



Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc

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



2019-20 ANNUAL REPORT



Published 2020
Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc.
www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au

DISCLAIMER

While all care has been taken to report accurately, the Sydney Coastal Councils Group does not accept responsibility for any information, whether correct or incorrect, supplied by others for this document, or for any loss or harm arising from the use or misuse of this document.

© Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc.

From The Chair

As we report on the activities and achievements of the Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG) 2019 – 20, we also reflect on this as a year of many challenges for our Member Councils and their communities. While recognising the significance of these challenges, the SCCG continues to pursue positive outcomes in sustainable coastal management for our members.

Our new strategic plan, adopted in November 2019, sets the direction of the Group over the next ten years allowing for annual evaluation to ensure we are responsive and adaptable to change. The Plan now focuses our activities under six key goals:

1. People and places adapt to a changing climate and future shocks and stressors
2. Waterways and the foreshore are protected and healthier
3. Marine biodiversity is protected in the bioregion
4. The SCCG Region is comprised of sustainable, liveable and 'smart' cities
5. There is a collaborative, effective and consistent approach to coastal and estuarine management
6. SCCG is trusted and respected to make representations that reflect the values of its members

In addition to the implementation of the 2019-2029 Strategic Plan and providing direct support and representation of Member Councils, the Secretariat has focused on:

- ⇒ advocating for better communication and coordination in the in the development of Coastal Management Programs (CMPs) to improve delivery of a sustainable coastal and estuarine environment
- ⇒ strengthening our governance to improve efficiencies and effectiveness in decision-making collaborating with various public authorities in the development of the Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program
- ⇒ actions to improve integrated water management, water quality and ecosystem values

I would like to thank all those who have been involved in our various committees and supported the SCCG to ensure continued professional operation and successful outcomes are delivered this year. A particular thanks to the SCCG Secretariat staff who have made significant contributions to the SCCG and have ensured the continuous improvements to the service provided to our Member Councils.

Looking ahead, the SCCG will continue to provide effective, efficient and well-directed services to members to advance the sustainable management of Sydney's coastal and estuarine environment. Our new improved internal governance arrangements will also assist with the continued efficient operations of the organisations during the next 12-month period

With our history and a new Strategic Plan, we will continue to meet these challenges and have the right vision, principles, objectives and defined pathways to get us to the destination to which we all aspire.



Cr Lindsay Shurey
SCCG Chairperson

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 four core Committees, namely the Executive Committee, Full Group Committee, General Managers Forum and Technical Committee.

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 of SCCG member Councils to share information and direct core activities.

The General Managers Forum provides strategic direction and advice on the development and implementation of the SCCG Strategic Plan.

The Technical Committee enables council technical 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 2019 AGM for 2019-20 representation are below:

- Chairperson: Cr Lindsay Shurey, Randwick City Council
- Vice-Chair Ocean: Cr Ian White, Northern Beaches Council
- Vice-Chair Estuarine: Cr Lynne Saville, Willoughby City Council
- Secretary: Cr Andrew Tsounis, Bayside Council
- Treasurer: Cr Paula Masselos, Waverley Council
- Members: Cr Michael Forshaw, Sutherland Shire Council
Mr Peter Massey, North Sydney Council

SCCG Vision

Resilient and healthy coastal and estuarine environments that are protected, conserved and managed in a manner consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development

Mission

Engaging with our members and their communities to lead sustainable management of our region's coastal and estuarine environment through collaboration, capacity building, advocacy and research

Guiding Principles

- P1—Restore, protect and enhance the coastal environment, its associated ecosystems, ecological and physical processes and biodiversity
P2—Facilitate the sustainable use of coastal resources, now and in the future
P3—Promote adaptive, integrated and participatory management of the coast

Sydney Coastal Councils Group in a Snapshot

OUR MEMBER COUNCILS



OUR WORK IN 2019-20



Coordination
of:

14

SCCG & guest
presentations

Involvement
in:

101

external committees,
meetings, workshops &
events



Facilitation
of:

26

internal
committee
meetings; and

5

capacity
building
workshops,
forums & events



Advocacy
via:

15

comprehensive
submissions

5

meetings with
Ministers/MP's

OUR REGION

Landscape



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

801.29 km² total land area
87 beaches/
swimming sites

Population



Sydney Coastal
Councils Group
represented:

1.3 million
Sydneyiders across
9 LGA's

Economy



Gross Regional
Product (GRP) of the
SCCG region:

\$106.09 Billion GRP
17.77% of the NSW
GRP

Our Performance in 2019-2020

Financial Performance

The SCCG financial position for 2019-20 is provided below.

