



# Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc

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



## 2017-18 ANNUAL REPORT



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## From The Chair

During 2017-18, SCCG responded proactively to challenges and opportunities, and achieved positive outcomes in sustainable coastal management for our Members through the implementation of our Strategic Plan and the adoption of our new Business Plan.

During the year, SCCG delivered on grant projects and formed collaborative partnerships to develop, advance and promote tools and resources to build the capacity of our members.

I would like to thank SCCG Member Councils and delegates for their valued contributions throughout the year. I would also like to thank the SCCG Secretariat for their ongoing hard work and commitment in addressing members interests and needs.

Executive Officer, Geoff Withycombe resigned from the SCCG at the end of the financial year after 23 years. We recognise and thank Geoff for his long-term investment in the SCCG, his substantial achievements and his significant contributions to coastal management locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. We wish Geoff well.

At the same time we welcome new Executive Officer, Sarah Joyce, who will commence in 2018-19 to lead the renewed SCCG strategic direction.



Cr Lynne Saville  
**Chairperson**



## From the EO

SCCG performed well during 2017-18, with positive feedback provided by members through the annual survey.

SCCG provided a strong voice on legislation, and policy reforms, developing comprehensive submissions and hosting capacity building workshops on key reforms, including coastal management.

2017 saw the establishment of the Executive Forum, a meeting of General Managers/ Executive staff of Member Councils as a means of providing advice and input into the development of the SCCG Business Plan. After extensive consultation the Business Plan was adopted in March 2018 with three key focus areas:

- ⇒ catchment management,
- ⇒ pollution reduction; and
- ⇒ state and local government reforms

I step down from the helm of the SCCG and hand over the leadership of the Group to a new Executive Officer to start the 2018-19 FY. I do so knowing that the Secretariat will continue to build on and facilitate coordination, collaboration and knowledge-sharing across the SCCG region, and that the strength of the Group will continue to lie in the engagement and shared expertise of the elected representatives, executives and technical staff of our Member Councils.



Geoff Withycombe  
**Executive Officer**



# About Us



Established in 1989, the Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc (SCCG) is a regional organisation of councils (ROC), advancing sustainable management of Sydney's urban coastal and estuarine environment.

SCCG is made up of the Secretariat and three core Committees, namely the Executive Committee, Full Group Committee (Councillors and staff), and Technical Committee (technical staff). The functions, operations, activities and committees of the SCCG are facilitated by the Secretariat, made up of an Executive Officer, Manager Projects and Programs and Support Officer.

The Full Group Committee provides a forum for Councillors and Senior staff to share information and direct core activities.

The Technical Committee enables council staff to exchange information, network and learn from their peers, collaborate on current and emerging needs and develop regional projects.

The Executive Committee undertake decision-making on specific strategic and governance matters.

The Executive Committee nominated at the 2017 AGM for 2017-18 representation are below:

- Chairperson: Cr Lynne Saville, Willoughby Council
- Vice-Chair Estuarine: Cr Ian White, Northern Beaches Council
- Vice-Chair Ocean: Cr Jack Boyd, Sutherland Council
- Secretary (Honorary): Cr Paula Masselos, Waverley Council
- Treasurer (Honorary): Cr Rochelle Porteous, Inner West Council
- Members: Cr Kathy Neilson, Randwick City Council  
Mr Peter Massey, North Sydney Council

In the last quarter of 2017, an Executive Forum was established comprising General Managers, and other senior staff to advise on the development and implementation of the new Business Plan.

## SCCG Vision

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

## Mission

To lead sustainable management of the coastal and estuarine environment through collaboration, capacity building, advocacy and research.

## Goals

We work towards our vision and mission through the implementation of activities under four key goals: Collaboration, Capacity Building, Advocacy and Research.



# Sydney Coastal Councils Group in a Snapshot

## OUR MEMBER COUNCILS



## OUR WORK IN 2017-18



Coordination of: **15** SCCG & guest presentations



Delivery of: **4** presentations at state & national conferences



Involvement in: **94** external committees, meetings, workshops & events



Facilitation of: **40** internal committee meetings; and **7** capacity building workshops, forums & events

Advocacy via: **6** comprehensive submissions

## OUR REGION

### Landscape



An area consisting of: drowned river valley, beaches, headlands, bays, lagoons and rivers.

