

SYDNEY COASTAL COUNCILS GROUP INC.
councils caring for the coastal environment



ART OF COMMUNICATION FORUM REPORT

CUSTOMS HOUSE, SYDNEY

THURSDAY 1 AUGUST 2013



ART OF COMMUNICATION REPORT CARD

Date: 1 August 2013
Place: Customs House, Circular Quay
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Number of speakers: 9
Number of participants: 75
Organisations in attendance

Councils		Other organisations
Member Councils	Other Councils	
Botany Bay City Council	City of Ryde Council	Department of Primary Industries
Gosford City Council	Eurobodalla Shire Council	Environmental Defender's Office NSW
Hornsby Shire Council	Gosford City Council	Georges River Combined Councils' Committee
Leichhardt Municipal Council		The Greens
Manly Council		Manly Community Centre
Mosman Council		Natural Resources Commission
North Sydney Council		New South Wales Health
Pittwater Council		NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
Randwick City Council		The Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust
Rockdale City Council		Shore Regional Organisation of Councils
Sutherland Shire Council		Sydney Institute of Marine Science
City of Sydney Council		University of Sydney
Warringah Council		University of Technology Sydney
Waverley Council		University of New South Wales
Willoughby Council		
Woollahra Municipal Council		



Figure 1 & 2: Engaged Art of Communication participants in the Barnet Long Room at Customs House

1. INTRODUCTION

The SCCG is pleased to report on the outcomes of the **Art of Communication Forum** held on 1 August 2013 at Customs House. Seventy five participants attended representing 32 organisations.

Context

Communication is an essential skill for Councils and government authorities, who, with their multiple and varied management responsibilities, are called upon to deliver important messages daily.

The Forum

The day was split into four sessions, which developed upon one another:

Session 1 Please Explain

Wendy Harmer and Clare Mann reviewed what communication is, the theory and psychology behind it and essential elements for effective delivery.

Session 2 Tools of the Trade

Focusing on the strategy behind effective communication, this session was run by Anne Howard and explored why we use communication strategies and how they are structured. Anne facilitated a workshop on how to write a communications strategy, that explored how to communicate to specific audiences and what are the appropriate media platforms to use.

Session 3 Information is Beautiful: Marketing your Message

Techniques to effectively communicate with the media and marketing your message were discussed by Matthew Moore and Galvin Scott-Davis. This session included a City of Sydney Council case study by Yvette Andrews, demonstrating successful methods for community engagement.

Session 4 Communication Conundrums

This session demonstrated techniques to translate and package elaborate information, such as the effects of climate change, law reform and the methodology of including the community in decision-making processes. Liese Coulter focused on communicating science, Dr. Rob Stokes MP shared his expertise on the best way to communicate policy and law to the community, and Dr. Neil Lazarow shared his knowledge on citizen science and some examples of how it's done.

Workshops

Workshops embedded throughout the program demonstrated the application of lessons learnt in practice. They also facilitated the sharing of knowledge and developed relationships between participants.

2. BIOGRAPHIES AND SYNOPSES

Opening Address

Presenter: Ms. Wendy Harmer
Role: Author, Comedian and Journalist



Biography: This year Wendy Harmer celebrates 40 years in the media.

She started as a copy girl on The Geelong Advertiser as a teenager and since then has worked as a journalist, sub-editor, documentary maker, scriptwriter, producer, TV host, broadcaster, playwright, author and stage performer.

She is now Editor in Chief of the daily online news magazine The Hoopla.com.au

The one thing you must do to get your message heard

Presenter: Ms. Clare Mann
Role: **Managing Director**
Organisation: Communicate 31
www.communicate31.com



Biography: Clare Mann is an Organisational Psychologist, bestselling author of numerous books and a communications expert with extensive international experience facilitating individuals/organisations to create results.

One of her books is a required text for a university course. Previously a human resources manager in a large UK Public Relations Company, she held a Senior Lectureship in Occupational Psychology in the UK. She developed open learning provision internationally/chaired a team responsible for quality standards in HRM. She lived 'off the grid' in a renewable energy-powered house in New Zealand for four years.