- Total Income: \$446,548
- Total Assets: \$684,398
- Total Expenditure: \$259,890
- Total Liabilities: \$395,162
- Total Equity: \$289,236

Annual Members Survey

The Annual Members Survey provides an opportunity for our member Councils to evaluate performance, identify their continuing and future needs, and inform the SCCG's future activities. The survey findings provide direction and build the capacity of SCCG to continuously improve services to member Councils.

Snapshot of 2019-20 Annual Survey Results:

- 94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the SCCG's performance during 2019/20.
- 94% agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG represents member Councils interests.
- 94% agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG promotes cooperation, collaboration and coordination among member Councils and facilitates exchange of information.
- 94% agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG build member Council capacity by providing advice, information and updates, while 89% agreed that staff capacity was built through the provision of useful tools/resources.
- 94% agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG is performing well at advocating on behalf of members, an increase of 12% comparative to 2018/19.
- 81% agreed that SCCG research activities were comprehensive and involved collaboration with experts, although 62% considered all research activities to be relevant to their individual council.
- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG membership provides access to skills and knowledge, peer to peer learning and information sharing, networking opportunities, capacity building and advocacy services.

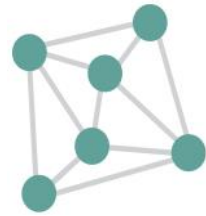
Achievements and Highlights

- ⇒ Release of the 2019-2029 Strategic Plan which sets out a new vision, mission and six specific goals to guide the activities on the Group
- ⇒ Extensive member Council consultation in review of the SCCG Constitution and governance arrangements
- ⇒ Collaboration with local councils, state agencies and peak bodies on the development of a catchment-wide Greater Sydney Harbor Coastal Management Program including the facilitation of Steering Committee and Partners Group
- ⇒ Prepared key recommendations for enhancing the Coastal and Estuary Grants Program to support Member Councils
- ⇒ Collaboration with the Marine Estate Management Authority to facilitate greater alignment with Coastal Management Programs
- ⇒ Actively engaged with local councils, stakeholders and NSW Government on the Sand Management Working Group
- ⇒ Delivered the Summerama coastal activities program which saw over 1479 participants attend 36 events in January 2020 across 3 Member Councils
- ⇒ Facilitated 26 internal committee meetings including several 'themed' Technical Committee with a broad range of presenters
- ⇒ Represented and advocated for Member Councils' interests through the preparation of 13 major submissions to Government policy, legislation, reviews and announcements
- ⇒ Established regular meetings with state government agencies and instigated 5 meetings with Ministers/Members of Parliament throughout the year to advocate for sustainable coastal management and address core issues and impediments to councils



GOAL 1: Collaboration

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



Summary

SCCG represented members on external committees and at stakeholder workshops, enabling greater collaboration and partnerships; providing an interface of communication and ensuring SCCG remained up-to-date on emerging issues, trends, programs and best practice approaches.

Highlights include:

- ⇒ Collaborations with key state agencies and Ministers and MPs on the development of the Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program (CMP)
- ⇒ Commenced quarterly meetings with Transport for NSW to work collaboratively on key projects which support both organisations' strategic goals.
- ⇒ Continued quarterly meetings with Sydney Water to review and re-establish commitment to the Memorandum of Understanding between both organisations and to enable member Councils to have a forum to raise issues and concerns.
- ⇒ Continued quarterly meetings with the NSW Coastal Council to discuss issues, challenges and opportunities of coastal management programs.
- ⇒ Collaboration with catchment groups in the Sydney region on the need for national leadership and strong policy direction on integrated water management for healthy waterways and water sensitive cities.



Get the Site Right

During 2019-20 SCCG partnered with the Parramatta River Catchment Group, Cooks River Alliance, Georges River Keeper, Lake Macquarie Council, NSW EPA and NSW Department of Planning, Industry 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.

**IS YOUR SITE
RIGHT?**

The campaign was run during May 2020. Due to public health concerns raised over the COVID-19 pandemic, councils were provided the opportunity to participate in on-site inspections or an online 'awareness-raising' campaign. In total, 600 building site inspections were conducted across 14 local government areas. 73% of sites were compliant with sediment and erosion controls, a 10% improvement in compliance comparative to the last campaign in May 2019.

Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program

In 2019, the SCCG was engaged by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to facilitate a Steering Committee and Partners Group and develop a Project Governance Plan for the development of the Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program (CMP).

In total, three Steering Committee meetings and one Partners Group meeting being held in 2019, which saw the involvement of approximately 30 organisations including 21 councils. The SCCG continues to be part of a project team involving DPIE, NSW Coastal Council and the Parramatta River Catchment Group which is guiding the CMPs development. The SCCG project manages this team along with a Steering Committee and Partners Group. It also supports the Chair of the Steering Committee, Prof. Bruce Thom from NSW Coastal Council.