836 km<sup>2</sup> total land area

86 beaches/  
swimming sites

### Population



Sydney Coastal Councils  
Group represented:

1.56 million  
Sydneyiders across  
11 LGA's

### Economy



Gross Regional Product  
(GRP) of the SCCG region:

\$346 Billion GRP  
40.1% of the NSW  
Gross State Product

# Our Performance in 2017-2018

## Financial Performance

The SCCG financial position for 2017-18 is provided below.

- Total Income: \$331,543
- Total Assets: \$629,445
- Total Expenditure: \$308,549
- Total Liabilities: \$421,856
- Total Equity: \$207,589

## Annual Members Survey

The Annual Members Survey provides an opportunity for the Full Group and Technical Committee representatives and other relevant staff from Member Councils to evaluate performance, identify the continuing and future needs of Member Councils, and inform the SCCG's future activities. The survey findings provide direction and build the capacity of the SCCG to continuously improve services to Member Councils.

### Snapshot of 2017-18 Annual Survey Results:

- 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG promotes cooperation, collaboration and coordination among Member Councils and facilitates information exchange.
- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG builds the capacity of Member Councils through the provision of useful advice and information.
- 92% agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG built capacity via useful tools and resources.
- 80% stated that SCCG had built staff capacity either fully or to some extent with regards to coastal management and other state legislative reforms.
- 85% agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG performs well in identifying and researching current and emerging regional coastal issues.
- 92% agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG performed well in advocating on Member Council interests, with 100% stating SCCG submissions were comprehensive and of a high standard.
- 91% agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG membership provides networking and relationship building benefits.
- 85% agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the performance of the SCCG, an increase of 9% based on the 2016-17 annual survey response.

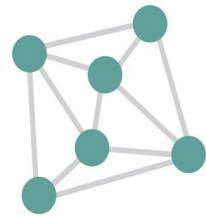
# Achievements and Highlights

- Developed a new Business Plan in consultation with our Member Councils.
- Implemented the grant program 'Prioritising and Adapting Coastal Recreational Infrastructure for Climate Change' to develop a Tool for local councils to assess asset risk and adaptability to climate change.
- Promoted the Emergency Management Health Check Tool and resource kit, with 43 councils across NSW requesting access to the Tool.
- Actively engaged with local councils, stakeholders and the NSW Government on the Marine Reforms, District planning process, and Crown Land Management.
- Hosted a workshop for members on the coastal reforms.
- Represented and advocated for Member Councils' interests through the preparation of 6 major submissions to Government policy, legislation, reviews and announcements.
- Delivered another successful Summerama coastal education program which saw over 5067 participants attend 75 events in January 2017 across 8 SCCG Member Councils.
- Continued to partner with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage to develop a regional approach to Flying-fox management.
- Partnered with the Catchment Groups (Parramatta River Catchment Group, Cooks River Alliance, Georges RiverKeeper) to implement the Get The Site Right Program.
- Partnered with the CRC for Low Carbon Living and WSROC to deliver a roadshow on engaging communities and facilitating change.
- Joined the Australian Microplastics Assessment Project as a partner.
- Presentations at the NSW 2017 Coastal Conference, the 2018 Coast to Coast Conference and the 2018 NCCARF Conference.
- Won the Innovation Category of the NSW 2017 Coastal Management Awards for the Sydney's Salty Communities Program.



# GOAL 1: Collaboration

Facilitate cooperation between, and coordination of, actions by Member Councils



## Summary

During 2017-18 SCCG represented Member Councils on external committees and worked on joint projects, enabling greater collaboration and partnerships; providing an interface of communication and ensuring SCCG remained up-to-date on emerging issues, trends, information, programs and best practice approaches.

Highlights include:

- SCCG established and facilitated the inaugural meeting of the Beach Nourishment Working Group in July 2017, with the aim of the group to provide advice and expertise to: i) identify and document information, trends, and impacts of beach nourishment programs; ii) identify gaps in knowledge and research; iii) identify triggers and a pathway process for commencing/ceasing actions/programs; iv) consult with relevant stakeholders to address the application of beach nourishment where appropriate.
- Involvement and participation in business planning workshops leading to the development of the Business Plan for the SPLASH network.
- Involvement with the Resilient Sydney Discovery Area Working Group and the Greater Sydney Commission Environment Panel.

