

COASTAL CURRENTS



The Sydney Coastal Councils Group Quarterly Newsletter | Autumn Edition 2016 | #79



From the Executive Officer

Welcome to the Autumn edition of our quarterly newsletter *Coastal Currents*.

We start 2016 in a challenging time for our Member Councils as they grapple with the implications of the proposed local government amalgamations. While this is a time of uncertainty and upheaval, we know that all our members are working hard to continue to serve the needs of their communities into the future, regardless of the outcomes.

On a lighter note, as always we started the year with our annual summer activities program, Summerama. This January, over 2,200 participants attended nearly 60 events held across 12 participating councils. Check out our update on page 4 for more details.

Over summer we have also, of course, been particularly focused on Stage 2 of the Coastal Management Reform Process—you'll find a full update on page 2.

We've also been reflecting on some of the key threats to our valuable coastal ecosystems, such as waterway pollution. Many Sydney residents are perhaps unaware of the frequency with which our sewer and stormwater systems interact and the resulting risks to ecosystems and human health. Later this month we will convene an Interagency Meeting on Waterway Pollution Response Protocols, an opportunity for all relevant state agencies and our Member Councils to discuss the responsibilities of each player when it comes to pollution incident responses, communications and clean up.

I'd also like to welcome our newest staff member, Katherine Howard, who has big shoes to fill in picking up the role of Coastal Projects Officer from Emma Norrie. I'm pleased to say the SCCG Secretariat is now back to a full complement of staff.

Coming up in 2016 we will be delivering Stage 2 of our Emergency Management Health Check project; hosting a forum on flying fox camp management; continuing the successful Salty Communities grants program and keeping a very close eye on the Hawkesbury Shelf Marine Bioregion Assessment, the proposed NSW Biodiversity Legislation Reforms and the review of the Metropolitan Water Plan for Sydney.

It's going to be a big year – I look forward to your company, participation and engagement as we continue caring for our coasts. 2016 here we come!

Geoff Withycombe, SCCG Executive Officer

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

The Group consists of fifteen 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.



www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au

Recent Activity

Update on Stage 2 Coastal Reforms

The public submissions period for Stage 2 documents – the draft Coastal Management Bill, the Statement of Intended Effect on the State Environmental Planning Policy and the Coastal Management Manual – has closed.

SCCG made an extensive submission based on the advice of the dedicated Coastal Reforms Advisory Committee, representing all SCCG Member Councils, and independent expert legal and economic advice on the proposed reforms.

The Minister for Planning, Rob Stokes, attended the SCCG Full Group meeting in December 2015 to give a detailed introduction to the proposed reforms and answer questions from SCCG Member Councils.

Minister Stokes has recently [announced](#) that the full draft SEPP and the maps of the four proposed coastal management areas will also be released for public consultation in 2016.

Prior to this second phase of public consultation, the NSW Government will consult with coastal councils to ensure the mapping aspects of the reforms are developed using local information and knowledge.

For more information visit: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/coasts/coastreforms.htm>. The SCCG submission to Stage 2 Coastal Reform can be viewed here: www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/Submissions.

Container Deposit Scheme

In February, the NSW Government sought public comment on the proposed container deposit scheme (CDS) to help tackle litter across the state. SCCG contributed to a joint submission to the proposed CDS in partnership with other Sydney catchment groups, prepared by the Cooks River Alliance.

Plastic bottles and cans make up significant percentage of Sydney's litter problem and impact on the marine environment. SCCG is supportive of a container scheme to encourage resource recovery, reduced waste to landfill, and to minimise impacts on marine and coastal wildlife. A copy of the joint submission is available here: www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/Submissions.

Coming Soon

Metropolitan Water Plan

The 2010 Metropolitan Water Plan is being reviewed to take account of changes in demand and supply, new data and research. In February SCCG attended a stakeholder engagement workshop held by the Metropolitan Water Directorate to comment on 'themes' identified by prior community engagement on a desired future for the city, namely: aligning land and water planning for a 'healthy, green, balanced future'; innovation, technology and data support for water efficiency and new water supply sources; education and awareness to build water wise communities; and reform of pricing, cost recovery and economic regulation of water.

SCCG will continue to engage with the review process to encourage a greater focus on integrated water management for Sydney, and in particular, improvements desperately needed at the interface between sewer and stormwater management.

Upcoming events

Sydney Institute of Marine Science Discovery Centre Visit 13 March

The Sydney Coastal Councils Group is pleased to offer a special visit (with discounted entry price!) to the Discovery Centre at the Sydney Institute of Marine Science. [Book tickets here.](#)

Sydney Sustainability Festival 5 – 20 March

The festival provides Sydneysiders with the opportunity to explore and contribute to green events all across the city.

