

Sydney Coastal Councils Group

STRATEGIC PLAN 2015 - 2019

Resilient coasts. Engaged communities. Local leadership. Regional impact.





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Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc.

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Diamond Bay, Courtesy of Waverley Council

Foreword

The Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG) recently celebrated its 25 year anniversary with a reflection on the significant milestones, achievements and collaboration between coastal Councils over the last 25 years. It is now time to focus on the future and the direction that Member Councils will need to take in a period where significant Local Government reform and coastal management legislative reform have been proposed.

This Strategic Plan seeks to update the existing plan for the next 4 years and represents a process of continuous improvement that commenced in 1989. The former Plan was reviewed with direct involvement of a Directional Committee, Full Group and Technical Committee and feedback from Member Councils.

This Strategic Plan covers the Sydney coastal region defined as the local government areas of Member Councils, including: Botany Bay, City of Sydney, Hornsby, Leichhardt, Manly, Mosman, North Sydney, Pittwater, Randwick, Rockdale, Sutherland, Warringah, Waverley, Willoughby and Woollahra, and the adjacent marine waters within three nautical miles of the coastline. This coastal region contains a rich diversity of natural and cultural assets that are recognised and valued internationally. The region experiences significant industrial and residential development pressure as well as increased tourism and recreational use.

The Strategic Plan 2015-2019 recognises the pressures and impacts facing the Sydney coastal region. It recognises that coastal management is very much a cross-sectoral activity with the three spheres of government, regional bodies, industry and the community sharing responsibility for its management.

There is no doubt that over the few next decades we will see unprecedented change to our coastal communities, governments, government services, commerce and indeed to the physical entity that is the coast we are all trying to manage. It is critical that our response to these developments builds on our experience, while harnessing innovations in technology and management practices. To this end, this Strategic Plan will inform our planning for the years ahead, with a view to positioning ourselves for the next 25 years and beyond.

The Plan seeks to draw together and focus on the outcomes Member Councils and the community will benefit from through joint participation and collaboration on information sharing, research, capacity building and advocacy. The Plan also allows for measurable performance objectives for the organisation.

I would like to thank all SCCG member representatives and staff who helped develop this document and Member Councils for their review and feedback on the Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Geoff Stevenson".

Councillor Geoff Stevenson
Chairperson
Sydney Coastal Councils Group

Purpose of this Plan

The SCCG Strategic Plan documents and highlights our strategic focus for the next four years (July 2015 - June 2019). It represents our seventh Strategic Plan and builds upon our 25 years' experience in sustainable coastal management.

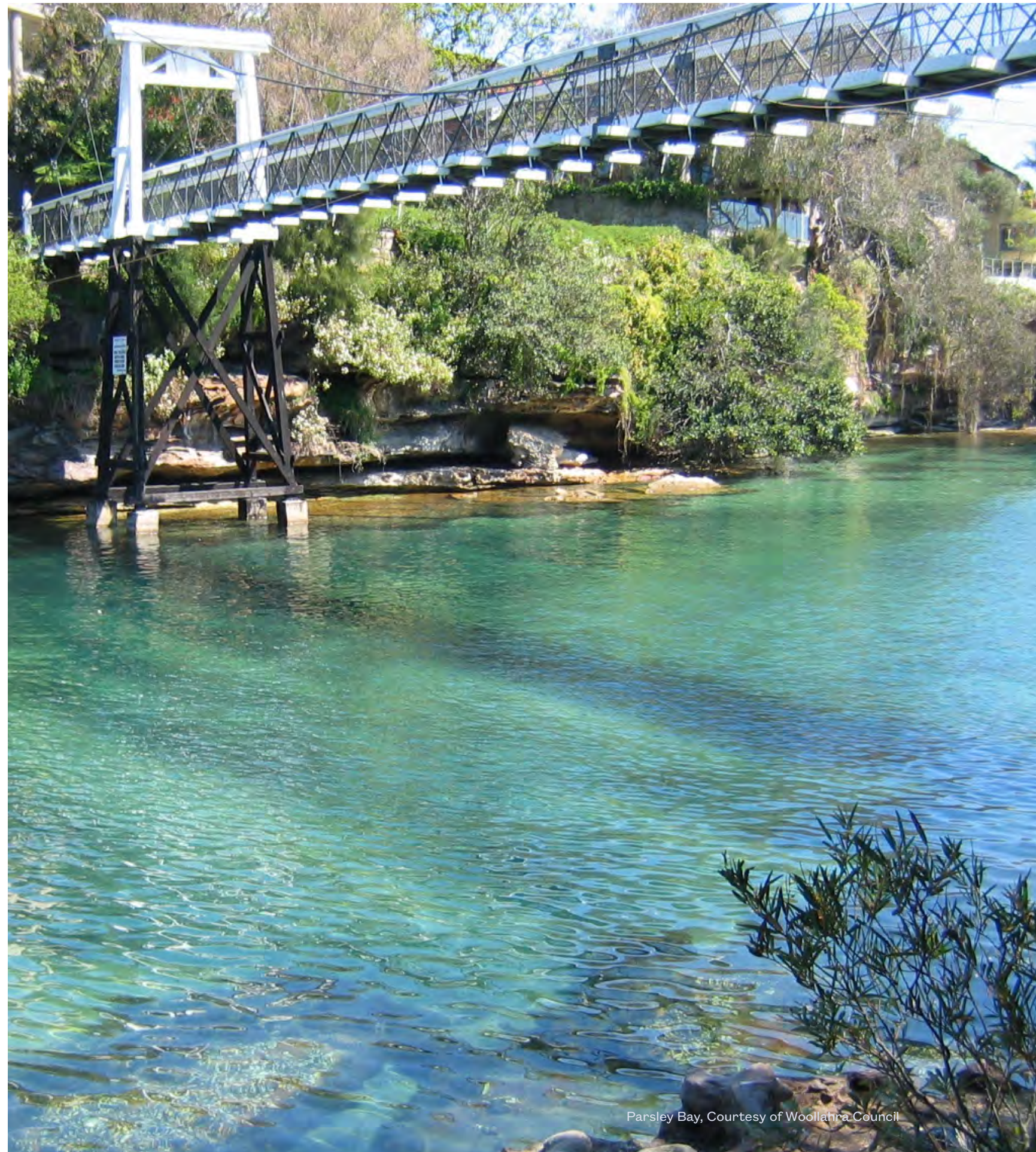
The purpose of this document is to define our priorities and direction over the next four years and describe how this fits within our organisational structure. Specifically, the Plan defines our:

- History, values and structure
- Guiding Principles
- Vision, Mission and Goals
- Strategic Activities we will undertake to achieve our Goals
- Monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities.