Synopsis: With over 20 years' experience with hundreds of different clients in over fifteen different countries, Clare Mann has discovered the one quality that communicators must possess for their message to be fully heard and for listeners to act and follow them.

In this lively and interactive presentation, Ms. Mann shared her findings with participants, which have been validated through her recent research with twenty-eight CEOs/executives who agreed on the one thing that influential communicators must have.

Ms. Mann explored how, with the development of this ability, you can create the essential foundations upon which to communicate your message more effectively. All Forum participants received a copy of her book, *Communicate*.

Presentation slides:

http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/sites/default/files/clare_mann_communicate31.pdf

Tools of the Trade: Hitting the mark: Your audience and your message. How to create and implement a communications strategy

Presenter: Ms. Anne Howard
Role: Director
Organisation: Howard Communications



Biography: Anne has been working with government, industry and NGOs to develop corporate communication and community management strategies for the past 20 years. This includes helping clients integrate social media into their engagement strategies. Anne is the author of *'Connecting with Communities: How Local Government is Engaging with Citizens,'* published in 2012. She holds a Master's Degree in Online Communication, and is a Director of the public policy and management advisory firm, Howard Partners.

Synopsis: This was a hands-on session where small groups worked together to develop a communications strategy. At the beginning of the Forum, participants listed communications issues, problems and challenges they wanted to develop a communications strategy for (see Section 3, Workshops). During morning tea, these were collated into categories. For the workshop each group chose an issue to explore. With guidance from the facilitator, groups went through each of the steps involved in building a strategy. Components such as problem definition, setting goals and objectives, understanding environmental context, budget and resourcing, audience segmentation, messaging, , channel selection and tactics, scheduling and timescales were covered. Groups also considered how the strategy could be best implemented.

Groups developed an accompanying implementation plan to ensure the strategy they developed could be well executed. The strategy also included methods to monitor progress and evaluate impact. Towards the end of the session, each group presented their strategy to the Forum to provide an opportunity for all participants to comment and provide feedback.

Presentation slides:

http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/sites/default/files/anne_howard_howardpartners.pdf

The importance of design and digital innovation

Presenter: Mr. Galvin Scott-Davis
Role: Entrepreneur, Designer, Published Author, Director
Organisation: Protein One



Biography: Galvin Scott Davis is the award-winning director of Protein, a digital agency specialising in brand integrity and digital innovation. Protein has won 10 IMA Awards under his direction, with clients including Apple and Westpac. Galvin has been responsible for four #1 Apps on iTunes. He is the author of the anti-bullying children's book *Dandelion*, Graphic Novel *Stricken*, and won the Beverly Hills Film Festival for his short film, *Brother*.

Synopsis: Audiences are savvier than ever when it comes to their experience online. They expect more, are time poor and respond to the nuances of design more than ever. With mobile device usage rapidly on the rise and the explosion of Apps – these users are quick to learn or fast to run. Your message online and on mobile needs to stand out from a sea of information. It needs to engage, retain and interact. There is a philosophy and strategy behind design which is more relevant than ever. Each and every project should innovate and create a lasting memory with your intended market – so that they will return, share and commit to your brand.

In this session, Mr. Scott Davis compared online and mobile case studies which have succeeded in generating a loyal user base and exceeded KPI's.

Presentation slides:

http://www.sydneycostalouncils.com.au/sites/default/files/galvin_scott_davis_Proteinone_low_res.pdf

Using the media strategically: an insider's perspective

Presenter: Mr. Matthew Moore
Role: **Media Specialist**
Organisation: City of Sydney



Biography: Matthew is a highly experienced journalist who worked as a reporter and editor at The Sydney Morning Herald for nearly 30 years. He held numerous roles at the paper including state political editor, chief-of-staff, news editor and Olympics editor. He served three years as Indonesia correspondent and most recently worked as Urban Affairs Editor. He joined the City in January this year as a media specialist and leads the City's media team.

Synopsis: The City of Sydney achieves an enormous amount of media coverage, not just in local media but across the country and internationally. With some notable exceptions, the coverage is overwhelmingly positive. It doesn't happen by accident, but as a result of a highly planned, disciplined and consistent approach to media relations. Matthew Moore explained how they do it.

