act to state governments as this will lead to weakening of environmental protections and oversight.

Globally, nationally and at the state level, there are major and steady declines in biodiversity. Recommendations on biodiversity offsets in the new NSW biodiversity offsets policy for major projects will weaken current legislation and only exacerbate loss of biodiversity, especially given the impacts of climate change. The effectiveness of offsetting biodiversity loss as a policy for ecological restoration is not supported by evidence due to poor measurability, uncertainty about recreating biodiversity that is lost and the time lags.

The Greens believe that market-based processes and trading mechanisms such as biodiversity banking and offsets that trade off high conservation areas for development lead to a net loss in biodiversity, and must not be used. We are committed to a sound policy which is based on conservation science and underpinned by preventing damage to our ecosystem, not one that leads to irreversible loss of our unique habitat and wildlife.

The recent recommendation from the Biodiversity Legislation Review Panel to abolish the Native Vegetation Act and repeal the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and parts of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 to reconstitute only elements of these key pieces of environmental protection legislation in a new 'Biodiversity Conservation Act' is deeply concerning and is a huge threat to biodiversity in our state. These recommendations were made despite 80% of the submissions (395) supported retaining or improving current legislation. The Greens NSW submission to this Review can be found here (<http://www.mehreenfaruqi.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Submission-to-biodiversity-legislation-review-Greens-NSW-Mehreen-Faruqi.pdf>)

The Greens NSW were very strong in our opposition to the changes to the Native Vegetation Regulations and introduced a disallowance motion in parliament to stop the weakening of environmental protections. The Greens are committed to the protection and strengthening of the National Parks and Wildlife Act and other environmental legislation to protect native vegetation and

biodiversity, and ensuring that all such legislation is underpinned by the principles of ESD including the widespread application of the precautionary principle.

The Greens NSW would place an immediate moratorium on the clearing of any coastal native vegetation within 5 km of the reach of tidal waters until effective coastal protection and management legislation is enacted, encourage the regeneration, rehabilitation and ongoing management of native vegetation in the coastal zone to improve biodiversity habitat values, visual and recreational amenity, and dune and foreshore stability, and fund for specific programs to address weed control.

The Greens NSW Coastal Management Policy (<http://nsw.greens.org.au/policies/nsw/coastal-management>), has the following policy points specifically reflecting the Greens position on SCCG recommendations:

- The creation of a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system for coastal lands and estuarine and marine ecosystems with certain sensitive areas being reserved as no-take sanctuary zones in marine parks and national parks
- Implementation of an immediate moratorium on development (including re-zonings and subdivisions) or new commercial operations in coastal lands and estuarine and marine ecosystems identified as being likely to be required for a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system;
- The inclusion of new legislative provisions to identify, map, securely protect and effectively manage all areas of wetland in the coastal zone that are of regional, state, national or international significance across all land tenures;
- Ensuring any development in coastal cities, towns and villages be underpinned by ESD principles and takes into full account sea-level rise predictions
- Supporting communities who responsibly plan through their local governments to effectively adapt to the impacts of climate change by ensuring public funding is not disproportionately reallocated to ameliorate the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise on private properties that have been developed since New South Wales released its sea-level-rise predictions in October 2009
- Protecting the visual amenity of the NSW coast, including by prohibiting the building of high-rise and other inappropriate development adjacent to the shoreline;
- Implementing measures to minimise night-time light pollution of beaches, lakes and headlands caused by the use of both public and private artificial light installations. This 'permanent full moon' effect negatively impacts on the sleeping, breeding, migration, and feeding cycles of nocturnal marine and terrestrial creatures

In addition, the Greens NSW Biodiversity Policy (http://nsw.greens.org.au/sites/nsw.greens.org.au/files/Biodiversity_8.pdf), has the following policy points specifically reflecting the Greens position on SCCG recommendations:

- Clearing of native vegetation poses the single greatest threat to biodiversity
- The majority of remaining native habitat in New South Wales is owned and managed privately, and it is on these intensively used areas that the greatest challenges for biodiversity conservation are found;
- The weakening of environmental protection by any level of government must be opposed.
- Implementation at local, regional and state levels of the National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biodiversity, consistent with the National Strategy's goals and timeframes
- Strengthening legislation that protects biodiversity, such as the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and the Native Vegetation Act 2003 and take legal action against agencies, including State Forests, that contravene species protection legislation
- Opposing any move to weaken the Native Vegetation Act or Native Vegetation Regulations, and work to maintain the compliance regime within government structures;
- Ensuring that oversight of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 remains with the federal government;
- Encouraging landholders and managers on all land tenures, through a mix of regulatory controls and incentives, to protect the biological diversity of their lands;
- Implementing incentives and regulations to encourage both private landholders and leaseholders to conserve and restore habitat for biodiversity protection purposes and to provide environmental services;
- Providing adequate funding for the management and/or restoration of all special habitat areas including a range of mechanisms for assistance to private landholders affected by wetland protection and management;
- Ensuring planning laws are consistent with the conservation of biodiversity and ecologically sustainable development principles
- Opposing market-based processes and trading mechanisms such as biodiversity banking and offsets that trade off high conservation areas for development;

8. A strategy supporting implementation programs for sustainable marine management

The Greens NSW believe in the intrinsic value of the marine environment and support the sustainable management and use thereof. The Greens NSW support the rights of local communities and community based groups to participate in planning and management of marine areas.