For the purposes of this Plan, and in relation to all our activities, 'coastal' refers to coastal *and* estuarine areas. This Plan applies to the Local Government Areas of our Member Councils. The Plan has been developed in the context of Sydney's unique environment, including its natural features, history and culture, society and economy.

The Plan has been prepared under the guidance of a Directional Committee comprised of Member Council representatives and other experts. We have consulted extensively with our members to ensure it accurately captures our shared goals and activities for improved coastal outcomes in our region.

This is a dynamic Plan that is evaluated annually and comprehensively reviewed after four years.



Parsley Bay, Courtesy of Woollahra Council



Figure 1: Sydney Coastal Councils Group Region



About Us

Our history

Established in 1989, we are a co-operative organisation that advances sustainable management of Sydney's urban coastal environment. We comprise 15 Member Councils who represent over 1.4 million Sydneysiders. Collectively we cover an area of 1,794km² adjacent to Sydney's coastal and estuarine areas, encompassing the waterways of the Hawkesbury River, Broken Bay, Pittwater, Port Jackson, Middle and North Harbours, the lower Lane Cove River, Botany Bay, the lower Georges and Cooks Rivers and Port Hacking (Figure 1).

We were originally established to address the discharge of primary treated sewage off Sydney's shoreline at North Head, Bondi, Malabar and Cronulla. In our genesis, we comprised five founding members - Manly, Warringah, Randwick, Waverley and Sutherland. At the time, many of Sydney's most iconic beaches were frequently affected by sewage pollution and the issue drew significant public attention, with widespread media coverage and community protests. Our concerted campaign to clean up Sydney's beaches resulted in the installation of the deep ocean sewage outfalls. Following this success, we quickly expanded membership and evolved from a single-issue into a broader movement for sustainable and integrated coastal management.

Twenty-five years later, we are the peak NSW Regional Organisation of Councils for sustainable coastal management and represent the majority of coastal residents in NSW. Our scope of work centres on four key activities – collaboration, capacity building, advocacy and research. 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.

Our Values

We are a visionary and progressive organisation with a strong commitment to:

- Integrity and credibility
- Innovation
- Evidenced based research
- Continuous improvement
- Trust, transparency and accountability

We conduct our business in a sound commercial and ethical manner, as defined by our Statement of Business Ethics (available on our website).

Our Structure

Our Group comprises three core Committees and a Secretariat (Figure 2).

The Full Group Committee: Membership consists of 1-3 elected and/or staff representatives (Delegates) as determined by the Member Council. Meetings are quarterly and direct the core activities of the SCCG. Nominated Honorary Members are appointed as observers to this Committee at the Annual General Meeting for their expertise and/or contribution to the work of the SCCG.

The Executive Committee: Membership consists of up to 8 elected delegates: a Chairperson, two Vice-Chairpersons (Ocean and Estuarine), a Secretary, a Treasurer, and up to three other Delegates. Delegates are appointed by vote at the AGM. The Committee meets quarterly (in between Full Group meetings) or as required to address operational matters.

The Technical Committee: Membership consists of one or more professional staff from each Member Council, including strategic planners, environmental officers, engineers, catchment liaison and policy officers, development assessment officers, educators, enforcement, compliance and environmental health officers. The Technical Committee meets up to five times a year to exchange information, collaborate on current and emerging needs and develop regional projects and programs.

Dedicated **working groups and advisory committees** are also periodically established to advance specific issues and projects. These groups comprise elected and technical members and occasionally include external experts and stakeholders.