Engaged communities = informed decision-making

Presenter: Ms. Yvette Andrews
Role: **Manager, Strategic Communication Consultation**
Organisation: City of Sydney



Biography: Yvette Andrews is the Manager of Strategic Community Consultation at the City of Sydney, a role she has held for the past two years. This specialist unit sits within the City Engagement division which delivers the media, marketing, communication, engagement, and customer service functions of the City.

The Strategic Community Consultation unit works on engagement strategies across the organisation from those large projects that will redefine the City such as transforming central Sydney with light rail or the \$8 billion redevelopment of the Green Square area, to local projects such as upgrades to community facilities, parks and playground.

Synopsis: What do the night time economy, a local playground and renewable energy have in common? This presentation explored ways to hear from the community in three very different scenarios and how engaging the community improves the decisions we make.

Too much information? Communicating for a purpose

Presenter: Ms. Liese Coulter
Role: **PhD Candidate**
Organisation: Griffith University



Biography: Liese worked for the Global Carbon Project while completing a MSc Communication focused on global environmental change at ANU. Since then, she has managed communication for the CSIRO Climate Adaptation Flagship and the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF) and consulted with government departments and universities to bridge knowledge gaps.

Synopsis: To create consistent and effective communication you can learn from theatre. Basic theatre improvisation tells us you can walk into a situation and handle it if you know *who you are*, *where you are*, and *what you want*. If I am a water engineer communicating progress on plans to moderate flooding I will make a different presentation to exchange detailed information with colleagues, compared to updating planners on the implications of proposed watercourse diversions or giving an overview to inform community consultation. The engineer's role changes from colleague, to advisor, to expert. Their shifting goals might range from having their team know about a new development, to ensuring planners evaluate the most likely risks when making changes, or a desire for better informed support from local residents for changes in development policy.

It is a challenge to find the time to prepare separate presentations, fit for purpose. And not every talented actor is a good scriptwriter. When scientists try to brief stakeholder communities using mathematic formulas, they clearly do not know where they are. Communication strategies that work well have prepared actors, who have some context for their setting and know what they want to achieve.

Presentation slides: http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/sites/default/files/liese_coulter.pdf

Communicating law and policy to the public

Presenter: Dr. Rob Stokes MP
Role: **Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy**
Member for Pittwater



Biography: Rob Stokes has served as the Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy in NSW since May 2011 and is a member of the Legislative Assembly Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics Committee. Previously, Rob has served as the Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and as a Member of the Parliamentary Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption. He was first elected to the NSW Parliament as the Member for Pittwater in 2007 and was re-elected in 2011.

Prior to his election, Rob was a practicing solicitor with city and suburban legal practices and was also a senior lecturer in law at Macquarie Law School. He was also involved with the International Bar Association and the NSW Law Society, having served as Vice-President of NSW Young Lawyers.

Rob was awarded a PhD in Law in 2008, and has written extensively on environmental and planning law in a range of professional and academic journals.

Outside work, Rob is an instructor and assessor with the Northern Beaches Branch of Surf Life Saving Australia.

Synopsis: Dr. Stokes canvassed the challenge of communicating law and policy to the public. He did this drawing upon his extensive experience as a legal practitioner and academic, as well as a Member of Parliament.

Presentation slides: http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/sites/default/files/Stokes_Presentation.pdf

Creating a dialogue with communities: the two-way conversation of citizen science:

Presenter: Dr. Neil Lazarow
Role: Senior Research Scientist, Science into Society Group
Organisation: CSIRO



Biography: Neil is a social scientist (BA, PG (Dip), MA, PhD) with fifteen years of national and international experience across academia, government, industry and the not-for-profit sector. His practice experience includes political science, public policy and institutions, social research, anthropology, economics and geography.

Neil's primary research and work interests include social research, public policy and governance, and stakeholder engagement. The majority of my work to date has focused on planning and policy for the coastal zones of the world with a focus in recent years on strategic planning, knowledge, capacity building, economics and climate change adaptation policy.