Breakfast with Shorebirds 13 March

Have breakfast with the birds before they leave for the Arctic summer! Riverside Drive, Sans Souci. Contact Madeline Hourihan, Rockdale Council: mhourihan@rockdale.nsw.gov.au

Birdlife Shorebirds Counts March - May

Birdlife volunteers run regular morning counts of shorebirds on Saturday 12 March, 9 April, 21 May – anyone interested in joining in and learning more about shorebirds is welcome to come along. Limited seats also still available on the Botany Bay shorebirds boat trip. Contact philip.straw@birdlife.org.au. Also check out the [Long Reef Shorebirds Facebook](#) page for upcoming events or contact Jenny Stiles jstiles@optusnet.com.au.

Earth Hour

19 March 8.30 – 9.30pm

It's the biggest grassroots movement for the environment in the world...and it all started right here in Sydney. In 2016 Australia will switch off for the tenth year in a row.

Project Update



Sydney's Salty Communities – Turning the Tide on Blue+Green Carbon

Sydney's vital coastal ecological communities have received some welcome extra support with the award of a supplementary round of grants from Sydney Coastal Councils Group, under the Salty Communities Grants Program.

The Salty Communities Program supports the restoration and management of these ecological communities through funding from the Australian Government. This round funded over \$300,000 worth of grants for projects valuing over \$700,000.

Successful projects in the Supplementary Round include:

- biocontrol of tenacious water weed *Salvinia* In Warriewood Wetlands
- lagoon restoration in Dee Why
- restoration of littoral rainforest on the Bicentennial Coastal Walkway, Fisher Bay, Manly
- a collaboration with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney University and local Councils to monitor tree hollow use as habitats by birds and other native fauna
- improvement works involving a wildlife corridor in Curl Curl
- a project spanning across 22 local government areas led by the Southern Sydney Region of Councils focusing on connecting biodiversity corridors.

Supplementary Grant Recipients include: Manly Council, Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, Southern Sydney Region of Councils, Warringah Council and Pittwater Council.

For a full list of successful projects visit the [program website](#).