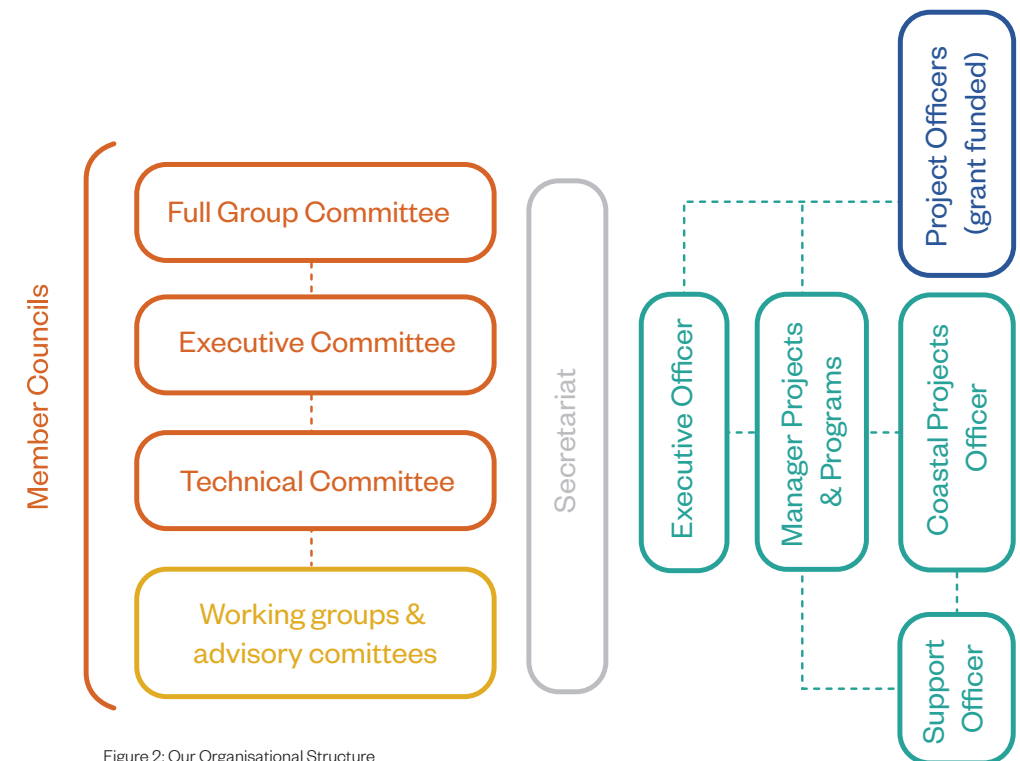


Figure 2: Our Organisational Structure

The work of the Group and these three committees is facilitated by our **Secretariat**, which is made up of an Executive Officer, a Manager Projects and Programs, a Coastal Projects Officer and a Support Officer. The Secretariat also employs grant-funded Project Officers to work on specific projects for the Group.

The strength of our Group rests in the shared expertise that Member Councils, through both their elected representatives and technical staff, bring to the organisation and the capacity of our Secretariat to facilitate that collaboration.

Powers & Nature of Association

We are a voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils incorporated in 1998 under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1984 (2009)*. Member Councils participate and collaborate in the association under the provisions of sections 355, 357 and 358 of the *Local Government Act 1993*. Our functions, powers and governance arrangements are described in our Constitution, which is ratified by all Member Councils.

Our Strategic Framework

Our Strategic Framework defines and guides the work that we do. Figure 3 defines our Vision, Mission and Goals, and demonstrates how the components of our Strategic Framework interact to realise these. This section of the Strategic Plan elaborates on each of these components.

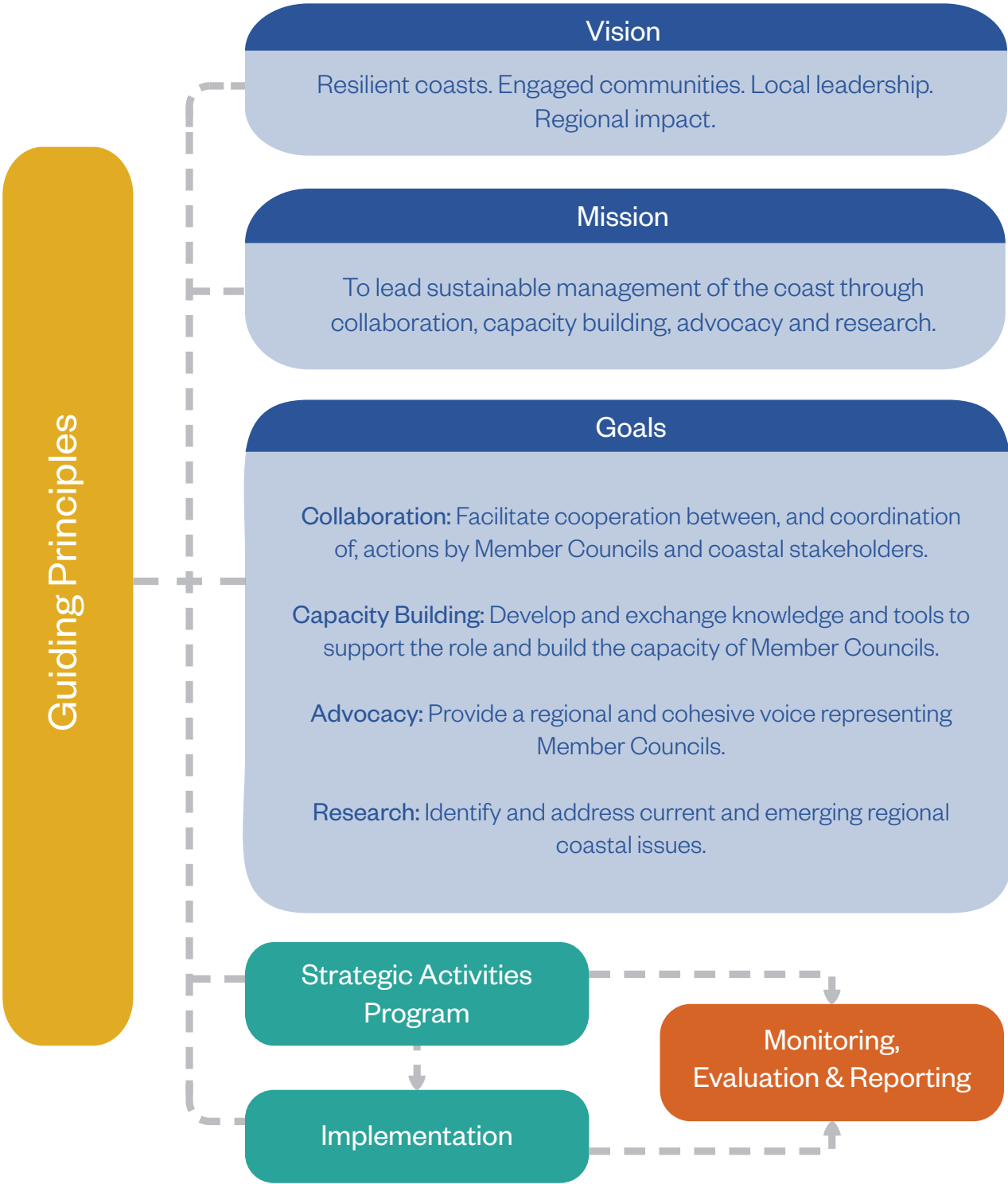
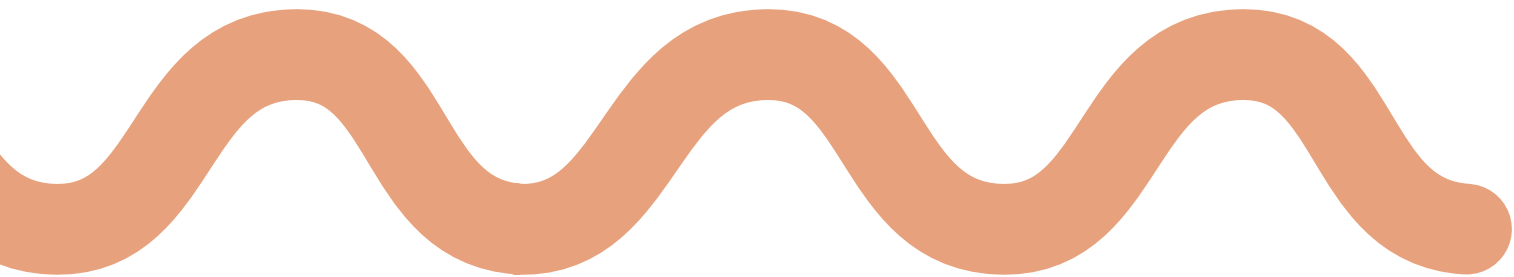


