

COASTAL CURRENTS



The Sydney Coastal Councils Group Quarterly Newsletter | Autumn Edition 2017 | #83



PHOTO: ANGELA VAN BOXTEL

From the Chair

From the hottest January on record for Sydney, with an average maximum temperature of 29.6°C, to the wettest March since 1975, we have certainly started the year with some extreme weather!

With persistent rainfall comes an increased volume of storm water runoff, washing pollutants and litter, including plastics, into our waterways. With 80% of all marine pollution originating on land, threatening the long-term health and sustainability of our oceans and marine life, SCCG are consistently working to mitigate pollution and protect our coastal environment.

SCCG has recently written a letter to the Premier of NSW, Gladys Berejiklian, calling for a state-wide ban on single-use plastic bags, a pertinent issue considering that the majority of plastic bags end up in land fill and/or work their way into our oceans, where they impact on marine life through entanglement or ingestion which can be fatal. This has been listed as a key threatening process under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. We look forward to receiving a response from the Premier on this matter.

It has been a very busy quarter for advocacy for SCCG. We have made a total of five submissions in addition to giving evidence at the Public Hearing to the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee regarding shark mitigation and deterrent measures.

The Sydney Salty Communities Program has now been completed, with a successful, well received final event being held during February at Customs House. But there is no rest for the dedicated with SCCG already starting work on a new grant project around Adapting Recreational Infrastructure for Climate Change, as well as forming a partnership with the Office of Environment and Heritage to develop a regional approach to Grey Headed Flying Fox management for the Greater Sydney region.

Councillor Lynne Saville
SCCG CHAIRPERSON

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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 SCCG currently consists of eleven Member Councils adjacent to Sydney marine and estuarine environments and associated waterways, and represents nearly 1.5 million Sydneysiders.



Bayside Council

NORTHERN BEACHES COUNCIL



Mosman COUNCIL



WAVERLEY COUNCIL

INNER WEST COUNCIL

www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au

Project Updates



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

The Sydney's Salty Communities -Turning the Tide on Blue + Green carbon program, funded by the Australian Government, has now been completed. The program ended with a fantastic half-day forum at Customs House on the 23rd of February, celebrating the achievements of the projects. Over a period of 3 ½ years the Salty program delivered an array of projects valued at over \$2.7million, supporting the restoration and management of ecological salty communities. The program has been a huge success and has achieved outstanding results.

For further information on the final outcomes of the program, there are individual reports and tools available including the: Literature Data and Practice Review; Climate-Ready Tool in partnership with CSIRO; Connected Corridors for Biodiversity online mapping; Backyard Habitat Programs Review in partnership with ARIES (Australian Research Institute for Environment and Sustainability); Mangroves and Saltmarsh Threat Analysis in partnership with University of Wollongong and Macquarie University. In addition factsheets have been published including: blue carbon, urban fox management, communicating about weeds, biodiversity and connectivity, the Climate-Ready Tool, and planning for adaptation.

Information and project resources can be found on the [Sydney's Salty Communities](#) page of the SCCG website.

The SCCG is continuing to work hard to maintain the legacy of the program and to enhance biodiversity throughout our Salty Communities.



PHOTO: CENTENNIAL PARKLANDS, WAVERLEY © BATKINS



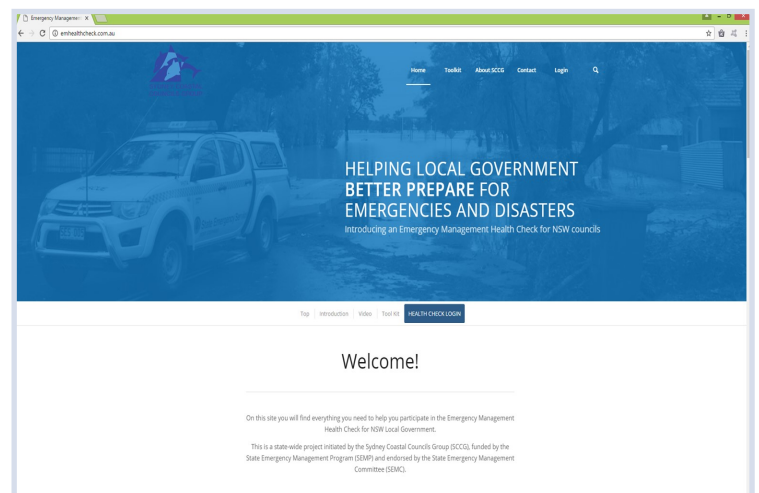
PHOTO: CUSTOMS HOUSE, SALTY COMMUNITIES EVENT © BATKINS

Emergency Management: Are You Ready?

SCCG has developed the Emergency Management Health Check Tool to enable NSW councils to better review and assess their preparedness, planning capability, resilience and resourcing in emergency management. The Tool covers four areas including; i) managing risks; ii) planning for emergencies and disasters; iii) building capability to respond effectively; and iv) providing assurance of capability and capacity.

The online Tool, and the resource toolkit can be accessed at www.emhealthcheck.com.au

All NSW Councils are encouraged to utilise the website and complete the online health check tool.



Advocacy

Submissions

2017 has so far been very busy for the SCCG in advocating for our coastal environment. All the SCCG submissions can be viewed on the [SCCG website](#).

Statewide Threat and Risk Assessment for the NSW Marine Estate

SCCG welcomed the State-wide Marine Estate Threat and Risk Assessment (TARA) process as a method of prioritising threats and determining risks leading to better informed decision-making on sustainable management of the Marine Estate. SCCG provided a brief submission on the TARA and will look to provide a more comprehensive submission once the draft NSW Marine Estate Management Strategy has been developed.