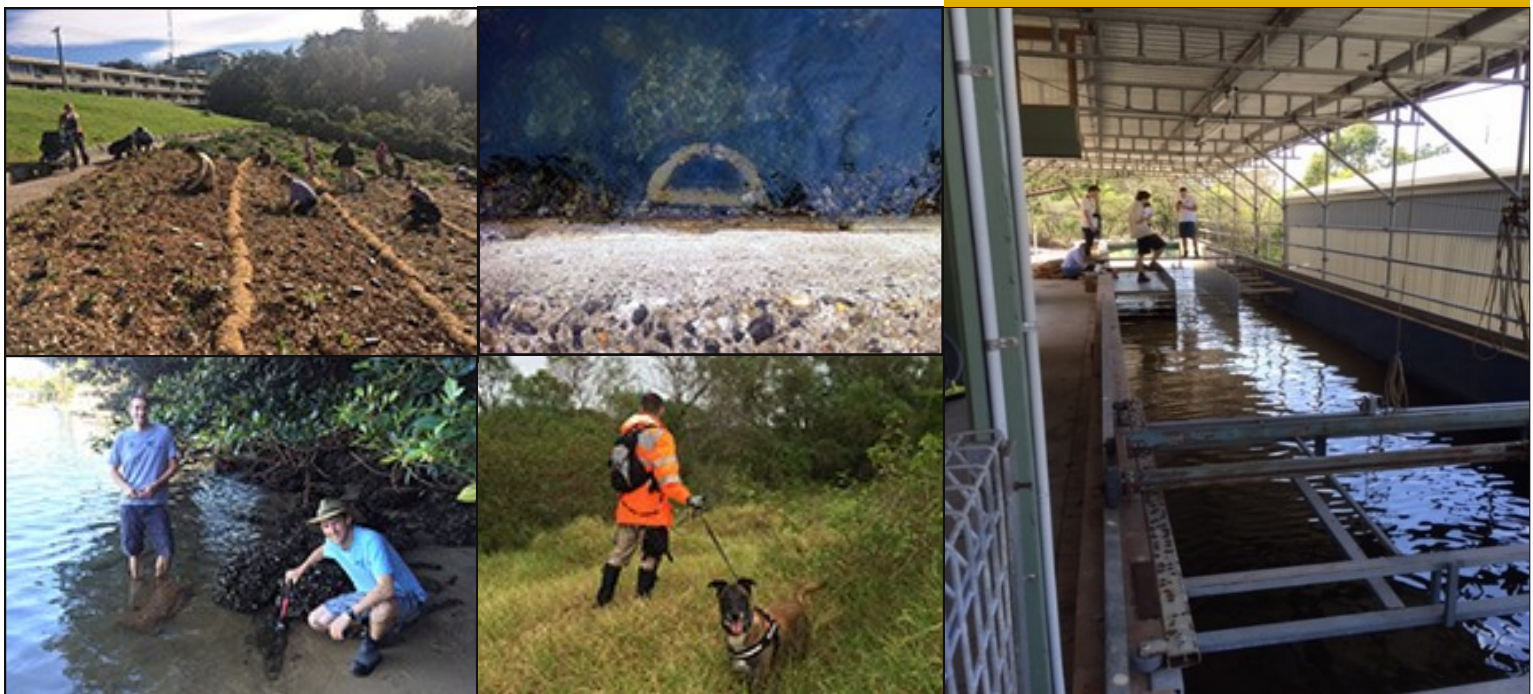
Climate Ready Tool

A key outcome from the Salty Communities program is the Climate Ready Tool.

Designed by the CSIRO for local government officers planning biodiversity conservation initiatives that might need to consider climate change, the tool is also applicable to many in the natural resources management sphere, particularly agencies who are seeking to incorporate long-term adaptation into their programs.

The tool has been tested in a series of workshops and webinars with SCCG Member Councils and working group members. It can be applied to existing and proposed initiatives, and to on-ground projects, plans and strategies.

The tool introduces key adaptation concepts and provides opportunities for people to build their capacity to use these concepts in planning biodiversity management. The Climate Ready Tool is available from the [program webpage](#).



SYDNEY'S SALTY COMMUNITIES GRANTS IN ACTION

Open for Comment

Hawkesbury shelf marine bioregion assessment 24 April 2016

The Marine Estate Management Authority (MEMA) is undertaking an assessment on options for enhancing marine biodiversity conservation in the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion while achieving balanced community outcomes, including opportunities for a wide range of recreational and commercial uses.

MEMA has developed eight suggested management initiatives to enhance marine biodiversity conservation and help reduce priority threats to the environmental assets of the bioregion and the social and economic values and uses that the NSW community derive from the bioregion.

The discussion paper and online submission form are open for comment until **24 April**: <http://www.marine.nsw.gov.au/key-initiatives/hawkesbury-shelf-marine-assessment>.

MEMA has asked for local councils to help with stakeholder engagement and has invited all coastal councils to attend stakeholder workshops planned for March. Contact Biddy Adams at biddy.adams@dpi.nsw.gov.au to RSVP or for more information, contact Elizabeth Irwin at elizabeth.irwin@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Shark Net Program 5 Year Review 31 March 2016

The NSW Shark Meshing (Bather Protection) Program was introduced on some Sydney beaches in 1937 in response to community concern about shark bites. The program now covers 51 ocean beaches between Newcastle and Wollongong.

Shark nets at ocean beaches are passive fishing devices that catch sharks and other non-target species. Unlike the nets at some Sydney Harbour beaches, ocean beach shark nets do not provide a continuous barrier between bathers and sharks.

The NSW Government believes that the program has been successful in reducing the number of sharks and shark bites at meshed beaches, but acknowledges that it has an impact on non-target marine species and is listed as a key threatening process under the State's threatened species legislation, the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* and the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.

The 5 year review of the Shark Meshing Program Joint Management Agreements and the proposed new draft agreement are open for public comment until **31 March**: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/info/sharks/meshing/draft-JMA>.



'MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE' BY ANGELA VAN BOXTEL, WINNER 2016 SUMMERAMA PHOTO COMPETITION.

Fun in the sun at Summerama 2016

Over 2,200 people attended nearly 60 Summerama events across twelve participating councils in January.

Activities included educational walk 'n' talks, snorkelling, ocean safety lessons, rock pool and wetlands tours, and many creative activities for the young, the more mature and families.

Now in its 13th year, the Summerama Program aims to enhance community awareness of sustainable coastal management through fun and engaging activities.

The theme for Summerama this year was waterway pollution.

Angela van Boxtel, winner of the 2016 Summerama Photo Competition, said "I'm so in love with our Harbour Beaches but can't get away from the plastic that is slowly polluting them. With this image I've tried to capture the beach through the plastic bottle I found in between hundreds of other pieces of plastic".

Funding Guide

Our 2016 Funding Guide is now available from the SCCG website.

The Guide lists funding opportunities for conservation, education, natural resource management, heritage protection, community capacity building initiatives and more.