Figure 3: Our Strategic Framework



Guiding Principles

The following Guiding Principles encapsulate the core ambitions of the Group and inform the implementation of our Strategic Plan. It should be noted that these Principles are formulated in the context of a changing climate. As such, adaptation to climate change is an implicit motivation in all the work that we do.

The Principles draw upon and are consistent with local, national and international legislation, strategies and declarations relating to environmental management[^], and have been developed in consultation with our Member Councils.

Principle One

Restore, protect and enhance the coastal environment, its associated ecosystems, ecological and physical processes and biodiversity

Sydney’s coastal environment holds significant values that should be understood, protected and enhanced. In ensuring this principle is met, we will identify, support and implement activities that:

- Recognise and promote the intrinsic and extrinsic values of the coastal environment
- Support greater understanding of the coastal environment, its associated ecosystems, ecological values and biodiversity
- Support and maintain ecological and physical processes that shape the coastal environment
- Identify, protect and restore threatened species, communities and their habitats
- Conserve sites and landscapes of cultural, scientific, historical and aesthetic significance.

Principle Two

Facilitate the sustainable use of coastal resources, now and in the future

Sustainable use of coastal resources involves optimising the benefits of natural systems while maintaining the ability to provide those benefits into the future. In ensuring this principle is met, we will identify, support and implement activities that:

- Promote understanding of the values (environmental, social, economic and cultural) of coastal systems and processes, and the impacts of proposed uses or developments on them
- Consider the cumulative impacts of resource use
- Manage community use of coastal land, infrastructure and other assets to return the greatest long-term public benefit, while protecting environmental, social and cultural values and minimising conflict between users
- Maintain and enhance appropriate access to coastal public lands
- Ensure that cultural, economic and recreational activities are sustainable and sensitive to the natural environment.



Hawkesbury River Railway Bridge, Courtesy of Hornsby Council

Principle Three

Promote adaptive, integrated and participatory management of the coast

In order to restore, protect and enhance the coastal environment and ensure coastal resources are used sustainably, our management approach needs to be adaptive, integrated and participatory. In ensuring this principle is met, we will identify, support and implement activities that:


- Ensure management decisions adhere to the precautionary principle and appropriately balance environmental, social and economic outcomes
- Promote integration of management efforts across the following dimensions:
 - levels of government (Local, State and Federal)
 - spatial and temporal scales
 - disciplines (e.g. the sciences, engineering, law, economics)
 - sectors (e.g. tourism, fisheries, mining)
 - government, non-government, community and industry groups
- Integrate land use planning with conservation and hazard management, providing consistency, authority and long term stability in decision-making
- Ensure decision-making is underpinned by the best available science and information, including community-based local and tacit knowledge
- Facilitate public participation in management decisions, ensuring that participants are provided with the information and mechanisms they need to engage in a meaningful way
- Promote a culture of integrity, transparency, trust and accountability in public decision-making
- Establish and resource monitoring and evaluation programs to facilitate adaptive management, allowing for a continuous process of doing, learning, sharing and improving.

[^] Including the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (1992), the United Nations' Agenda 21 (1992), the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992), the Resource Assessment Commission's Coastal Zone Inquiry (1993), the NSW Coastal Policy (1997), Australia's Ocean Policy (1998), the Framework for a National Cooperative Approach to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (2003), the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values, the NSW Public Service Commission Strategic Directions and relevant State and Federal legislation.



Strategic Activities Program

Our Strategic Activities Program defines the strategies and associated activities we will pursue to realise our Goals and Mission, and ultimately our Vision. We will monitor progress against these activities using the Performance Measures identified in the table below.



Goal 1: Collaboration
Facilitate cooperation between, and coordination of, actions by Member Councils and coastal stakeholders.

