



Sydney Coastal Councils Group

Resilient Coasts. Engaged Communities. Local Leadership. Regional Impact.

REGIONAL COLLABORATION IN ACTION



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An Introduction

Guided by the [SCCG Strategic Plan 2015-2019](#), and the SCCG Business Plan 2017-2019, the SCCG is providing benefits to Councils across a range of coastal management issues including; climate change adaptation and resilience, coastal engineering, infrastructure and asset management, strategic and land use planning, biodiversity restoration and conservation, natural hazard and emergency management, monitoring and evaluation, and integrated water management.

The Strategic Plan and Business Plan provide clear direction to guide organisational activities, through the Group's Vision, Mission, Goals and the implementation of the 'Activities Program/ Actions Plan'. Three guiding principles encapsulate the core motivations of the SCCG and inform the implementation of the Strategic Plan:

Principle 1: Restore, protect and enhance the coastal environment, its associated ecosystems, ecological and physical processes and biodiversity.

Principle 2: Facilitate the sustainable use of coastal resources, now and in the future.

Principle 3: Promote adaptive, integrated and participatory management of the coast.

The SCCG was established as a Regional Organisation of Councils (ROC) in 1989, and is a well respected, industry leader in the areas of coastal and estuarine management, coordination and facilitation, demonstrating a prime example of regional local government collaboration in action. Originally established to address the discharge of primary treated sewage off Sydney's shoreline at North Head, Bondi, Malabar and Cronulla, resulting in the installation of the deep ocean outfalls, the SCCG quickly expanded membership and evolved from a single-issue to a broader movement for sustainable and integrated coastal management.

SCCG currently comprises nine Member Councils representing nearly 1.3 million Sydneysiders, encompassing the waterways of Pittwater, Port Jackson, Port Hacking, Botany Bay, Middle and North Harbours, and the lower reaches of the Lane Cove, Georges and Cooks Rivers.

Twenty-nine years on, the SCCG is the peak ROC for sustainable coastal management and represents Councils and their coastal residents in NSW. Our success leading sustainable coastal management is achieved by harnessing the individual and collective knowledge of our Member Councils, a suite of technical and academic experts and other coastal stakeholders. Accordingly, the SCCG is able to provide a unique service drawing upon the skills and knowledge of a range of practitioners in coastal management.

The strength of the SCCG rests in engagement and shared expertise of the elected representatives, executive and technical staff of our Member Councils, and the capacity of our Secretariat to facilitate coordination, collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the SCCG and provide general and specialised expertise to implement the Strategic Plan and Business Plan.



Through the Strategic Plan, the SCCG delivers a range of services and programs that assist all Member Councils collectively and individually in the management of Sydney's urban coastal and estuarine environments. Through membership of the SCCG, Member Councils benefit from an increased capacity to implement a broad range of coastal and estuarine management initiatives.

Member Councils participate and collaborate in the SCCG, as an Incorporated 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.

Representation by Member Councils is via four core committees, namely the Executive Committee, Full Group, Technical Committee and the GM's Forum. These committees provide efficient and effective opportunities for Member Councils at all levels to regularly come together as a platform for coordination, collaboration, networking and peer-peer learning.

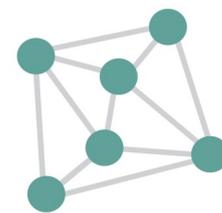
The Full Group Committee provides for Councillors and staff to share information and direct the core activities of the SCCG. The Executive Committee are council delegates appointed at the SCCG Annual General Meeting providing regional representation, business operation oversight and decision making. The Technical Committee provides a regular forum for council professional staff to exchange information, network and collaborate on current and emerging needs/projects.

In addition the GM's Forum has been established under the Business Plan. This Forum meets twice per year to enable GM's and / or senior staff from member councils to provide strategic direction and input into the development and review of the Business Implementation Plan.



