



# Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc

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



## 2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT



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## From The Chair

At the end of my second year as Chairperson of the Sydney Coastal Councils Group, I am proud to report on the activities and achievements of the Group in 2020-21.

The SCCG Secretariat and its member councils continue to show resilience in light of some of the most challenging times our communities have collectively had to face. Despite these challenges, the SCCG has had great success in progressing many of its initiatives. Of particular note is the development of the Regional Litter Prevention Strategy which seeks to reduce marine debris entering Sydney Harbour by 50% by 2025 and establishing a collaborative partnership with 20 Councils to progress the development of the Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program (CMP).



I am also proud of our continuous achievements in supporting our member Councils and ensuring the SCCG has a regional and cohesive voice to address issues our Councils face when managing our beautiful coasts and waterways.

I sincerely wish to thank all member councils, especially their delegates for their support of the SCCG. My fellow Executive Committee Members have demonstrated their commitment this year and I appreciate their support. The SCCG Secretariat continues to coordinate, facilitate and deliver many services and project for our councils and achieve great results. For such a small team, I continue to be impressed about how much can be achieved by working with council staff and coordinating regional initiatives. Thank you to our Executive Officer, Sarah Joyce, for her key role in delivering all the SCCG does and her Secretariat team for helping to achieve SCCG's vision to create resilient and healthy coastal and estuarine environments.

*Lindsay Shurey*

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 three core Committees, namely the Executive 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, Project Coordinator and Support Officer.

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 2020 AGM for 2020-22 representation are below:

- Chairperson: Cr Lindsay Shurey, Randwick City Council
- Vice-Chair: Cr Lynne Saville, Willoughby City Council
- Treasurer: Cr Paula Masselos, Waverley Council
- Members: Cr Michael Forshaw, Sutherland Shire Council  
Mr Peter Massey, North Sydney Council  
Clr Ian White, Northern Beaches Council  
Clr Colin Hesse, Inner West Council  
Mr Peter Barber, Bayside 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 2020-21



Coordination of:

30

SCCG & guest presentations



Involvement in:

113

external committees, meetings, workshops & events

Facilitation of:

41

internal committee meetings; and

3

capacity building workshops, forums & events



Advocacy via:

15

comprehensive submissions

1

meetings with Ministers/MPs

## OUR REGION

### Landscape



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

801.29 km<sup>2</sup> total land area  
87 beaches/  
swimming sites

### Population



Sydney Coastal Councils Group represented:

1.3 million Sydneysiders across 9 LGA's

### Economy



Gross Regional Product (GRP) of the SCCG region:

\$108.52 Billion GRP  
17.31% of the NSW GRP

# Our Performance in 2020-21

## Financial Performance

The SCCG financial position for 2020-21 is provided below.

- Total Income: \$444,395
- Total Assets: \$836,199
- Total Expenditure: \$301,659
- Total Liabilities: \$485,570

## 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 2020-21 Annual Survey Results:

- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG represents member Councils interests.
- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG membership provides access to skills and knowledge, peer to peer learning and information sharing, while 92% agreed or strongly agreed that membership provides networking opportunities, capacity building and advocacy services.
- 94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the SCCG's performance during 2019/20.
- 93% agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG promotes cooperation, collaboration and coordination among member Councils and facilitates exchange of information.
- 93% agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG build member Council capacity by providing advice, information and updates, and agreed that staff capacity was built through the provision of useful tools/resources.
- 92% agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG is performing well at advocating on behalf of members.
- 83% agreed that SCCG research activities were comprehensive and involved collaboration with experts, although 75% considered all research activities to be relevant to their individual council