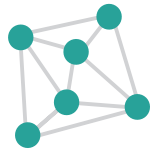
Strategy	Activities	Frequency	Performance Measures	Data Sources
Ensure our governance structure continues to facilitate effective participation of Member Councils	Facilitate participation by Member Councils in Group decisions and activities	Ongoing	Member Councils actively participate in decision-making and activities	Record of meeting resolutions and outcomes Meeting attendance
Facilitate collaboration within and between Member Councils	Facilitate Committees and Working Groups, including: -Executive Committee -Full Group Committee -Technical Committee -Advisory and Directional Committees -Working Groups	Quarterly Quarterly ~ Bi-monthly As needed As needed	Meetings are held when scheduled, are timely, reflect the agenda and are well attended Participants positively evaluate meeting facilitation	Committee / Working Group Minutes Meeting attendance Annual Members Survey and/or post-meeting surveys
	Engage with Member Councils' executive management on issues of regional significance	Ongoing	Executive management are responsive to SCCG propositions	Correspondence Reports
	Develop resources and tools to support interaction and collaboration within and between Member Councils	Ongoing	Tools and resources are used by Member Councils	Annual Members Survey
	Explore opportunities for expanding area of representation	Ongoing	Expanded representation of coastal areas	Annual Report
Facilitate collaboration, dialogue and partnerships with coastal stakeholders, including government agencies	Engage external stakeholders in Committees, Working Groups and projects	Ongoing	A diverse range of stakeholders are engaged in Committees, Working Groups and projects	Record of meeting resolutions and outcomes Meeting attendance
	Facilitate networks, meetings and forums that promote interaction and collaboration with external stakeholders	Ongoing	Regular networks, meetings and forums are facilitated with external stakeholders	Quarterly Activities Report
	Formalise ongoing partnerships with coastal stakeholders	Ongoing	Partnerships are formalised with targeted stakeholders	Annual Report
Facilitate information exchange and sharing with Member Councils, coastal stakeholders and the broader community	Develop and implement a Strategic Communications Plan to guide communications with members and external stakeholders	Developed in 2015, then reviewed annually	Our communications are timely, achieve wide reach and are appropriately targeted	Website analytics Annual Members Survey
	Promote information exchange and sharing at meetings and through networks	Quarterly	Meetings and networks provide a forum for information exchange and sharing between participants	FG and TC Minutes Annual Members Survey



Goal 1: Collaboration

Facilitate cooperation between, and coordination of, actions by Member Councils and coastal stakeholders.

Strategy	Activities	Frequency	Performance Measures	Data Sources
Promote community engagement in our activities	Facilitate opportunities for community engagement in our activities through: -Appropriate access to information -Representation on relevant SCCG Committees -Direct and indirect consultations	Ongoing	Our information is publicly accessible, as appropriate	Website analytics
			Community representatives are engaged in relevant Committees and consultations	Committee Minutes and consultation reports
Provide efficient, effective and coordinated support to Member Councils	Maintain employment of suitably qualified Secretariat staff	Ongoing	Secretariat is appropriately resourced and qualified	Annual Report
	Undertake business improvement reviews to optimise organisational efficiency and financial management	Biennially	Efficiencies are gained in business operations	SCCG Standard Operating Guidelines
	Maintain Incorporated Association compliance requirements	Annually	Full compliance with statutory requirements	Report to Dept. of Fair Trading
	Hold relevant insurances	Annually	Insurances maintained at an appropriate level	Annual Report
	Maintain currency of Hosting Contract	Annually	Hosting contract currency maintained	Annual Report



Goal 2: Capacity Building

Facilitate the exchange of knowledge and tools to support the role and build the capacity of Member Councils



Strategy	Activities	Frequency	Performance Measures	Data Sources
Provide accurate, timely and relevant information on sustainable coastal management	Establish and maintain a 'Coastal Knowledge Hub'	Quarterly	Coastal Knowledge Hub is up-to-date and regularly accessed	Website analytics
	Provide regular updates on coastal-related developments via our website and newsletters	Monthly	Audience is satisfied with the frequency and content of our communications	Website analytics Annual Members Survey
Build Member Council and stakeholder capacity to advance sustainable coastal management	Continuously develop the SCCG Capacity Building Program to meet Member Council and stakeholder needs	Annually	Capacity building initiatives are evaluated highly Capacity building resources are utilised by Member Councils	Post-event surveys Annual Members Survey
Identify and secure external funding and support from Governments and other sources	Facilitate a Grants Committee to assist identify, prioritise and develop grant proposals relevant to Member Council needs	Established in 2015, then ongoing	Grant proposals are targeted and successful	Grants Committee Activity Reports
	Advise Member Councils of upcoming grants	Monthly	Member Councils are advised of grant opportunities in a timely manner	Website updates
	Provide advice and support to Member Councils preparing grant applications	Ongoing	Member Councils are benefiting from SCCG input to their grant applications	Annual Members Survey
Build Member Councils' capacity to engage with the Federal and State Governments and stakeholders to advance sustainable coastal management	Maintain understanding of Federal and State Government legislation, structures and policies related to sustainable coastal management	Ongoing	Accurate and timely information is provided to Member Councils	Monthly Webpage Updates
	Facilitate interaction between Member Councils, the Federal and State Governments and coastal stakeholders	Ongoing	Frequent and productive interactions are facilitated	Quarterly Activities Report Annual Members Survey
	Maintain relevant and current contact registers and associated databases	Monthly	Member Councils utilise resources	Annual Members Survey
	Canvass community values, perspectives and issues at Full Group and Technical Committee meetings	Quarterly	Sufficient allocation in agendas for Council roundtables	FG and TC Minutes
	Develop tools and resources to assist Member Councils to effectively engage the community	Quarterly	Member Councils utilise tools and resources provided	Annual Members Survey
	Facilitate regional cooperation on community engagement initiatives	Annually	Regional engagement initiatives are coordinated annually and are well attended	Post-event survey Annual Report



Goal 3: Advocacy
 Provide a regional and cohesive voice representing Member Councils

