

COASTAL CURRENTS AUTUMN 2013

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SYDNEY COASTAL COUNCILS GROUP ED 67

FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of Coastal Currents. On behalf of the SCCG, I hope you had a safe and Happy Easter.

Were you in Sydney for January? If so, perhaps you were one of almost 2000 Summerama participants. Member Councils organised a wide range of activities and workshops for all ages along the Sydney coastline. A report appears later in this Newsletter and, if you missed out on the activities, don't worry it will be running again in January 2014.

We are as busy as ever this year, with a number of capacity building events held already. March saw our forum *Diverse Depths: See Beneath the Shallows* expand awareness on marine biodiversity issues and management activities. The launch of the SCCG Assessment and Decision Frameworks for Seawalls study provided participants with an overview and understanding of key project outputs. We have also hosted two excellent seminars: *Barriers to Adaptation to Climate Change* by the University of Melbourne and *What Does Climate Change Mean for Extreme Weather Events*

and Local Councils by the Climate Commission. Visit www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/Events for more information and seminar materials.

We have recently been awarded two grants to advance our leaderships in coastal management: the *Sydney Harbour Coastal Zone Management Plan: Stage Scoping Study* and the *Emergency Risk Management, a Health Check for Local Government*. Please see the Projects Update below for more details.

Looking for grant or funding opportunities? Well, the SCCG 2013 Funding Guide is the answer. It's now available on our website and lists over 100 grant, scheme and award opportunities: www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/Funding_Guide.

Stay tuned to *Making Waves*, our monthly website update, for issues of regional coastal significance which arise between newsletters.

Clr Cathy Griffin
SCCG Chairperson

SCCG PROJECTS UPDATE

SCCG Project Launch: Assessment and Decision Frameworks for Seawall Structures, Forum and Field Assessment 21 March 2013

Seawall structures are found at many locations around Australia's 30,000 kilometre coastline. For many of these protection structures, construction details are unknown and their capacity to withstand existing or future storm and inundation events is poorly understood.

Coastal managers (usually Local Government) may be faced with issues regarding seawalls whose quality and origin are unclear. Frequently, there is conflict between coastal managers and the community.

The Launch of this study included presentations of all project elements:

- An overview of the Project
- Geotechnical aspects of seawall stability
- Economic aspects of valuing seawalls and management interventions
- Field data investigations at Bilgola

The day offered an opportunity to develop priorities for research and collaboration between our Member Councils and other organisations, and increased awareness of the current state of management of many small seawalls. The final documents will be published and made available soon: www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/Project/assessment_and_decision_frameworks_for_seawall_structures_project

New Project: Emergency Management: a Health Check for Local Government

Climate change will continue to cause higher-than-average temperatures, increased storms and precipitation for Australia in the future (*Critical Decade: Extreme Weather*. Climate Commission 2012). This will result in potentially severe consequences for our communities particularly the vulnerable. In light of this, we are undertaking a project to improve Local Government activities in Emergency Management (Prevent/Prepare/Respond/Recover). By working closely with Local Government and the major combat agencies, we will explore current practice in NSW and review best practice approaches from other States and Internationally. A key element is the building of resilience, both organisationally and within the community, to provide adaptive and flexible responses to emergencies.

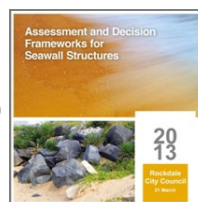


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The SCCG was established in 1989 to promote co-ordination between Member Councils on environmental issues relating to sustainable management of the urban coastal environment.

The Group consists of 15 Member Councils adjacent to Sydney marine and estuarine environments and associated waterways in Sydney; Botany, Hornsby, Leichhardt, Manly, Mosman, North Sydney, Pittwater, Randwick, Rockdale, Sutherland, Sydney, Warringah, Waverley, Willoughby and Woollahra. The Group collectively represent over 1.4 million Sydneysiders.



SCCG Web Sites

www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au
www.summerama.com.au
www.walkingcoastalsydney.com.au
www.monitor2manage.com.au

SCCG PROJECTS UPDATE (cont.)

The project will also investigate limitations and opportunities for Local Government practice due to other areas and responsibilities of Emergency Management. The project is due for completion in February 2014 and will engage emergency management staff from SCCG Councils and the lead agencies. A Steering Committee with representation from those organisations will be established to draw upon viewpoints and needs from all perspectives.