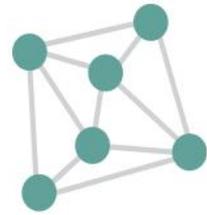
# Achievements and Highlights

- ⇒ Extensive member Council consultation in review of the SCCG 2020/21 Operational Plan
- ⇒ Collaboration with local councils, state agencies and peak bodies on the development of a catchment-wide Greater Sydney Harbor Coastal Management Program
- ⇒ Coordinate the development of the 'What is a CMP' education video
- ⇒ Engage expertise to develop a regional litter prevention strategy and pilot with several member councils
- ⇒ Representation on the Risk-based Framework for considering waterway health outcomes advisory committee
- ⇒ Prepared key recommendations for enhancing the Coastal and Estuary Grants Program to support Member Councils and regional organisation of councils (ROCs)
- ⇒ Actively engaged with local councils, stakeholders and NSW Government on the Sand Management Working Group
- ⇒ Expression of Interest accepted for the Smart Places Acceleration Program in partnership with EPA, CSIRO, Parramatta River Catchment Group, Sydney Olympic Park Authority and four Sydney councils
- ⇒ Delivered the Summerama coastal activities program which saw over 2605 participants attend 32 events in January 2021 across 3 Member Councils
- ⇒ Facilitated 41 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 15 major submissions to Government policy, legislation, reviews and announcements
- ⇒ Established regular meetings with state government agencies and instigated 3 meetings with Ministers/Members of Parliament throughout the year to advocate for sustainable coastal management and address core issues and impediments to councils
- ⇒ Partnered with the Catchment Groups (Parramatta River Catchment Group, Cooks River Alliance, Georges Riverkeeper) to implement the Get the Site Right Program
- ⇒ Participation in the Microplastics Assessment Project training program
- ⇒ Facilitated several workshops between state government agencies and Member Councils on the development of the Shark Management Strategy and NSW Coastal Design Guidelines
- ⇒ Represented Member Councils' interests on various external forums including the Commercial Vessels Advisory Group, Stormwater NSW Committee and Network for Ecological Research on Artificial Light (NERAL)



# GOAL 1: Collaboration

Facilitate cooperation between, and coordination of actions by Member Councils



## 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)
- ⇒ Continued 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 on the 'Love Your Waterways Campaign' aimed at encourages people to take up five simple actions protect our waterways
- ⇒ Collaborations with research Institutions on grants committee including the Sydney Institute of Marine Science.
- ⇒ Our quarterly Technical Committee meetings provided a valuable forum for networking, peer to peer learning and information / knowledge sharing between member Councils.



### Get the Site Right

During 2020-21 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. Over this time we conducted two month-long education and compliance campaign during October and May as well as a follow-up one-day inspection blitz of building sites across Sydney and the Hunter Coast.

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.

## Regional Litter Prevention Strategy

In early 2021, the Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG) and Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) secured a \$90,000 grant from the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) in the Own It and Act: Round 6 Community Litter Grant funding stream. The grant has funded the development of a Regional Litter Prevention Strategy (RLPS) for the Greater Sydney Harbour catchment.

Over the next five years, the strategy aims to reduce litter to Greater Sydney Harbour including the Parramatta and Lane Cove Rivers by 50 per cent – equivalent to half the 2,150 cubic metres of marine debris collected by the Maritime Environmental Services in 2019 which would fill almost half an Olympic-sized swimming pool.

The strategy aims to create a unified and coordinated approach to litter prevention across the Greater Sydney Harbour catchment, by establishing clear actions and programs that can be embedded in all participating councils and community organisations.



## Sydney Harbour Coastal CMP

In September, the SCCG was successful in securing a \$274,000 grant through the NSW Government's Coastal and Estuary Grants Program to address the impact of urban stormwater discharge on Greater Sydney Harbour. The project is supported by 20 councils in the Greater Sydney Harbour catchment and is the largest collaboration of local government agencies to have received a NSW Government planning grant. The grant funding will contribute towards a detailed assessment of stormwater runoff across the region, to better understand the needs of councils in managing the health of their local waterways. The results will support the development of a Coastal Management Program (CMP) for Greater Sydney Harbour, being led by the SCCG.

## Summerama Program

The SCCG Summerama Program, celebrated its 18th year in January 2021, 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, snorkeling, boat and adventure tours to rock pool rambles, walk 'n' talks and surf safety. Summerama 2021 saw over 2605 participants attend 32 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