## Engaging Communities & Facilitating Change

A Roadshow was held on 20th October 2017 as a collaboration between the CRC for Low Carbon Living, SCCG and WSROC, to explore the latest research on sustainable design, energy efficiency and community engagement. The aim of the roadshow was to:

- Build and strengthen relationships between and among researchers and practitioners;
- Share and develop new knowledge via face-to-face engagement and outreach activities;
- Showcase and facilitate utilisation of CRCLCL research;
- Provide practitioners with access to researchers and leading research to assist and support their work.

A range of expert speakers presented on research projects as examples of how to effectively engage with communities and foster sustainable behaviour change. Throughout the day attendees were able to network with peers and participate in a workshop to assist in identifying opportunities for collaboration and scope potential future CRC projects.





## Summerama Program

The SCCG Summerama Program, celebrated its 15<sup>th</sup> year in January 2018, providing a platform for the community to enjoy, discover, interact and connect with Sydney's coastline through fun filled and family orientated coastal activities, from kayaking, snorkelling, boat and adventure tours to rock pool rambles, walk 'n' talks and surf safety.

Summerama 2018 saw over 5,067 participants attend 75 activities across the 8 participating council areas.

SCCG hosted two activities; a walk & talk of Long Reef Aquatic Reserve specifically aimed at the Chinese speaking community; and a Summerama Coastal Explorer Bus Tour which took 14 participants on a day tour to learn about and participate in activities on the coast.

The Bus Tour included a guided walk of the Sydney Park Wetlands and a waterbug monitoring activity with expert Dr Arthur White; a rockpool ramble to discover the intertidal zone at Balmoral with Marine Biologist Kate Smellie; and a waste cleanup activity at Chowder Bay with Harriet Spark. This tour was supported by the Greater Sydney Local Land Services through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



Local Land  
Services  
Greater Sydney



The Summerama Program was presented by SCCG at the National Coast to Coast Conference held in Hobart during April 2018.



## Get the Site Right

During 2017-18 SCCG partnered with the Parramatta River Catchment Group, Cooks River Alliance, Georges River Keeper, NSW EPA and NSW Department of Planning and Environment to implement the Get the Site Right Campaign.

The campaign targets erosion and sediment control on construction and building sites and aims to raise awareness of the effects of sediment laden runoff on our waterways.

The campaign was run during Oct/November 2017 and May 2018. A stall was hosted at the Home show (27-29 Oct) to educate and spread the Get the Site Right message to homeowners and DIYers.

Three training sessions were held in Oct/November 2017 for Council staff to build the capacity, knowledge and skills of council compliance officers.

During the November 2017 Blitz, 18 Councils across Sydney inspected 891 sites, with 60% of sites compliant and 40% of sites non-compliant leading to \$212,146 in fines being issued.



# GOAL 2: Capacity Building



Develop and exchange knowledge and tools to support the role and build the capacity of Members

## Summary

SCCG continued to build Member Council and stakeholder capacity through regular updates on coastal related news and policy in the *Coastal Currents* quarterly newsletter and the monthly *Making Waves*. In January 2018, the Annual Funding Guide was developed for SCCG Member Councils, including information on relevant funding programs and award opportunities.

### Workshop & Presentations

- ⇒ In February 2018, SCCG partnered with Northern Beaches Council and the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) to host a workshop for our members on 'Practice Note 12.1: Climate Change Impacts on the Useful Life of Infrastructure, developed by IPWEA and Northern Beaches Council through a Building Resilience to Climate Change Grant project.
- ⇒ In August 2017, SCCG's Executive Officer presented to students at the University of Sydney's Digital Architecture Studio on "Climate Change Adaptation in a Global Coastal City - the contribution of regional collaboration in Sydney Policy and practice responses".
- ⇒ In September "Sea level rise issues in Sydney – challenges and opportunities" was presented to Architects in Magma Architects Droga Residency Program.



### Climate Change Grant Project

#### Adapting Priority Coastal Recreational Infrastructure for Climate Change

SCCG received grant funding through the 'Building Resilience to Climate Change Grants Program'. SCCG engaged Manly Hydraulics Laboratory and Engineers Australia via its partnership with the National Committee on Coastal and Oceans Engineering (NCCOE) to deliver this project.

The project has involved the development of an assessment methodology and decision framework for priority recreational coastal infrastructure assets.