Neil is currently a Senior Research Scientist with CSIRO. His work focuses on science-policy and climate adaptation; and he works on a number of national and international projects. Prior to joining CSIRO, he held roles with the Australian Government and also in academia.

Synopsis: Communities of interest are increasingly making more sophisticated use of tools and approaches as part of their advocacy strategies. This can broaden the impact of their messages and may lead to more favourable outcomes. However these approaches also carry risks: the devolution of hard-won community engagement opportunities within the planning system; and significantly higher transaction costs for the public sector. In this presentation, Dr. Lazarow described these challenges, their implications for science-policy, and discussed a number of interesting approaches that seek to improve dialogue between citizens, the public service and politicians.

Presentation slides: http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/sites/default/files/neil_lazarow_csiro.pdf

3. WORKSHOPS

3.1 Communication issues, problems and challenges



Figure 3: Strategisation in action. Participants developed a communications strategy as part of the *Tools of the Trade* session facilitated by Anne Howard.

In the first Session *Please Explain*, participants were asked to list communications issues, problems or challenges they would like to develop a communications strategy for. These were collated into key categories which are detailed in Table 1. This information was used to feed into the second workshop below.

Table 1: List of communication issues, problems and challenges identified by participants.

Climate change issues, particularly coastal erosion restricting development
Marine research suggests more marine park reserves necessary to preserve marine biota (this will restrict the rights of fishers)
Calling to action the commercial sector to adopt environmentally ethical practices
Informing the public of the issues relating to forced council amalgamations (impacts upon community services etc)
Informing the community of the impacts of marine debris (particularly plastic) and implementing reduction strategies

3.2 Developing a communications strategy

In the second workshop session, *Tools of the Trade*, Anne Howard ran a workshop *Hitting the Mark: Writing and Implementing a communications strategy* that tackled each of the communication issues, problems and challenges identified by participants: developing individual communication strategies. Each group explored their communication 'dilemma' through the following pathway:



One of the 'goals' workshopped was to increase the number of marine parks in NSW. The group who workshopped this goal developed the following objectives:

GOAL	OBJECTIVES
An agency, such as OEH, increase the number of marine parks in NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a more targeted approach, segment the audience into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Greenies → Surfers → Fishers → Boaters → Media → Residents within the proximity of a marine park • In the first month of the campaign, employ ten lobbyists in one month to push the message out strategically • Over three months, undertake an education campaign for Fishers e.g. place ads in fishing magazines, run a social media campaign link on our website to marine parks • Over four months, develop strategic partnerships with organisations over ten separate meetings • In 12 months, create one new marine park

4. EVALUATION

At the end of the Forum, a survey was conducted to evaluate the event. Forty-six of the 75 participants responded. A Likert-style rating system was utilised combined with a series of questions requiring user comment to identify the outcomes for participants.

4.1 Results

The evaluation form employed a coded questionnaire to capture quantitative and qualitative data (which can be analysed descriptively and statistically) using Likert-style rating questions. Sixty-two per cent of participants completed the survey. Most results were along the positive end of the satisfaction spectrum (Fig. 4), with the majority of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposition.