Strategy	Activities	Frequency	Performance Measures	Data Sources
Strengthen SCCG participation and influence in the development and review of Government policy, legislation, activities and programs	Prepare regional submissions and representations to advance Member Council interests	Ongoing	Submissions are timely and representative of Member Councils interests	Quarterly Activities Report
	Facilitate positive and proactive relationships with Government representatives	Ongoing	Relationships are maintained with Government representatives	Quarterly Activities Report
	Represent Member Council interests on relevant Government committees	Ongoing	SCCG is represented on relevant Government committees	Quarterly Activities Report
Present and raise the profile of Member Council interests at appropriate forums	Participate in relevant seminars, conferences and events	Quarterly	Papers are presented at relevant events and attract high level of interest	Quarterly Activities Report
	Exhibit SCCG projects and outputs at relevant internal and external events	Quarterly	Exhibitions are presented at relevant events and attract high level of interest	Quarterly Activities Report
Raise awareness of regional coastal issues in the media	Provide a qualified perspective on regional coastal issues via media releases and consultation with journalists	Ongoing	SCCG commentary and communications are regularly referenced in media	Media analytics
	Support Member Councils to effectively engage with the media on regional coastal issues	Ongoing	Member Councils utilise tools and resources provided	Annual Members Survey



Goal 4: Research

Identify and address current and emerging regional coastal issues

Strategy	Activities	Frequency	Performance Measures	Data Sources
Identify current and emerging priority issues	Maintain awareness of current and emerging research	Monthly	Our communications reflect accurate, credible and contemporary research and advice on coastal management issues	Annual Members Survey
	Conduct gap and priority needs analysis of Member Councils and other relevant stakeholders	Annually	Information is collected and informs development of our projects and activities	Annual Members Survey
	Collate, review and synthesise priority focus areas across Member Councils	Quarterly	Consensus is secured on priority focus areas	FG and TC Minutes
	Participate in research forums and conferences	Monthly	Regular attendance at research forums and conferences	Quarterly Activities Report
	Maintain awareness of Sydney coastal population demographics, attitudes and values	Biennially	Regional profile developed and updated with contemporary data	Regional Profile Report
Promote and distribute relevant research outcomes to inform best-practice management	Distil relevant research outcomes for Member Councils and other coastal stakeholders	Monthly	Research outcomes are regularly communicated to Member Councils and other coastal stakeholders	Monthly Webpage Update
	Support Member Councils and other coastal stakeholders to integrate research outcomes into management practices	Ongoing	Member Councils report integration of research outcomes into management practices	Annual Members Survey
Enhance the research capacity of the Secretariat and Member Councils	Promote and develop best practice research methodologies, tools and guidelines	Ongoing	Resources are applied by Member Councils	Annual Members Survey
	Facilitate research internships and placements within the Secretariat and Member Councils	Ongoing	Research placements established and maintained	Quarterly Activities Report
Engage with and drive strategic partnerships between researchers and policy makers	Maintain and develop a multi-disciplinary community of experts on regional coastal issues	Quarterly	Community of experts regularly consulted on regional coastal issues	Quarterly Activities Report
	Develop collaborative, strategic and applied research activities with research organisations, other relevant organisations and funding bodies	Annually	Research partnerships are established and maintained	Annual Report
	Facilitate interaction between researchers and policy makers	Annually	Forums are established that facilitate interaction between researchers and policy makers	Annual Report

Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting

Implementation of our Strategic Plan is directed by Quarterly Action Plans that link directly to our Strategic Activities Program. These Plans define the work programming of the Secretariat and are developed following each Full Group meeting (March, June, September and December).

We measure progress against our Quarterly Action Plans through specific Performance Indicators which are predominantly quantitative and outputs-focused. Progress against the Indicators is reported in our Quarterly Activities Reports to the Full Group and Technical Committee.

We also conduct an Annual Members Survey which allows us to capture qualitative feedback on our performance. It is distributed to Full Group and Technical Committee representatives each year and aims to:

- Identify strengths and weaknesses in our performance
- Guide activities and assess where improvements can be made
- Asses the utility and application of our services and outputs.

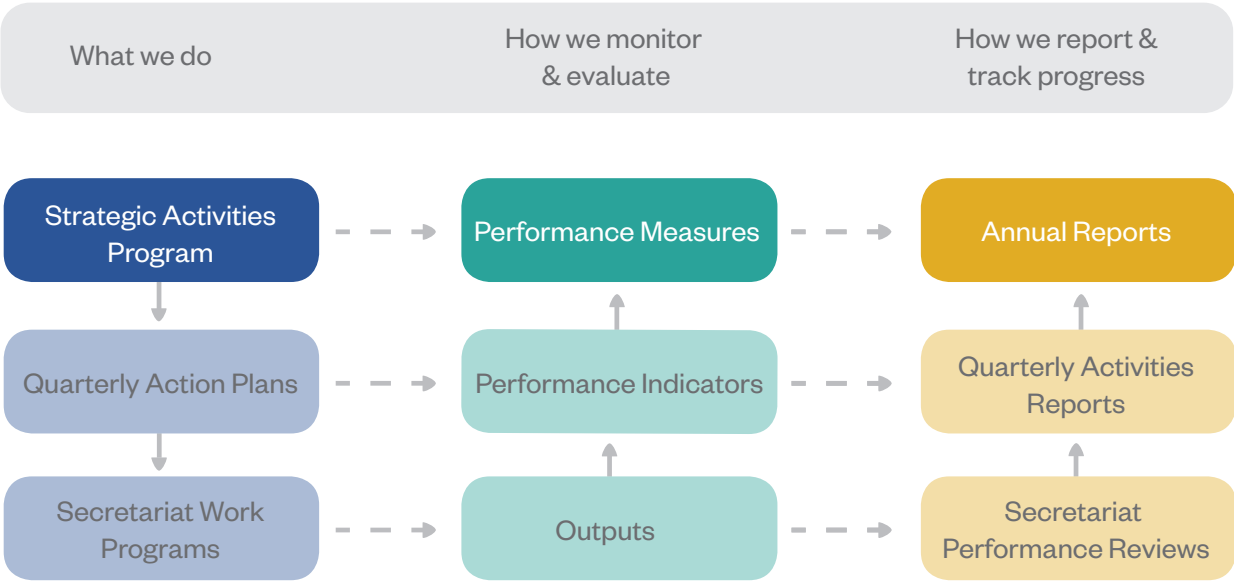


Figure 4: How we monitor, evaluate & report on our work



Narrabeen Lagoon Entrance, Courtesy of Warringah Council

The results of our Quarterly Activities Reports and our Annual Members Survey are combined to assess progress against the Performance Measures in our Strategic Activities Program. These Measures are outcomes-focused as far as possible and draw upon quantitative and qualitative information. The outcome of this process is reported publicly in our Annual Report and used to guide activities in subsequent years.