GOAL 1: Collaboration

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



Overview

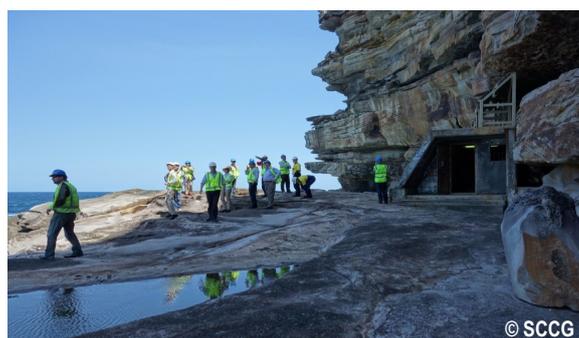
The SCCG provides an effective and efficient mechanism for Member Councils at all levels to drive regional collaboration and assist in ensuring regional consistency on issues of mutual interest. Working as a region the SCCG is also able to engage and collaborate with a range of key regional stakeholders including State government and its agencies, interest and advocacy groups, research organisations and the broader community.

Key Current Activities

- SCCG internal Committees (Full Group, Executive, Technical Committee, GM's Forum).
- SCCG internal Working Groups (Coastal Reforms, Beach Nourishment, Coastal Recreational Infrastructure, Summerama Champions).
- Representation on National, State and Local policy, management and research committees ensuring member council issues and needs are represented and addressed.
- Integrated water management—SCCG and Sydney Water MOU and shared data agreement, and the development of an Action Plan: Systems Management for Healthy Waterways, focusing on Regulatory and Funding Arrangements; System Performance – Sewer Network and Non-Compliant Connections; Information Transparency, Sharing and Effective Communication and Engagement.
- Waterway pollution response interagency collaboration and pollution protocols.
- Grey-headed Flying-fox regional management approach in partnership with OEH.
- Facilitating the annual SCCG Summerama community outreach program in collaboration with Member Councils and Summerama partners.

Benefits of Membership

- Strategic regional collaboration (through meetings, committees, forums, workshops)
- Peer support, peer-to-peer learning and mentoring
- Capture and sharing of knowledge and information
- Develop and delivery of regional advocacy
- Interface of communication between Federal, State and Local Government, Academic and research Institutions and other stakeholders
- Resource sharing including innovation and best practice approaches
- Review and development of best practice policy and practice including emerging issues
- Access to substantial stakeholder networks and the coordination of information distribution and exchange between stakeholders
- Dedicated SCCG staff with high level facilitation, collaboration, and negotiation skills.



GOAL 2: Capacity Building



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

Overview

The SCCG builds Member Council capacity to sustainably manage the Sydney's coastal and estuarine areas through the provision of tools, documents and resources; partnership and grant-based programs; forums and professional development opportunities; and knowledge sharing through extensive networks.

Current Key Activities

- An online Emergency Management Health Check Tool and Resource Toolkit developed to assist Member Councils in self assessing capability in their planning, preparedness, resourcing and response to emergencies, hazards and risks, and in building a business case for state-based funding.
www.emhealthcheck.com.au
- Development of the Adapting Priority Coastal Recreational Infrastructure for Climate Change project in partnership with the National Committee on Coastal and Oceans Engineering (NCCOE).
- Advancing the Connected Corridors for Biodiversity project outputs in partnership with SSROC.
- Maintaining and continuously building the SCCG network to ensure access to relevant decision makers, and technical, policy, academic experts.
- Facilitation and /or development of grant applications to address needs identified by Member Councils, and assisting and supporting grant applications by members and other stakeholders where appropriate, through the Grants Committee.
- Building on and embedding outcomes and deliverables including tools and resources from recent SCCG programs and projects.
- Hosting capacity building workshops for Member Council staff (e.g. coastal reforms process).