The assessment method is a tool for councils to use in evaluating the condition and vulnerability of a recreational asset to coastal hazards and climate change.

Case studies have been prepared based on different public recreational infrastructure assets within three NSW council areas.

This project and tool was presented at the NCCARF Conference in May 2018, and to the SCCG Full Group in June.

## Capacity Building — Coastal Reforms Workshop

During May 2018, SCCG held a workshop for member councils on the NSW coastal reforms.

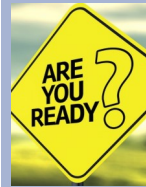
The aim of the workshop was to build the knowledge and capacity of member council staff through the presentation of the final elements of the NSW coastal reform package with a focus on implementation of these elements; and to provide an opportunity to workshop local council needs and local/regional activities and outcomes.

Speakers from the NSW Coastal Council, Department of Planning and Environment and Office of Environment and Heritage presented on the history of the coastal reforms, the role of the NSW Coastal Council, the Act, State Environmental Planning Policy and the Coastal Management Manual.

Workshops were held in the afternoon to identify local and regional priority actions and outcomes. The main points summarised from the workshop included:

- Working collaboratively internally within councils — bringing together multi-disciplinary staff.
- Identifying funding opportunities and mechanisms on a regional basis
- Undertake vulnerability mapping and overall coordination on a catchment wide basis.

An Outcomes Report has been developed.



## Emergency Management Health Check Tool



The Emergency Management Health Check Tool and resource kit, funded through the State Emergency Management Projects Program, was launched during 2017. The Tool was developed to enable NSW councils to better review and assess preparedness, planning capability, resilience and resourcing in emergency management.

During 2017/18 the tool was evaluated through a survey, with regards to usage and usefulness of the tool to councils.

Results include:

- 42 NSW councils with over 100 participants attended 6 workshops
- 200 factsheets were distributed
- 2 conference presentations in 2017 - NSW Coastal Conference and the Local Government Internal Auditors Conference
- 97 project inquiries to the dedicated e-mail address
- 43 NSW councils requested access to the tool (17 councils have reviewed the tool or completed the offline version, and 23 councils have completed the online tool and received reports)
- For those councils that completed the online tool, the average overall readiness score was 3.75 (with 3 being adequate and 4 being effective)
- 91% of respondents to the survey agreed the tool enabled councils to identify areas of capability and improvement
- 73% agreed the reports were useful in decision-making and would be provided to the GM and/or Local Emergency Management Committee
- 83% have accessed [emhealthcheck.com.au](http://emhealthcheck.com.au) and downloaded resources.



## GOAL 3: Advocacy

Provide a regional and cohesive voice representing Member Councils.



### Summary

Advocacy was a major focus for the SCCG in 2017-18, taking three main forms; i) formal submissions to government; ii) participation in relevant external committees and/or advisory bodies, and/or; iii) direct communications / correspondence with government agencies and elected representatives.

### Submissions 2017-18

- Draft Code of Practice Authorising Flying-Fox Camp Management Actions 2018
- Draft Environment SEPP Explanation of Intended Effect
- Draft Greater Sydney Region Plan and District Plans
- Draft NSW Marine Estate Management Strategy
- Draft Crown Land Management Regulation 2017
- Environmental Impact Assessment Improvement Project

### Draft Greater Sydney Region Plan

The key recommendations provided within the SCCG submission for the draft Greater Sydney Region Plan are presented below:

- Explicitly recognise that Ecologically Sustainable Development is at the heart of the draft Greater Sydney Region Plan and District Plans.
- Set up a sufficiently resourced unit for monitoring, reporting and evaluation within the Greater Sydney Commission.
- Develop a new monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework document
- Identify appropriate coasts and waterways as collaboration areas.
- Provision of a statement clarifying how detail of the former Implementation Plans will be carried forward
- Develop new actions from supporting text under each planning priority.

### Environment SEPP

SCCG's submission on the Explanation of Intended Effect for the Environment SEPP noted the following primary points:

- Assurance was required that all essential clauses, related to ensuring the protection and sustainable management of the harbor and waterways, from the existing SEPPs were included in the Environment SEPP.
- Concern that wetlands would not be included in the Environment SEPP where they are covered under the Coastal Management SEPP which had not yet been proclaimed.
- Support for the inclusion of Water Sensitive Urban Design and Integrated Water Management principles and provisions.
- Not supportive of the RMS subdivision clause which may impact on amenity and access to public space and impinge on the public good.