This project has been made possible by funding from the Natural Disaster Resilience Program.

Sydney Harbour Coastal Zone Management Plan: Stage 1 - a Scoping Study

Sydney Harbour is a vibrant, iconic waterway. A drowned river valley, comprising contrasting natural and urban landscapes abounding with cultural, geological and biological diversity and heritage. It is Sydney's and one of Australia's tourism drawcards (described as 'spellbinding' by the Australian National Landscapes program). The health of the Harbour is crucial to all including the ~1.2 million Australians living within its urban fringe.

The pressures upon Sydney Harbour are increasing. Governance arrangements are complex with multiple agencies and stakeholders. Management remains fragmented and, often, ad hoc. The SCCG, in partnership with the City of Sydney and Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority seek to address this, having been awarded a grant under the Office of Environment and Heritage's Estuary Management Program to undertake a scoping study for the preparation of a Coastal Zone Management Plan for Sydney Harbour.

The project will scope the priority management issues to underpin a strategic and integrated management plan for Sydney Harbour to protect, enhance, maintain and restore this valuable asset. There are 26 councils in the Sydney Harbour catchment, 13 with Harbour frontages. The scoping study will capture all those not covered by of the Parramatta River and the Lane Cove River Coastal Zone Management Plans, that is, downstream of Clarke's Point Birchgrove.

Watch the project evolve on the project webpage http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/Sydney_Harbour_CZMP

Becoming Social

A survey among our 15 Member Councils has been conducted to explore Councils' application, adoption and use of social media, and in particular, its use to address environmental issues. Results are currently being analysed to identify current social media strategies, policies and tools employed as well as any gaps, barriers and capacity required. A survey results report will be uploaded to the Project Page shortly.

A consultant has been retained to undertake a literature review to underpin project outputs. The review will investigate, summarise and synthesise social media and its use in Government engagement, consultation, education and policy development. This important and informative document will also be made available on our website.

A tender process will kick off shortly to appoint a consultant to develop and pilot test tools and strategies for the use of social media addressing specific local or



regional coastal environmental issues. If you would like any further project information, please contact Stephen Summerhayes on (02) 9246 7326.

Mapping and Responding to Coastal Inundation



This project, undertaken with the assistance of the CSIRO, provides SCCG Member Councils with the science, planning guidance and community awareness-raising materials necessary to incorporate extreme sea level modelling and sea level rise into planning and management systems. Following on from the launch in late 2012, legal advice was commissioned to consider the release of the coastal inundation mapping information by Member Councils. In particular what, if any, are Councils' obligations on receipt of the information, and risks in relation to disclosure or non-disclosure. This legal advice has now been received and provided to Member Councils. See http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/Project/Mapping_and_Responding_to_Coastal_Inundation for further details.

MATTERS OF INTEREST

Local Land Services Workshops

Late last year the NSW Government announced that the number of Catchment Management Authorities will be reduced and merged into 11 new *Local Land Services* (LLS) offices. The LLS will also incorporate Livestock Health and Pest Authorities and DPI advisory services and deliver functions currently provided by these agencies. The LLS will be regionally-based, semi-autonomous, governed by locally-elected and skills-based Board Members. For further details visit the Local Land Services website - <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/locallandservices>.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Summerama 2013

Another successful Summerama saw almost 2000 participants re-acquainted with Sydney's beautiful coastline through the 69 activities that took place across 12 Member Councils. Activities were as popular as ever (with most booked out weeks in advance) and included all the favourites: rockpool rambles, nocturnal wildlife spotlight walks, recyclable arts and crafts, sea-kayaking, wetland tours, bird-watching tours, wildlife shows and educational talks.

We'd like to extend a big thank you to our participating Councils: Hornsby, Leichhardt, Manly, Mosman, North Sydney, Pittwater, Randwick, Rockdale, Sutherland Shire, Waverley, Willoughby and Woollahra, the Summerama Champions, all the lovely Sydneysiders who participated, and to our sponsor Landcare Australia and Be Natural. The 2014 program will be available on the Summerama



Just a sample of all the fun that was had at Summerama!

CAPACITY BUILDING

Marine Biodiversity Forum - Diverse Depth: See Beneath the Shallows 12 March 2013

To build the role and capacity of Member Councils to sustainably manage the urban coastal environment, we hold events and conduct workshops on issues relevant to representatives.