With funding from the Marine Estate Management Authority, the SCCG project managed the development of an education video highlighting the importance of coordination, consistency and leadership to achieve a healthy waterway. The video can be viewed [here](#).

Collaboration on the Greater Sydney Harbour CMP is continuing through 2020/21.



Sand Management Working Group

In 2019, the SCCG with the support of DPIE, re-established its Sand Management Working Group. The Working Group seeks to provide advice, direction and assistance to advance the application of broad scale regional beach nourishment program(s) in the Sydney region.

In November 2019, the SCCG held its first meeting of the Working Group with representatives from NSW Coastal Council, the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and University of Sydney. Since then, several meetings have been held with presentations from key stakeholders. These presentations are available on our members page [here](#).



Summerama Program

The SCCG Summerama Program, celebrated its 17th year in January 2019, 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 2020 saw over 1479 participants attend 36 activities across the participating council areas, including Waverley Council, Randwick City Council and Woollahra Municipal Council .



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. In January 2020 the Annual Funding Guide was developed for SCCG Member Councils, including information on relevant funding programs and award opportunities.

Presentations to key stakeholders

- ⇒ On 28th August, the SCCG's Executive Officer (EO) presented at the Stormwater NSW Conference highlighting SCCG's role in project managing the Greater Sydney Harbour CMP
- ⇒ The SCCG's Executive Officer presented at IPWEAs 2nd Annual Development Engineering Forum on the developments in Water Sensitive Urban Design using case examples from member Councils.
- ⇒ The SCCG's Executive Officer also presented at the NSW Coastal Conference on Wednesday 30 October 2019 under the Abstract Title 'Developing a Coastal Management Program for Sydney Harbour – It Takes a Village

Member Capacity Building

Workshops

- ⇒ A workshop was held on 10 July 2019 to discuss and hone key messages for new members around the benefits of SCCG membership.
- ⇒ The SCCG hosted a workshop for its member Councils on 22 August 2019 in relation to the Marine Statement Management Strategy
- ⇒ On 27 May 2020, the SCCG facilitated a workshop between member councils to input into the updated NSW Coastal Design Guidelines



© Northern Beaches Council

© K.Howard



© Sutherland Shire Council

Engagement opportunities for Members

The SCCG's internal committee meetings provide an opportunity to build and maintain the SCCG network and ensure council staff have the opportunity to access relevant technical, policy and academic experts.

Technical Committee

In early 2020, the SCCG transitioned to 'themed' technical committee meetings in order to improve the capacity building opportunity within council. These themes allow the SCCG to better present information to the most relevant council staff, for example strategic planning, coastal, or biodiversity divisions of council. So far, the SCCG has facilitated two of these meetings, including:

- ⇒ **Biodiversity:** The biodiversity theme included presentations on the light pollution guidelines for wildlife presented by a representative from the Commonwealth Government; a series of biodiversity initiatives being undertaken by the Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment – Environment, Energy and Science division; and peer to peer learning on the 'Urban Night Sky Park' facilitated by Northern Beaches Council
- ⇒ **Water Quality:** The water quality meeting including two presentations from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment; implementation of the Risk Based Framework provided by Northern Beaches Council; various stormwater harvesting initiatives used by Randwick Council as well as an overview of the new NSW Stormwater Guidelines Manual provided by Stormwater NSW

Marine Estate Management Strategy Workshop

In August 2019, the SCCG facilitated a workshop for member councils on the Marine Estate Management Strategy (MEMS).

The workshop included presentations and Q&A by staff from the NSW Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries presenting information on the Marine Estate Management Strategy and the Sharm Management Strategy including the NSW SMART Drumline trial.

This workshop brought together environment staff from member Councils to build knowledge and capacity and identify future opportunities for better collaboration between councils and MEMA, and potential management actions within the Sydney region for funding under stage 2 of the Marine Estate Management strategy.

Consistent topic areas for discussion included:

1. Improving water quality and reducing litter
2. Delivering healthy coastal habitats with sustainable use and development
3. Planning for climate change

Priorities were identified as:

- ⇒ Implementation of the risk based framework across entire Sydney region
- ⇒ Development of a toolkit to assist councils to facilitate community engagement processes during Coastal Management Program Scoping
- ⇒ Comprehensive survey of marine biodiversity

Collaborative approaches were also discussed to improve communication and coordination between MEMA and member councils.

An outcomes report was prepared for member Councils to refer to in the development of Coastal Management



GOAL 3: Advocacy

Provide a regional and cohesive voice representing Member Councils.