Together, this information builds a picture of our progress towards our Goals and Mission, and ultimately our Vision. Through this process we strive to be transparent in our activities and identify opportunities for continuous improvement in consultation with our Member Councils.



Bare Island, Courtesy of Randwick Council

The Sydney Coastal Region

Environment & natural features

Sydney's coast extends from Broken Bay in the north to Port Hacking in the south, and contains approximately 110 km of ocean shoreline and over 480 km of estuarine frontage. There are 38 ocean beaches interspersed with high sandstone and shale cliffs, four drowned river valley estuaries (Sydney Harbour, Broken Bay (Hawkesbury), Port Hacking (Bate Bay) and Botany Bay) including more than 50 estuarine beaches and four coastal lagoons (Manly, Curl Curl, Dee Why and Narrabeen), which periodically enter the ocean across the northern beaches.

The Sydney coastline was formed when the Tasman Sea opened between 60 and 80 million years ago. This geologic history is critical in understanding its present biophysical character and how it offers an array of natural assets that help drive the lifestyles and livelihoods of the region.

The coastline is fronted by a narrow and steep continental shelf extending approximately 30 km from the shoreline, after which the sea bed plunges rapidly from a depth of approximately 200 metres to as much as three to four kilometres in some areas. This continental shelf formation exposes the Sydney region to a deep water wave climate and high wave energy, giving rise to impressive vertical sandstone and shale cliffs, and dynamic beach zones.

Sydney's climate is temperate, with warm to hot summers and mildly cool winters. The weather is moderated by proximity to the ocean and therefore the region does not experience extreme seasonal differences. Nonetheless, Sydney is exposed to a range of extreme weather events including bushfire, flooding and storm surge.

The varied landforms and weather patterns in and around Sydney make it one of the most biodiverse regions in Australia.¹ Vegetation communities vary from coastal and estuarine to rainforest, dry woodlands and tall forest.² These are home to a variety of faunal communities, many of which are endemic to the region. Amongst these are a number of endangered and vulnerable species.

Sydney's coastal environment faces a range of natural and human pressures which are expected to intensify in the coming years and decades. A growing coastal population brings with it increased development, demands on natural resources and pollution. Climate change is also impacting on coastal ecosystems, with rising sea levels, extreme weather events and warming temperatures already evident. While forecasts of the scale of future climate change are imperfect, it is acknowledged that these trends will intensify over the coming decades.

History & culture

Aboriginal people have lived along Sydney's coast for at least 20,000 years.³ There is still debate about the range and name of Indigenous language groups in the region. Archaeologist Val Attenbrow suggests that Dharawal was spoken south of Botany Bay to the Shoalhaven, a hinterland variety of Dharug was spoken to the west of the Lane Cove River, and a coastal dialect of Dharug on both sides of the Harbour as far north as Kuringai. Others believe that a different language, Guringai, was used in the area to the north including the beaches.⁴ These language groups comprised a number of different clans that had distinctive dress, tools, weapons and song and dance.⁵ However despite these differences, the 'Saltwater People' shared a culture of subsistence and ritual practice strongly associated with and adapted to the Sydney coastal environment. Spiritually, the sea 'figured as a place of origin from where ancestors came'.⁶

Reminders of Aboriginal life are evident in the many heritage sites throughout the Sydney region. There are approximately 4,240 Aboriginal heritage sites within Sydney's coastal Local Government Areas including features such as rock engravings, drawings and stencils, shelters, shell middens, camp sites, burial sites, axe grinding grooves, waterholes and scarred trees, as well as places of outstanding cultural significance.

The arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 and the subsequent European settlement led to the dispossession of many Aboriginal people from their land around Sydney and the disruption of culture. Unlike other British colonies of the time, this dispossession was never formalised through a treaty, but occurred through expanding settlement, armed force and the spread of disease. By the end of 1789 well over half the original inhabitants of Sydney had died.⁷

By the mid-19th century the colony was well-established. Port Jackson, the official name of Sydney Harbour, was an important conduit for the import of manufactured goods and the export of wool and other primary products. The western end of Sydney Harbour was characterised by industry and commerce - boatbuilding and wharfage - while the east was becoming the preserve of the wealthy. Tanneries and other industries operated on the south eastern fringe of the town. Without a fixed Harbour crossing, the northern side was slower to develop.⁸ Having surrendered large areas of waterfront in land grants before 1828, the Government was compelled to resume a number of foreshore areas for defence and, later, public recreation.⁹

Today the Sydney coastal region contains many of NSW's oldest and most significant European heritage items, including historical and architecturally significant residential and commercial buildings, navigation structures such as lighthouses, stone walls and crater huts, and defence structures such as gun emplacements and fortifications, particularly in and around Sydney Harbour and West Head in Pittwater. These sites are now preserved and maintained through partnerships between Local and State Government.



Walsh Bay, Courtesy of City of Sydney Council

Society & economy

Sydney is Australia's most populous city, home to some 4.8 million people.¹⁰ It is diverse and multicultural, with almost a third of the population born overseas and more than 250 different languages spoken in the city.¹¹ The population is projected to grow to 6 million by 2030.¹² Collectively our 15 Member Councils have a population of close to 1.5 million people, representing almost a quarter of Sydney's total.