The Greens opposed the recent Marine Estate Management Act 2014 which now replaces the Marine Parks Act 1997. While the Greens welcome an integrated approach to the management of the New South Wales marine environment, it is problematic to have an Act that focused primarily on marine parks and conservation superseded by a bill that will compromise protecting our marine

ecosystem. The principles of ecologically sustainable development need to be front and centre of all decision-making processes for the marine estate, regardless of whether the area under consideration is a marine park, an aquatic reserve, an estuary or any part of the remaining 600,000 hectares of ocean captured by the bill. The Greens pushed for the bill to retain the standard New South Wales definition of ESD from section 6 of the Protection of the Environment Act 1991, to ensure good environmental outcomes are not undermined by anthropocentric benefits. (<http://www.mehreenfaruqi.org.au/speech-marine-estate-management-bill-2014/#sthash.z9VO4ZaC.dpuf>).

The Greens NSW have a clear policy that commits us to protecting ecologically significant areas of the marine environment in a system of comprehensive, adequate and representative Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) including introducing legislated targets of a minimum of 30 per cent of each representative marine ecosystem and bioregion being fully protected in no-take sanctuary zones to ensure that a Comprehensive Adequate and Representative (CAR) regime can be effective across the state.

The Greens have been campaigning strongly with environment groups and the community to restore full protection to all sanctuary zones across NSW.

The Greens NSW Marine Policy (<http://nsw.greens.org.au/policies/nsw/marine-environment>) has the following policy points reflecting the Greens NSW position SCCG recommendations:

- In the creation of a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)
- In effective monitoring and evaluation of MPAs, and the collection of scientific data to support the ongoing benefits of MPAs;
- In effective and genuine public participation in the design and implementation of management plans for MPAs
- In sustainable recreational and commercial fishing in marine areas other than no-take sanctuary zones;
- In sustainable employment-transition programs to assist commercial fishers and people employed in associated industries impacted by changes in marine management practices
- Protecting ecologically significant areas of the marine environment in a system of comprehensive, adequate and representative Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)
- Ensuring no further loss of aquatic habitat, such as mangrove, saltmarsh and seagrass
- Safeguarding against the loss of marine habitats, such as rocky reef, deep ocean reef and island reef through fishing practices such as trawling
- Introducing legislated targets of a minimum of 30 per cent of each representative marine ecosystem and bioregion being fully protected in no-take sanctuary zones to ensure that a Comprehensive Adequate and Representative (CAR) regime can be effective across the state

- Establishing a framework for ecosystem management incorporating sustainable fishery assessment and management plans for recreational and commercial fishing;
- Ensuring all commercially harvested fish stocks are assessed and their sustainable harvest levels determined
- Regulating fishing and spear-fishing competitions appropriately to avoid ecosystem damage and unsustainable take
- Addressing sources of marine and estuarine pollution such as acid sulphate soils, contaminants, ocean outfalls, marine debris, stormwater runoff, nutrients, pesticides, heavy metals and fertilisers, dog faeces, exfiltration of sewage contaminants from damaged sewerage piping and any other pollutants that contribute to the degradation and loss of function of any marine or coastal ecosystem;
- Improving land management to reduce impacts on estuarine and marine ecosystems;
- Restricting moorings in MPAs, particularly over seagrass beds, to existing, approved, permanent moorings;
- Regulating ballast and bilge waters to prevent the introduction of noxious marine species into marine waters;
- Ensuring that land-based aquaculture development does not occur below 1m of the Australian Height Datum (AHD);
- Ensuring that ocean-based aquaculture is underpinned by principles of ecologically sustainable development and the species of fish culture are within their natural distribution ranges;
- Ensuring that all species of 'fish' (as defined in the Fisheries Management Act 1994) are locally native to the area in any aquaculture development;
- Regulating aquaculture ventures and ensuring they are approved only if they can demonstrate a better ecological outcome than from projected ecologically sustainable practices in the wild fishery for that species;
- Removal of shark meshing operations from beaches and the development of alternative methods of shark attack prevention
- Ensuring implementation of by-catch avoidance techniques of fishing, as well as requiring the mandatory reporting on the extent and make up of by-catch by commercial fishers;
- Strict regulation of the use of seismic and other explosive devices, sonar equipment, and disruptive mining activities, and the banning of such activities in locations where, and at all time, when, they could cause harm to whale and other marine animal populations
- Rapid phasing out of targeted shark fishing, particularly for shark fins, unless it can be demonstrated that a targeted shark species can be harvested at sustainable levels

- Maintaining the minimum-approach distance to whales and dolphins; and

In addition, the Greens NSW Biodiversity Policy

(http://nsw.greens.org.au/sites/nsw.greens.org.au/files/Biodiversity_8.pdf), has the following policy points specifically reflecting the Greens position on SCCG recommendations:

Policy points (7), (12),

- Indigenous Australians play an important role in the protection of biodiversity;
- Genetically engineered organisms released into the environment pose a possible threat to biodiversity through direct competition with or contamination of gene stock in existing species



2218



The Rev. The Hon. Fred Nile MLC ED., L.Th.,

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Cr G Stevenson
Chairperson
Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc
C/- City of Sydney Council
GPO Box 1591
SYDNEY NSW 2001

2015/15

Dear Mr Stevenson

Thank you for your letter dated 4th February 2015 concerning Sustainable Coastal Management: Policy recommendations to political parties contesting the 2015 NSW Election.