Summary

Advocacy was a major focus for the SCCG in 2018-19, 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, elected representatives, and Ministers

Submissions 2018-19

- ⇒ Submission to the Minister for Local Government on Coastal Management Program – MEMA – July 2020
- ⇒ NSW Housing Strategy – July 2020
- ⇒ NSW Flood Prone Land Package – June 2020
- ⇒ NSW Waste Strategy and Plastics Plan – May 2020
- ⇒ Joint Submission with PRCG – Greater Metropolitan Region Unregulated River Water Sharing Plan – April 2020
- ⇒ IPART Review of Sydney Water Prices – April 2020
- ⇒ EPBC Act Review – April 2020
- ⇒ Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade – March 2020
- ⇒ Clarification of the requirements for cost benefit analyses for Coastal Management Programs – March 2020
- ⇒ Review of proposed cruise ship terminal in Molineaux Point/Yarra Bay – January 2020
- ⇒ Review of NSW Coastal Design Guidelines – January 2020
- ⇒ Catchment Groups Joint Submission – IPART Review of Prices: Sydney Water 2020 – October 2019
- ⇒ Coastal and Estuary Grants Program – October 2019
- ⇒ Marine Pollution Act Amendments – October 2019
- ⇒ National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife – September 2019

Advocacy

As part of the Annual Survey, the SCCG seeks feedback on how the SCCG is performing against our goal to provide a regional and cohesive voice representing our Member Councils and advocating for their interests.

- ⇒ In the survey, 94% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that “*Overall, the SCCG is performing well at advocating on behalf of Member Councils*”.
- ⇒ 87% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG submissions were comprehensive and of a high standard
- ⇒ 75% agreed or strongly agreed that submissions were representative of their council's views.

Meetings with Ministers and Local Members

Meeting	Purpose
26 July 2019 - Meeting with James Griffin MP, Member for Manly, Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment	Meeting to discuss the progress of the Sydney Marine Park Proposal and Greater Sydney Harbour CMP
16 September 2019 - Meeting with Senior Advisor to Matt Kean MP, Minister for Energy and Environment	The SCCG sought an update on the Sydney Marine Park Proposal and provided recommendations for Stage 2 funding under the Marine Estate Management Strategy
16 October 2019 - Meeting with Shelley Hancock MP, Minister for Local Government	Meeting to discuss progress of the Greater Sydney Harbour CMP and engagement with the Marine Estate Management Authority
27 February 2020 - Meeting with Shelley Hancock MP, Minister for Local Government	The SCCG provided a further update on the Greater Sydney Harbour CMP and Sand Management Working Group
28 April 2020 - Meeting with Senior Advisor for Matt Kean MP, Minister for Energy and Environment	Meeting to seek Minister's view on the Sydney Marine Park Proposal as well as recommend strengthening communication between the Marine Estate Management Authority and Councils

Coastal Management Programs

In April 2020, Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock announced that the NSW Government is increasing financial assistance to councils to help mitigate coastal erosion risks and restore degraded coastal habitats. As part of this assistance, the Minister has committed to changing the funding ratio from 1:1 to 2:1 and opening funding rounds in August 2020 to align with councils internal budgeting and planning cycles.

The Minister has also committed to provide greater support to regional organisation of councils, such as SCCG. Twenty percent of the total project cost can now be requested for project management where there are five or more councils working together such as the Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program (CMP). Other changes include increasing the range of low impact activities that can obtain funding support without having a certified CMP.

The SCCG advocated strongly for these changes over the last 18 months through meetings and submissions and greatly appreciates the NSW Government for making these changes.



© K.Howard

© D.Kramer

GOAL 4: Research



Identify and address current and emerging regional coastal issues.

Summary

During 2019-20, SCCG continued to engage with our government and academic partners to further our knowledge and promote and distribute research outcomes to our member councils.

Highlights include:

- ⇒ Development of a new 'members' resource information hub
- ⇒ Review of councils Gross Pollutant Trap management and monitoring in the Greater Sydney Harbour catchment
- ⇒ Re-establishment of the SCCG Grants Committee
- ⇒ Engagement of researchers on the Sand Management Working Group
- ⇒ Collaboration with the Sydney Institute of Marine Science on the Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Partners Group
- ⇒ Collaboration on the Network for Ecological Research on Artificial Light

Network for Ecological Research on Artificial Light

In May 2020, the SCCG became a member of the newly established Network for Ecological Research on Artificial Light (NERAL). The Network was established following the release of the Draft National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife, which the SCCG provided support for by way of submission in September 2019. It consists primarily of research scientists from four Australian universities, Commonwealth Government representatives, Australian Institute of Marine Science and private environmental consultants. The SCCG will take part in collaborating on further develop management practices surrounding artificial light.







Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc.

PO Box 999 Manly NSW 1655

www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au

info@sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au

