

Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

September 2019

PURPOSE

The purpose of these FAQ's is to provide background information on:

1. the Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program (CMP) specifically
2. the CMP process and funding more generally

The FAQ's provides responses to key questions likely to be asked of Steering Committee and Partners Group members and/or the organisations they represent.

Steering Committee and Partners Group members should digest this information to ensure a shared understanding of the CMP process and key issues to be addressed in developing the next stages of the Greater Sydney Harbour CMP.

1. GREATER SYDNEY HARBOUR CMP

What is a Coastal Management Program?

Coastal management programs (CMPs) set the long-term strategy for the coordinated management of the coast, with a focus on achieving the objectives of the *Coastal Management Act 2016* (CM Act).

CMPs are generally prepared by local councils in consultation with the community.

CMPs identify coastal management issues and the actions required to address these issues in a strategic and integrated way.

They detail how and when those actions are to be implemented, their costs and proposed cost-sharing arrangements and other viable funding mechanisms.

As shown in Figure 1, there are generally five stages in the process for preparing a CMP.

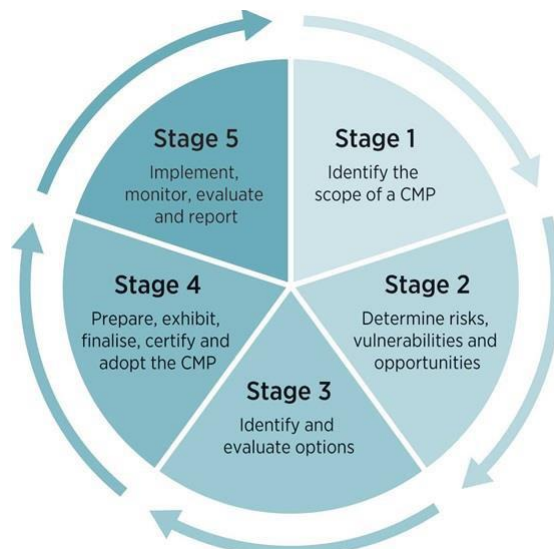


Figure 1 – The five stages of the CMP process

What stage is the Greater Sydney Harbour CMP up to?

A Scoping Study (Stage 1) has been completed and is available on the Sydney Coastal Council's website (www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au) or [here](#).

To enable the subsequent stages (Stages 2-4) to commence, a Steering Committee and Partners Group have been established to resolve key issues including governance, scope and cost-sharing arrangements.

However, some of the studies required in Stage 2 have already been completed. This includes the Sydney Harbour Estuary Processes Study Report which is available on the SCCG website or can be downloaded [here](#). The Processes Study was developed to provide detailed studies of physical, ecological and biogeochemical processes of the Harbour.

Why is a Steering Committee needed to enable the next stages of the CMP to commence?

The pressures upon the coast are ever increasing. Governance arrangements can be complex and involve numerous agencies and stakeholders.

The Scoping Study identified that developing a CMP for the whole of Sydney Harbour is complex given the number of organisations and stakeholders that have a responsibility for its regulation and an interest in its management. The study found that governance is often multi-layered and that a level of jurisdictional ambiguity exists. It also found that current management is typically occurring in response to localized plans and initiatives.

The Steering Committee and Partners Group are tasked with identifying an appropriate governance framework to develop the next stages of the CMP. The preparation of a CMP overseen by a multi-organisational body, provides an ideal opportunity to establish a whole of government partnership and a collaborative governance framework for managing Sydney Harbour. It also provides an opportunity to establish appropriate cost-sharing arrangements for both development of the CMP and the implementation of its actions.

What is the likely cost of preparing the CMP?

The cost of preparing the CMP was estimated in the Scoping Study to be approximately \$1.5 to \$3 million. This cost would be refined through tendering processes and engagement of consultants – a key deliverable of the Steering Committee.

Who pays for the development of the CMP?

The preparation of a CMP for Greater Sydney Harbour is likely to require the sharing of resources and financial support by relevant local/state and federal agencies/organisations.

The Scoping Study recommended a whole-of-government collaborative funding partnership, with all tiers of government, to enable a strategic and coordinated management framework.

Given the large number of potential funding partners, the cost to individual councils and other government agencies is expected to be relatively low.

The SCCG is also eligible to apply for matching funds through the NSW Government's Coastal and Estuary Grants Program.

Developing equitable cost-sharing arrangements is one of the terms of reference of the Steering Committee.

Who is on the Steering Committee and Partners Group?

The Scoping Study recommends a suite of project partners including relevant local, state and federal government agencies, Regional Organisations of Councils, catchment groups and NGOs. Additional project partners were identified during the SCCG information session held 28 February 2019.

The list of organisations on the Steering Committee and Partners Group is provided in both parties Terms of Reference.

Why is SCCG facilitating the Steering Committee?

SCCG was identified as a potential project coordinator in the Scoping Study. SCCG currently represents six of the Councils that are within the study area and have relevant skills and experience in project coordination and coastal and estuarine management. Further information can be found on Sydney Coastal Council Group's [website](#).

2. COASTAL MANAGEMENT

PROGRAMS¹

The *Coastal Management Act 2016* (and other relevant legislation) establishes specific roles and responsibilities for relevant Ministers, the NSW Coastal Council, public authorities and local councils, as well as providing opportunities for communities to participate when preparing and implementing a CMP.

What is the scope of a CMP?

The scope has been articulated in the Scoping Study and is mainly concerned with the four management areas as defined in the *Coastal Management Act 2016*: Wetlands and littoral rainforests, coastal use areas, coastal environment areas and coastal use areas.