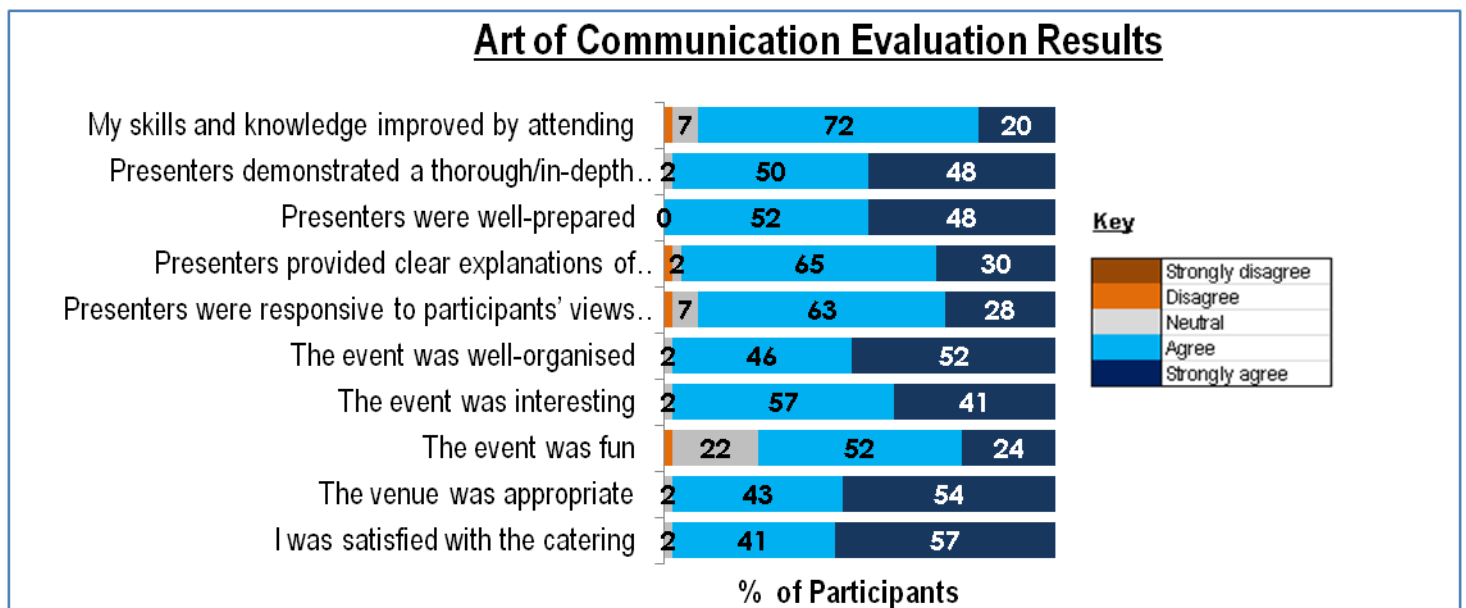


Figure 4: Bar chart rating participant responses.

Participants identified relationship building, networking and understanding priorities of other organisations as valuable elements of the Forum. To further support and encourage networking and collaboration across organisations, a contact list of participants has been distributed with this report to participants.

As part of the evaluation, participants were asked what key learning they took away from the day. Figure 5 provides a snapshot of results. Additional comments provided by participants and suggestions for improvement appears under that Figure.