## GOAL 4: Research

Identify and address current and emerging regional coastal issues.



### Summary

During 2017-18, the SCCG continued to engage with our government and academic partners and other stakeholders to further our knowledge on priority issues, and to promote and distribute relevant research outcomes to our member councils.

#### Coastal Erosion Project

UNSW have completed a grant funded project entitled 'Community Understanding of Coastal Erosion: Improving Resiliency and Preparedness to Coastal Storms and Sea Level Rise', of which SCCG was a project partner.

The purpose of this project was to measure expectations and the level of understanding of coastal users, businesses and coastal managers in regards to risk, current practices and how the coast is used and valued. A total of 1442 surveys were completed and analysed (1276—general coastal users, 72 coastal businesses, 94 coastal managers). Hazards including heat, flooding, sea level rise and bushfires were considered by coastal users to pose the greatest risk within the next 20 years, whilst coastal businesses identified coastal storms, flooding, sea level rise and coastal erosion as the coastal hazards posing greatest risk to their business.

[A project paper](#) of this study was presented at the 2017 NSW Coastal Conference.



#### Finding a Path for Blue Green Innovation

SCCG partnered with OceanWatch Australia and EMM Consulting to put together a paper for submission to the 2017 NSW Coastal Conference.

The paper was based on the OceanWatch Living Shorelines program, initially funded by SCCG under its Salty Communities Program, involving the trial of bagged oyster shells as a suitable natural substrate for oyster reef formation and indirectly bank stabilisation, in intertidal areas; and the need for a new assessment pathway approach for innovative projects with a public and environment benefit.

This paper addressed the regulatory regime required to be followed for the living shorelines installation at each location, the impediments, feasibility and disincentives that arise from the current regulatory process. The paper and its recommendations can be downloaded from the NSW Coastal Conference [website](#).



# Looking Ahead



2018/2019 will see the release of government policy reform agenda's such as the NSW marine estate reforms, as well as the finalisation and enactment of state government reforms in key areas of coastal management, biodiversity, and planning.

The SCCG's focus and key activities for 2018/2019, as directed by the Business Plan and it's Implementation Plan, will include:

- Promoting the Coastal recreational assets assessment tool to our members and councils NSW wide.
- Rolling out actions in the *Action Plan: Systems Management for Healthy Waterways*, working with Member Councils, Sydney Water and other stakeholders to implement strategic actions to improve integrated water management, water quality and ecosystem values in coastal Sydney.
- Advocating for mandatory Water Sensitive Urban Design standard provisions in LEP's/DCP's based on agreed standards and best practice.
- Implementing a regional pollution reduction program focused on marine plastics.
- Acting as an effective conduit between Members to achieve collaboration, coordination and information sharing.
- Seeking new investment opportunities, in partnership with other stakeholders, and through potential expansion of council membership.
- Continuing to position ourselves as a strong advocate on behalf of Member Councils on key government legislative and policy reforms.

With ongoing support we will continue to provide effective, efficient and well-directed services to members and their communities to advance the sustainable management of Sydney's coastal and estuarine environment.







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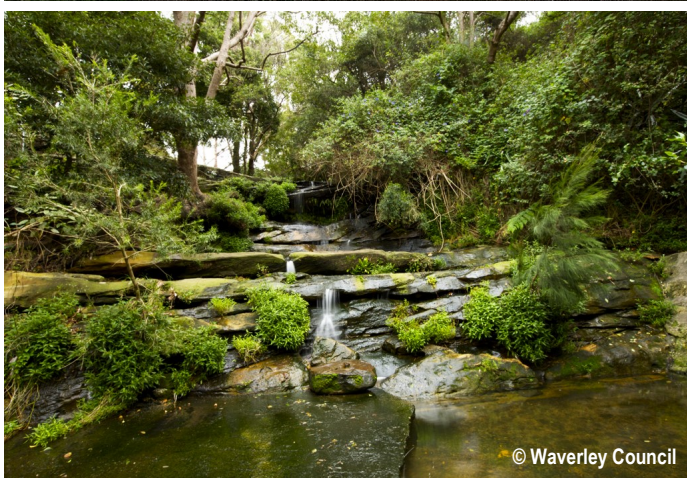
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