Within these management areas a variety of local circumstances influence scope detail such as:

- local management issues, challenges and opportunities identified for each coastal management area, including the spatial extent
- effectiveness of existing management approaches and land use planning instruments to address current and future challenges
- responsibilities and capacities of council, public authorities, communities and other stakeholders to address coastal management issues
- future population growth and development pressures
- risks and liabilities associated with coastal hazards and threats to coastal environments
- vulnerability of coastal assets, environments and social and economic systems
- potential opportunities to adapt to change and thereby enhance the resilience of natural features and coastal communities.

¹ Further information on CMPs is available on the NSW Government's web-page <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/water/coasts/coastal-management/programs>

What are the key benefits to Councils and other organisations in developing the Sydney Harbour CMP?²

The benefits of preparing a Greater Sydney Harbour CMP for Councils include:

- opportunity to understand and manage coastal climate risks
- requirement for state agencies to participate in, and have regard for CMPs in their management operations (CM Act s.23)
- structured forum for community engagement
- opportunity to undertake works to enhance social, environmental and economic values
- statutory immunity for councils, when coastal management decisions/actions are in accordance with a certified CMP (LG Act s.733 good faith provision)
- access to state government funding for coastal planning and implementation, including but not limited to, WSUD projects and riparian management

The benefits of preparing a system-wide CMP are:

- organisations working collaboratively to attract funding and investment
- efficiency savings (economies of scale, reducing duplication of studies and community engagement)
- improved capacity to address strategic and harbour-wide issues and interests
- improved communication, advocacy and promotion.

How are CMP's generally funded?³

The NSW Government supports councils through grant funding and technical assistance to develop CMPs. The Coastal and Estuary Grants Program is part of the NSW Government's \$83.6 million package announced for coastal management.

The program provides technical and financial support to assist in managing the risks from coastal hazards, such as coastal erosion, restoring degraded coastal habitats, stormwater pollution and improving the health of NSW estuaries, wetlands and littoral rainforests.

There are currently five streams under the Coastal and Estuary Grants Program: one stream for planning and studies (including the development of a CMP) and four streams for implementing works identified in a certified CMP.

Currently the Coastal and Estuary Grants Program is a 50/50 funding model.

Who can apply for funding?

The following can apply for funding under the NSW Government's Coastal and Estuary Grants Program:

- local councils
- regional organisations of councils, joint organisations and county councils which manage a grant on behalf of a group of local councils
- public land managers (such as a Crown reserve trust or a location-specific NSW Government authority) in partnership with a lead council, providing the council is the principal applicant and assumes overall responsibility for administering the grant.

² Donaldson P & Withycombe G (2019) Presentation – SCCG Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program Information Session.

³ Information sourced from the NSW Government's website:
<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/water/coasts/coastal-and-estuary-grants>

What can be funded once a CMP is in place?

Once a CMP has been certified by the Minister, funding can be sought from the Coastal and Estuary Grants Program for implementation works, including but not limited to:

- erosion reduction management and beach nourishment
- actions to reduce future risk from coastal hazards
- habitat restoration and conservation
- management and stabilisation of dune systems, river and creek banks and foreshores
- actions to improve and monitor waterway health (eg. WSUD)

Further information on the Coastal and Estuary Grant Program can be found on the OEH website:

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/water/coasts/coastal-and-estuary-grants>

What are non-foreshore councils going to get out of participation in the Sydney Harbour CMP?

Benefits include:

- potential funding opportunities
- inclusion of water quality/water sensitive urban design actions in the CMP as a priority
- access to and be a part of a long-term strategic plan for the harbour and its catchment
- opportunity to integrate the CMP actions into councils' community strategic plan to ensure greater opportunities for funding from other sources
- collaboration and closer relationships with public authorities.

What are the staff resourcing commitments for councils if they agree to sign up – must they provide a staff member who dedicates a certain amount of time each week?

Assigning a council contact officer for the project is advisable, but the time required over the life of the project will vary. Likely commitments will include reviewing draft grant funding application, reviewing draft tender documentation for outsourcing the work, project reference group or steering committee participation, sourcing required LGA-specific information, engaging with relevant council colleagues and briefing the council on progress.

Will there be funding left in the program given there appears to only be funding available to 2021?

Similar to the NSW Floodplain Management Program, the NSW Coastal and Estuary Grants Program has been running for almost 30 years. There is \$9.5M currently available for preparing CMPs, and applications can be submitted at any time.

Will councils that don't contribute monetary value to the CMP still be able to use the CMP to access funding?

If a council area is not covered in a CMP then that council would likely be ineligible to apply for grant funding under the NSW Coastal & Estuary Grants Program.

Will the CMP only focus on estuarine zones or can funding/co-funding of actions on the freshwater parts of the catchment be allowed/prioritised?

Where appropriate, the development of CMPs should take a catchment management approach to understanding and addressing coastal management issues, which includes freshwater flow inputs (quantity and quality). The NSW Coastal Management Manual recommends water sensitive urban design (WSUD) (including artificial wetlands) in the design of coastal urban areas and in the wider catchment, to improve the integrity of downstream environments such as coastal wetlands, littoral rainforests and coastal environment areas. Therefore, it would be advantageous if all LGA's within the Sydney Harbour catchment are included in the CMP so that water quality improvements that protect downstream receiving environments are considered and councils are able to apply for funding of actions through the Coastal and Estuary Grants Program.