This forum addressed a wide range of marine biology and biophysical topics of interest and provided a grasp of the issues and threats present in the marine environment.

This event fostered the sharing and transfer of knowledge of marine biodiversity, climate change and management issues. It was a successful day that exhibited current Sydney research and monitoring activities as well as a variety of strategies to assist coastal biodiversity resilience to climate change. We were very lucky to receive an opening address by ocean pioneer and Ambassador Ms. Valerie Taylor OAM.

If you would like to know more, please visit the Events Page for the Final Report (including agenda), Program, a list of Presenters and to download presentations from the day at www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/diverse_depths_see_beneath_the_shallows.

SCCG Funding Guide 2013

This Guide, updated annually, provides a comprehensive list of funding opportunities to assist Councils, their communities and businesses identify and apply for funding opportunities to support the management and protection of Sydney's coastal and estuarine environment. The 2013 version is now available on our website:



www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/funding_guide

Letter in support of a National Container Deposit Scheme

Plastic is a vector carrying pollutants into food chains. Our Member Councils are particularly concerned with the amount of plastic pollution entering our coasts and waterways. We have written to State and Federal Environment Ministers urging support for a Container Deposit Scheme, highlighting the impact that plastic containers have on the marine environment. We have also written to the NSW Minister for Education to inquire what school education and change behaviour programs are underway to reduce plastic use and increase recycling. This information will inform our future activities.

NSW Reforms to Coastal Management: An Update

As part of the Stage 1 NSW Coastal Reforms, the NSW Government has revoked the Sea Level Rise Policy.

SCCG SUBMISSIONS, ADVOCACY, GRANTS & AWARDS

At our Full Group meeting in March, delegates resolved that we write to our Member Councils encouraging a regional and consistent approach to sea level rise by continuing to apply the former 2009 NSW Sea Level Rise benchmarks until other reliable scientific information is available. (See <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ukmXcVJesYA%3D&tabid=177>), considering the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water 2009 Technical note: *Derivation of the NSW Government's sea level rise planning benchmarks* (<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/climatechange/09709technotesealevelrise.pdf>).

Draft Code of Practice under the Coastal Protection Act 1979

OEH has now released a draft Code of Practice under the Coastal Protection Act 1979 that is available for comment until 19 April 2013. The changes in the consultation draft Code

compared to the current Code include:

- updating the authorised locations where coastal protection works can be placed to reflect all areas where properties are currently known to be at risk from coastal erosion
- increasing the allowable height of the works from 1.5 to 2.2 metres
- allowing temporary works to be placed in front of any existing works
- relaxing the specifications for the sand used in the works.

Comments should be emailed to

coast.flood@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Visit <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/coasts/130212draftcopcoast.htm>

for more information and to have your say.

The SCCG ramps up coastal advocacy activities in the lead up to the Federal Election.

On 30 January Prime Minister Julia Gillard MP announced that the next Federal Election will occur on 14 September, 2013. At the SCCG Full Group Meeting on 16 March, it was resolved that in the lead up to the election, the SCCG will be active in two national advocacy campaigns:

SCCG in Support of the National Coastal Policy Initiative

We have encouraged our Members to participate in the 'The National Coastal Advocacy Alliance' supporting the National Coastal Policy Initiatives to encourage effective, whole of government effort to achieve a sustainable future for our coast and communities.

This initiative has evolved from discussions at the National Coastal Conference in September 2012 between key national coastal groups, research organisations and other individuals regarding the need for a collaborative national approach to increase national political attention to issues facing the Australian Coast. These key issues are:

- A collaborative national response to coastal planning and management involving all three tiers of government.
- An intergovernmental agreement defining the roles and responsibilities of each tier of government in relation to the coastal zone.
- A national coastal policy that addresses the challenges facing the coast zone through a national coastal commission and accompanying Act

SCCG SUBMISSIONS, ADVOCACY, GRANTS & AWARDS (cont.)

SCCG request for policy positions on key coastal issues

Similar to the 2010 Federal Election and the more recent NSW State Election, we will request all registered political parties to outline their policy positions in relation to key coastal management issues that we define.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COASTAL NEWS

The Government's Response to the Scientific Audit of Marine Parks in NSW

In June 2012 we made a submission in response to the Independent Scientific Audit on Marine Parks in NSW to advocate the SCCG's views on marine management (http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/sites/default/files/submission_marine_audit.pdf).