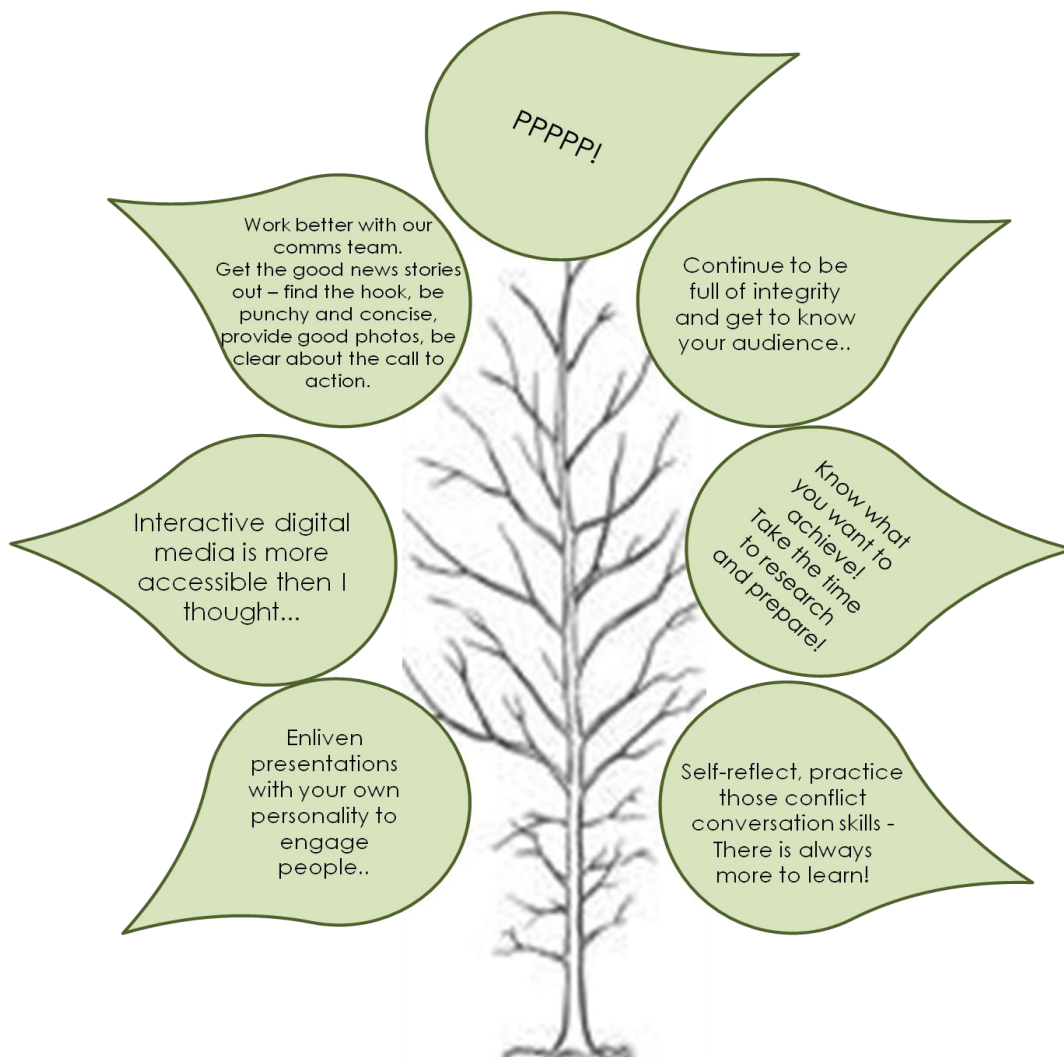


Figure 5: A snapshot of some of the key learnings participants took from the day.

Participant comments

- This was an especially strong and diverse program in line with what you would expect from a national-level symposium
- This forum was well run and introduced high quality and fresh presenters. Keep doing what you are doing!
- Excellent day – one of the better and more engaging workshops I have attended in recent years. Good balance between presentations, workshops and networking opportunities.
- Very informative day with a great calibre of speakers
- Great to get a book out of the day!
- A follow up forum on the same topic in 12-18 months could be interesting from the perspective of changing technologies and media.
- The range of speakers who tackled the topic from very different angles was great

Suggestions for improvement

- More council case studies and use a wider range of councils.
- Do ½ day events or make sure presentations are shorter (30-45 minutes) or more interactive. As it was hard to maintain energy
- Audio equipment needs to be improved

- Take home cheat sheets/messages from each of the presentations as a hand out.
- There could be an active, participatory component in the afternoon to keep everyone going.
- Something that ties it together at the end – more audience participation
- Provide the participant list BEFORE the event
- Allow more time for workshops or tailor material to fit the time

4. SUMMARY

This Forum was presented as part of the SCCG's Capacity Building Program. This Program aims to build the role and capacity of Member Councils and other stakeholders to sustainably manage the urban coastal and estuarine environments. Capacity building is undertaken through activities that strengthen knowledge, abilities, skills and behaviour via activities such as forums, workshops and guideline documents.

Capacity building subjects are identified in the SCCG Annual Survey and workshopped with the Full Group and Technical Committee to further refine them. Workshop outcomes are evaluated, synthesised and scoped.

Communications theory and how to communicate well to various audiences were identified by Member Councils as key areas in which they require capacity. Responding to this request, we scoped and tailored a Forum addressing all pertinent elements of communication.

The subject matter, forum structure, location, extremely high calibre of presenters and the participation of participants ensured that the Forum was a resounding success for all involved. Lessons learned will be applied to future activities to ensure they produce the very best outcomes.



Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc.

councils caring for the coastal environment

Level 14, Town Hall House, 456 Kent Street

GPO Box 1591, SYDNEY NSW 2001

t: +61 2 9246 7326 | **f:** +61 2 9265 9660

e: info@sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au

w: www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au