Senate Inquiry into the Efficacy and Regulation of Shark Mitigation and Deterrent Measures

SCCG made a submission to the Senate Inquiry into regulation of shark mitigation and deterrence measures and also provided evidence at the public hearing on the 16th of March. The SCCG highlighted the following key recommendations:

- Shark mitigation and deterrent measures must consider the role of sharks as apex predators in the ecosystem, and any adverse impacts that nominated measures might have on shark species and ecosystems as a whole.
- A review should be undertaken of existing local, regional, national and international research to inform appropriate new and emerging mitigation strategies and deterrent measures, and identify research gaps.
- New research efforts should be focused on the behaviours and movements of target species to better understand the target species to develop well-regulated effective tailored measures.
- New mitigation measures and educational materials tailored for estuarine waterways.
- Effective collaboration and engagement between State and Local Government, and the Tourism industry to deliver a comprehensive education program and consistent messaging that is appropriately targeted to local communities, primary user groups and tourists, ensuring increased empowerment for decision-making around personal risk, responsibility and behaviours.
- Support for the deployment of non-lethal mitigation and deterrent measures for public safety. It is recommended that the shark meshing program be phased out altogether, to be replaced with targeted non-lethal alternatives (including personal devices) tailored to those that are primarily at risk (surfers).
- Decision-making around appropriate mitigation and deterrent measures, and the development and implementation of these measures, needs to be based on a balance of concerns including tourist/public safety, evidence based economic impacts on industry and the conservation and welfare of target and non-target species to ensure sustainable marine management.

Draft Sydney Regional and District Plans

SCCG prepared a submission on 'Towards Our Greater Sydney 2056' and the North, Central, South District Plans that make up the SCCG region. SCCG noted that catchment/natural system boundaries should be used to address cross boundary governance issues; that 'water sensitive cities' principles should be integrated into the plans; and that the blue-green grid should link to the SSROC/SCCG Connected Corridors for biodiversity habitat mapping. The district plans will need to adequately balance productivity, livability and sustainability in a triple bottom line approach.

Planning Legislative Updates

The SCCG provided a submission on the Planning Legislative Updates. Our member Councils are charged with environmental planning of their local area, including managing the coastal zone and activities that impact the coastal zone. The proposed changes to NSW planning legislation will have direct impacts and indirect influences on the health and resilience of our coast; but also on the way we use our coastal resources, and the sustainable management mechanisms we employ. SCCG acknowledged the need for simpler, more efficient planning and development application processes, with the caveat that any change to process must ensure ecologically sustainable development outcomes. SCCG also recommended that specific weight be given to how all aspects of the planning system address climate change adaptation and resilience.



PHOTO: PITTWATER, COURTESY OF NORTHERN BEACHES COUNCIL

Coastal News

SCCG Grant Project

The SCCG is currently underway with the 'Adapting Priority Coastal Recreational Infrastructure for Climate Change' project, through funding from the Building Resilience to Climate Change program. The SCCG is working in partnership with Engineers Australia - National Committee on Coastal and Oceans Engineering (NCCOE). The project team is working on developing a survey and a practical assessment tool for coastal infrastructure that councils and other foreshore managers can use to evaluate and assess the condition and vulnerability of assets to the impacts of climate change.

We will keep you updated on this project over the course of the year.

In the past few months the SCCG has also worked hard to submit three grant program Expressions of Interest for the Environmental Research and Environmental Education grant programs, and has also supported a further three applications — so stay tuned.

Plastic Bags

The SCCG has written a letter to the Premier of NSW, The Hon Gladys Berejiklian, advocating for a ban on single-use plastic bags.

The impact of plastics on marine life and the environment is substantial and well documented, with 50-80% of waste accumulated in the marine environment comprising of plastic. Marine life including turtles can ingest or become entangled in plastics causing injury or fatality. As plastic bags and other plastic items break down into small fragments, they form microplastic particles. Microplastics can absorb persistent organic pollutants, providing a pathway for the entry of these chemicals into the food web and onto our own dinner plates.

According to the Australian Marine Conservation Society, Australians use around 10 million plastic bags a day, equivalent to 3.9 billion a year. If NSW implements a ban it will be following in the footsteps of South Australia, the Northern Territory, Tasmania and The Australian Capital Territory.

With proven reductions of plastic bag waste being sent to landfill by a third in the ACT, it is the aim to reproduce similar results in NSW. Despite the localised efforts of Member Councils and community groups, without state government legislation, significant results cannot be produced.

Plastic Free July

With Plastic Free July just around the corner, take the challenge and reduce your impact on our environment.

Check out www.plasticfreejuly.org to register to participate or for tools, ideas and tips on reducing your reliance on plastic in your everyday life.



PHOTO: MANLY TO SPIT WALK © KHOWARD

CoastAdapt Now live!

Coast Adapt has been developed by NCCARF (National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility) for coastal managers and those stakeholders interested in Australia's coast, as an information delivery and decision support framework designed to build resilience to climate change.

Coast Adapt is a coastal climate risk management tool, but also has wider resources that can be applied in Australia.

Stakeholders can find detailed information and support on topics including: 'What is Climate Change?', 'Assess risks and impact', 'Understand adaptation', 'Undertake adaptation' and 'Connect with the adaptation community'.

Users can also find case studies, interactive maps and use the 'coastal climate adaptation decision support' or 'sea-level rise and you' tools.

Take advantage of the plethora of information that is available relating to Climate Change adaptation by utilising [Coast Adapt](https://www.coastalrisk.com.au/).



Just for Interest

Check out www.coastalrisk.com.au/ to view online maps showing what the coast of Australia may look like in 2100. The maps use 3 sea level rise scenarios; low – SLR of 0.44m by 2100, medium—SLR of 0.54m by 2100, and high—SLR of 0.74m by 2100.