On 12 March 2013, the NSW Government officially responded to the Independent Scientific Audit by accepting the Audit's two principle recommendations to:

- reorganise management of the NSW Marine Estate under a single new authority known as the Marine Estate Management Authority and
- establish an independent scientific committee to support evidence-based decision making.

These will be the foundations for the new approach to the management of the Estate. The key initiatives of the two management and advisory bodies will be to develop a risk and assessment framework and a marine estate management strategy to prioritise actions over the next decade.

The NSW Government has also introduced an amnesty on recreational line fishing in marine parks from ocean beaches and headlands, including sanctuary zones (apart from those sites identified as set threatened species). All other sanctuary provisions apply.

For more information, please visit <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/info/marinereform>.

Draft Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Action Plan (CAP) 2013-2023

This statutory ten year plan guides community and government in managing the region's natural resources. It has been developed with the vision to "support communities and government working together to achieve productive, biodiverse, liveable urban areas and resilient landscapes in the Hawkesbury-Nepean and Sydney catchments."

The document has five inter-related goals and 22 strategies for whole government and community implementation. It can be found at <http://www.hn.cma.nsw.gov.au/news/6601.html>. Comments are invited up until 14 April 2013.

Draft Sydney Metropolitan Strategy For 2031

Interested to know how the NSW Government is planning to manage a projected population increase of 1.3 million people by 2031? Check out the Draft Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney: <http://strategies.planning.nsw.gov.au/MetropolitanStrategyforSydney.aspx>. It proposes that particular industries, such as health, education, offices and manufacturing be clustered together in areas called 'Specialised Precincts' with the aim of increasing resources in these growth centres.

The "Healthy and Resilient Environment" chapter of the Strategy acknowledges that urbanisation degrades air and water quality, and biodiversity. This section identifies policies that aim to develop a healthy and resilient environment, whilst encouraging the City to grow.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COASTAL NEWS (cont.)

The Green Corridor Initiative is to be integrated into land use planning by purchasing and protecting strategic areas of high conservation value.

Regarding coastal hazards and climate change, the strategies are to:

- link strategic land use planning with periodic reviews of flood studies and coastal hazard studies.
- use the Office of Environment and Heritage's current project *Towards a Resilient Sydney* to identify opportunities for strategic planning to assist local government and communities to plan for climate change

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure encourages submissions on the draft strategy by 31 May 2013. Visit <http://strategies.planning.nsw.gov.au/MetropolitanStrategyforSydney/Haveyoursay.aspx> for more information.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES & MEETINGS

Engineers Australia Coastal Climate Change Guidelines Workshop: 8 May

A one day workshop with practical advice on adaptation to climate change and uncertainty for coastal development. Anyone involved in decision making, designing, building or maintaining structures, infrastructure, residential, commercial or leisure facilities in the coastal zone should attend. For the program flyer visit http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/sites/default/files/nccoe_2013_flyer.pdf. This event will be held at Engineers Australia, 8 Thomas St, Chatswood.

NCCARF Conference: Knowledge & Partnerships 24-27 June 2013

This conference will bring together end users and researchers from across Australia to share experience in adaptation and showcase activities, strategies and research. This event will be held at the Hilton Hotel in Sydney. <http://www.nccarf.edu.au/conference2013/>

Coasts and Ports Conference: 11-13 September, 2013

This conference provides an opportunity for professionals to discuss and focus on the technological, scientific, policy, planning and design issues related to our diverse and developing coasts. It will be hosted in Manly.

www.coastsandports2013.com.au

Beachwatch Training

Do you want to know more about the Beachwatch Program? A Beachwatch Training Course will be held in September to raise Council awareness about what Beachwatch does, why it's important and how Council can help manage beach pollution. If you're interested, click the link below to fill in a quick survey to assist the Beachwatch Team make the training as relevant as possible for participants. <http://www.cvent.com/d/qcqv0/3B>

NSW Coastal Conference: Valuing our Coast, Planning our Future, What's the big picture? 12-15 November

The theme for the 22nd Coastal Conference will focus around strategic planning, the values of the coast, technology, community engagement and coastal infrastructure. This event will be held at the Glass House at Port Macquarie. Abstract submissions close on 28 June 2013. <http://www.coastalconference.com/>.