Benefits of Membership

- Building Member Council individual and collective capacity to advance sustainable coastal and estuarine management;
- Securing and distributing grant funding for local and regional programs;
- Facilitation of the SCCG Capacity Building Program providing access to seminars, forums, workshops and professional development activities as defined by Member Councils;
- Developing regional policy, practice, tools and resources;
- Interpretation and translation of scientific, legal, policy and other specialised information;
- Access to qualified and experienced policy and technical experts within the Secretariat;
- In-field learning via program case study presentations and on-site visits.



GOAL 3: Advocacy



Provide a regional and cohesive voice representing Member Councils.

Overview

The SCCG provides a significant vehicle for influencing Local, State and Federal policies and programs and ensuring ongoing recognition and support of the important role Member Councils play in the delivery of sustainable coastal management and planning. The active advocacy role improves the capacity of members to deliver a sustainable coastal environment.

Current Key Activities

- Significant regional submissions developed on behalf of Member Councils on issues of interest/concern (e.g. Marine Estate Management Strategy, Marine Parks Proposal, Biodiversity Reforms, Coastal Reforms).
- Facilitation of dedicated advocacy working groups (e.g. Coastal reforms, Biodiversity reforms).
- Submission of successful motions to the ALGA National Assembly.
- Meetings with Ministers (and local members) to discuss SCCG positioning on environment/coastal issues and the SCCG Business Plan.
- Representation on Committees and at Stakeholder Workshops.
- Additional advocacy activities including Policy and position statements during State/Federal Elections; corresponding with relevant state/federal departments on issues of concern; attendance and provision of evidence at Public Senate Inquiries.



Benefits of Membership

- Significant influence in the development and review of Government policy, legislation, activities and programs via a regionally representative and cohesive voice;
- Providing access to critical regional and state decision makers including Ministers and senior executives;
- Participation on key government and non-government committees representing the interest of members;
- Advocating on behalf of members through submissions, inquiries, correspondence, direct and indirect stakeholder consultations, and lobbying.
- Provision of qualified perspectives on regional coastal issues within the media and supporting member councils with their public representations;
- Substantial corporate and historical knowledge and clear contemporary understanding of regional and local issues and needs;
- Raising general community awareness of key SCCG activities and challenges through publicly available information including dedicated web sites, newsletters, media releases and other community forums.

GOAL 4: Research



Identify and address current and emerging regional coastal issues.

Overview

SCCG continually identifies and addresses current and emerging issues of relevance to member councils in alignment with priorities identified in the SCCG Strategic Plan. The SCCG is an award-winning facilitator of applied research assisting member councils with the complexities of contemporary and future coastal and estuary management policy and management practice. The SCCG enhances the research capacity of member councils and drives beneficial and co designed partnerships with a broad range of research institutions and key academics.

Key Current Activities

- Annual Survey of Members to determine priority research issues/ trends, potential areas of future research.
- Desktop research projects under the Healthy Waterways Action Plan.
- Community Understanding of Coastal Erosion: Improving Resiliency and Preparedness to Coastal Storms and Sea Level Rise (UNSW partner project).
- Adapting priority coastal recreational infrastructure to climate change project.
- Partnership between SCCG and Universities/research partners (e.g. grant applications, Expression of Interest for the Innovation and Research Fund on plastic litter/ pollution)
- NCCARF CoastAdapt tool Implementation Partner as well as representation on NCCARF Advisory Groups.
- Representation on Committees (e.g. AUSMAP)
- Research publications and resources provided on the SCCG website (including Salty Communities Program outputs/research studies/ reports).

Benefits of Membership

- Well established formal and informal partnerships with key research institutions;
- High level research knowledge and skill sets within the Secretariat, and maintenance and ongoing development of multidisciplinary networks of key experts available to advise and assist members;
- Proven track record of developing and facilitating applied research addressing identified needs of member councils and Sydney's coastal and estuarine environments;
- Regular and targeted interactions between researchers and policy makers;
- Representing Member Council research interests and needs on key national research bodies and advisory committees;
- Supporting and assisting members to integrate research outcomes into policy and management practices.