I am pleased to advise that the Christian Democratic Party supports your eight key policy recommendations for NSW.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Fred Nile' in a cursive script.

Rev Hon Fred Nile MLC





Email correspondence received from Australian Democrats on Friday 20 March 2015:

Dear Shab,

I apologise for taking this long to respond, as you can probably appreciate, this is a very busy time.

It is important to state that the Australian Democrats have recent, Nationally balloted policy on [Coasts and Oceans](#), which gives a framework for the management of Coasts and Oceans of the entire country and which should also be taken into consideration for the full context of this response.

After consideration, our Lead Candidate, Rendall Wagner, is able to endorse the Sustainable Coastal Management: Policy recommendations to political parties contesting the 2015 NSW Election as a positive initiative towards achieving our policy goals and restoring health - economically, socially and environmentally to our coastal areas. Within these recommendations, we feel that the establishment of an independent advisory body for NSW along with increased funding and an Integrated Water Management strategy would be priorities for the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important initiative.

Kind regards

Rendall Wagner
NSW Legislative Council Lead Candidate 2015
Australian Democrats
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(Coasts and Oceans Policy attached)

Coasts and Oceans Policy

THE ISSUE

1. Australia's coasts and oceans are of vital importance to our community and economy.
2. Australia's marine environment covers twice the area of Australia's terrestrial environment, but receives scant attention.
3. The concentration of settlement and economic activity in eastern, south-eastern, and south-western coastal zones has had an enormous impact on the coastal and marine environment.
4. Future sea level rises are projected to cause significant impacts on the built and natural environments.
5. Almost 60% of Australia's fisheries are overfished and a significant number of marine and estuarine species are threatened with extinction.
6. An understanding of our ocean's past and present condition and knowledge of basic mapping is deficient, yet critical in understanding future resource management issues including climate change.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

- a) To ensure the maintenance of biodiversity, to protect threatened species and to maximise habitat protection.
- b) Ensure Australia has a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) coastal and marine protected area system.
- c) To co-operate with Indigenous peoples in the sustainable conservation management of their traditional lands and waters.

POLICY ELEMENTS

The Australian Democrats will work towards:

- i. Initiating an inquiry into the need for, and design of, a *National Oceans Act*, which will establish a National Oceans Authority. The Act will:
 - a. Ensure there is a legislatively backed regional marine planning process;
 - b. Ensure all regional marine plans include target areas for marine protected areas and timelines for their proclamation;
 - c. Ensure that all decisions concerning fisheries management, shipping and mining are consistent with approved regional marine plans.

- ii. Rapidly expand the National Reserve System program to ensure Australia has a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) coast and marine protected area system.
- iii. Ensuring that the expansion of the National Reserve System is accompanied by an associated increase in the resources needed for orderly conservation planning and management, including the ongoing provision of well-trained staff to implement Coastal and Marine Management Plans.
- iv. Increasing the resources available for the protection and conservation of coastal and marine areas, including programs to improve water quality in rivers that discharge into coastal and marine areas.
- v. Supporting programs that identify, control or eliminate coastal and marine invasive species, including programs that stop the introduction of new pest species.
- vi. Supporting and expanding no-take (or green zones) in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.
- vii. Increasing resources available for research into the conservation status of coastal and marine species.
- viii. Committing to recurrent funding for the oceanographic research vessel program.
- ix. Increasing funding for the systematic collection of hydrographic and oceanographic data from Australia's coastal and oceanic waters.
- x. Ensuring Australian fisheries are harvested at sustainable levels based on sound scientific evidence, and ensure that effort and catch data is publically available for all Australian fisheries.
- xi. Increasing surveillance of Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone to stop illegal fishing activities and poaching of threatened marine species.
- xii. Funding programs that reduce fisheries by-catch such as albatross, petrels, sea turtle and sharks, from both commercial and recreational fishing.
- xiii. Establishing national guidelines for aquaculture developments in coastal and marine areas.
- xiv. Increasing the involvement of Indigenous communities in the management of coastal and marine areas.
- xv. Reducing or, if possible, eliminating sewage, stormwater and industrial discharge to marine and estuarine areas (including discharges from ships) and ensuring there are strict environmental regulations and enforcement concerning discharges to marine and estuarine areas including through aquaculture.
- xvi. Establishing a nationally co-ordinated Coastal Inundation Mitigation Plan due to sea level rise as a result of climate change.
- xvii. Supporting a strict compliance and risk management review of offshore oil and gas exploration, production processes and facilities.



**SYDNEY COASTAL
COUNCILS GROUP**