Sydney is the largest economy in Australia. It services a range of industries, including finance and insurance, tourism, information media and telecommunications, professional services and transport and logistics, which together generate a total regional domestic product in excess of \$200 billion annually.¹³ In 2014, Sydney received 32 million visitors, an increase of nearly 6 per cent on the previous year.¹⁴

Sydney's coastal region also supports a range of other activities – cultural, recreational and commercial. These include bathing, boating, recreational fishing and surfing; commercial fishing and mariculture; many forms of industry; waste treatment and disposal; extensive residential and commercial development; transport; and the conservation of terrestrial and marine resources and natural and cultural heritage.



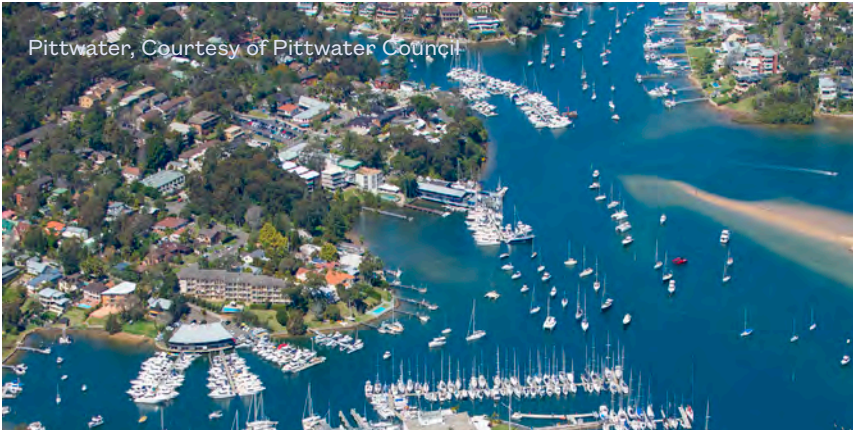
Clifton Gardens, Courtesy of Mosman Council



North Sydney,CBD Courtesy of North Sydney Council



Clive Park, Courtesy of Willoughby Council



Pittwater, Courtesy of Pittwater Council



Manly Beach, Courtesy of Manly Council



Sydney Port, Courtesy of Botany Bay Council



King George Park, Courtesy of Leichhardt Council

¹ NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (2011), Sydney Basin – biodiversity, <<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/bioregions/SydneyBasin-Biodiversity.htm>>

² NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (2011), Sydney Basin – biodiversity, <<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/bioregions/SydneyBasin-Biodiversity.htm>>

³ John Ogden (2011) Saltwater People of the broken bays: Sydney's Northern Beaches, Cyclops Press, p. 24

⁴ Val Attenbrow (2003), Sydney's Aboriginal Past: investigating the archaeological and historical records, UNSW Press, Sydney , p. 34.

⁵ John Ogden (2012) Saltwater People of the fatal shore: Sydney's Southern Beaches, Cyclops Press, p. 27.

⁶ Ian Hoskins (2013), Coast: A history of the New South Wales edge, NewSouth Publishing, Sydney, p. 67.

⁷ Val Attenbrow, Sydney's Aboriginal Past: investigating the archaeological and historical records, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2003, p. 21.

⁸ NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (2011), Sydney Basin – regional history, <<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/bioregions/SydneyBasin-RegionalHistory.htm>>

⁹ NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (2011), Sydney Basin – regional history, <<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/bioregions/SydneyBasin-RegionalHistory.htm>>

¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013), 3218.0 – Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2012–13: Estimated Resident Population, States and Territories – Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSAs)

¹¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012), 'Greater Sydney: Basic Community Profile', 2011 Census Community Profiles.

¹² NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure (2011), New South Wales State and Regional Population Projections: 2010 interim version, <<http://data.nsw.gov.au/data/dataset/nsw-state-regional-population-projections>>

¹³ NSW Government (2015), Greater Sydney, <<https://www.nsw.gov.au/region/greater-sydney>>

¹⁴ Destination NSW (2014), Travel to Sydney Tourism Region: Year ended September 2014, <<http://www.destinationnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Sydney-time-series-YE-Sep-14.pdf>>

Glossary

Amenity	The quality of being pleasant or agreeable in situation, especially the pleasantness of a place; convenient features, facilities or services of a house, estate, district and so on.
Biodiversity	The variety of life forms: the different plants, animals and micro-organisms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems they form. It is usually considered at three levels: genetic diversity, species diversity and ecosystem diversity.
Climate Change	<p>The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in its Article 1, defines climate change as:</p> <p><i>a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.</i></p>
Conservation	The protection, maintenance, management, sustainable use, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment.
Cultural Heritage	Knowledge, places and things, including those made or changed by humans, that have aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual significance or other special value for future generations as well as the present community.
Ecosystem	A dynamic complex of plant, animal, fungal and micro-organism communities and the associated non-living environment interacting as an ecological unit.
Estuary	The lower course of a river or stream forming a semi-enclosed water body connected to the sea, within which tides have an effect and where fresh and saline water mix.
Habitats	An ecological or environmental area that is inhabited by a particular species of animal, plant or other type of organism.
Indigenous Peoples	Australians who identify as belonging to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and who are recognised by their communities as belonging to those groups.
Integrated Coastal Management	A dynamic process in which a coordinated strategy is developed and implemented for the allocation of environmental, socio-cultural and institutional resources to achieve the conservation and sustainable multi-use of the coastal zone.

Marine	Of or relating to the sea or ocean.
Precautionary Principle	Where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.
Threatened (species, population and ecological communities)	A species, population and ecological community that is vulnerable, endangered or presumed extinct. Specified in the <i>Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995</i> as either endangered, vulnerable or presumed extinct.



Elourea Beach, Courtesy of Sutherland Council