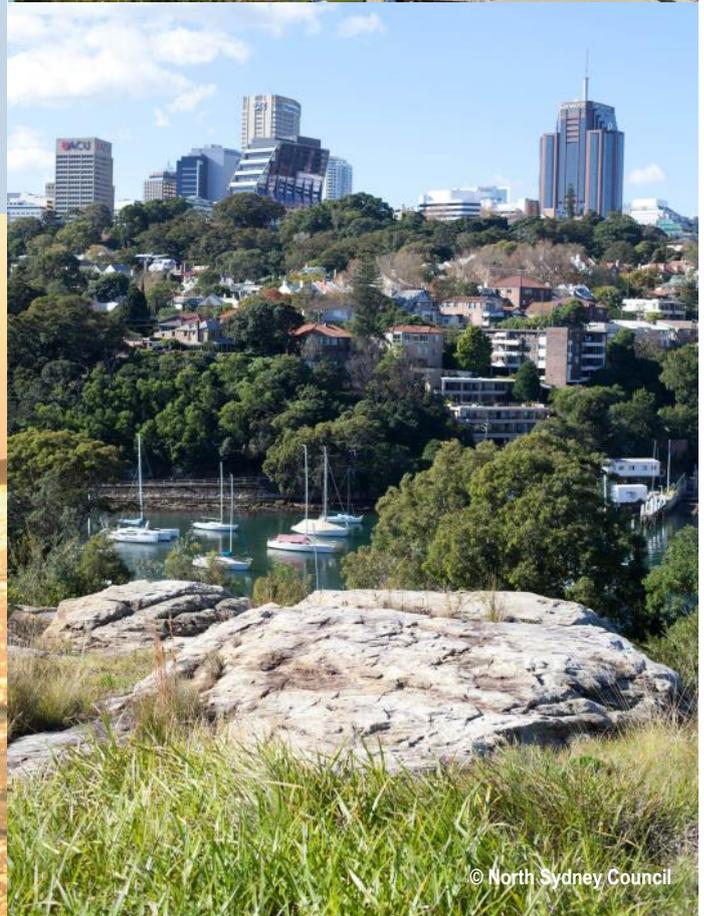
## Summary

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 2021 the Annual Funding Guide was developed for SCCG Member Councils, including information on relevant funding programs and award opportunities.

### Member Capacity Building

#### Workshops

- ⇒ A workshop was held on 3 February 2021 on the Marine Estate Education Strategy between MEMA and member councils
- ⇒ The SCCG hosted a workshop for its members on 23 September 2021 in relation to the Shark Management Strategy
- ⇒ On 31 March 2021, the hosted an Information Session on the Greater Sydney Harbour CMP and its next stages



## 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

The 'themed' technical committee meetings continue to receive positive feedback as an important capacity building tool for the SCCG and its members. The SCCG has facilitated four of these meetings in the period 2020/21:

- ⇒ Water Quality – Included presentations related to stormwater management and harvesting, water quality monitoring and implementation of the risk-based framework for considering waterway health
- ⇒ Coastal and Estuarine Hazards - presentation on coastal hazards case law by Lindsay Taylor Lawyers and further guidance on the Coastal SEPP
- ⇒ SMART and Sustainable Cities – showcased various upcoming SMART technologies including beach safety monitoring, GPTs and various grant funding streams to pilot these tools
- ⇒ Marine Biodiversity – provide guidance on marine biodiversity in Sydney Harbour including seagrass and their locations as well as various citizen science initiatives to improve biodiversity outcomes

### Sand Management Working Group

The SMWG continues to meet quarterly to identify and workshop key issues relating to beach management. In 2020/21 the group heard from several presenters including. These presentations have guided representatives on coastal processes, information availability and potential management strategies to management the ongoing threats posed by sea level rise and beach erosion.



## Shark Management Workshop

Throughout 2020/21 the SCCG has sought to provide council with the opportunity to be engaged on the NSW Government Shark Management Strategy. This included a discussion on workshop between DPI Fisheries and the SCCG's Technical Committee in October 2020 seeking feedback from councils on the design of the proposed public consultation process for the draft strategy. Issues raised by member Councils included a lack of clarity around the options, whether the NSW Government had budget to adopt new technologies, and timing for seeking feedback from communities.

Since then, DPI held an information in February 24 February 2021 with Mayors, Councillors and relevant staff from SCCG council. This session enabled councils to help promote further public consultation as recommended by the SCCG's Technical Committee in October 2020. Several councils passed motions to consider alternative shark mitigation measures and SCCG continues to promote engagement between State government and councils on decisions regarding shark management.

## GOAL 3: Advocacy



Provide a regional and cohesive voice representing Member Councils.

### Summary

Advocacy was a major focus for the SCCG in 2020-21, 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 2020-21

- ⇒ SCCG Submission – Shark Management Strategy – April 2021
- ⇒ SCCG Submission – Draft Design and Place SEPP – April 2021
- ⇒ SCCG Submission – Draft EPA Regulatory Strategy – March 2021
- ⇒ SCCG Submission – Draft NSW Water Strategy – March 2021
- ⇒ SCCG Submission – Coastal and Estuary Grant Program Priorities – March 2021
- ⇒ SCCG Submission – Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway – March 2021
- ⇒ SCCG Joint Submission – Draft Marine Estate Education Strategy – March 2021
- ⇒ SCCG Submission – Draft NSW Design Guidelines – February 2021
- ⇒ SCCG – Sydney Marine Park Proposal Update – January 2021
- ⇒ SCCG Submission – Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks – October 2020
- ⇒ SCCG Joint Submission with PRCG – Greater Sydney Open Space and Parklands – September 2020
- ⇒ SCCG Submission – Greener Places Design Guide – August 2020
- ⇒ SCCG Submission – Draft State Strategic Plan – A Vision for Crown Land – August 2020
- ⇒ SCCG Submission to the Minister for Local Government on Coastal Management Program – MEMA – July 2020
- ⇒ SCCG Submission – NSW Housing Strategy – July 2020

SCCG submissions are available at [www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/submissions/](http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/submissions/)

### Advocacy

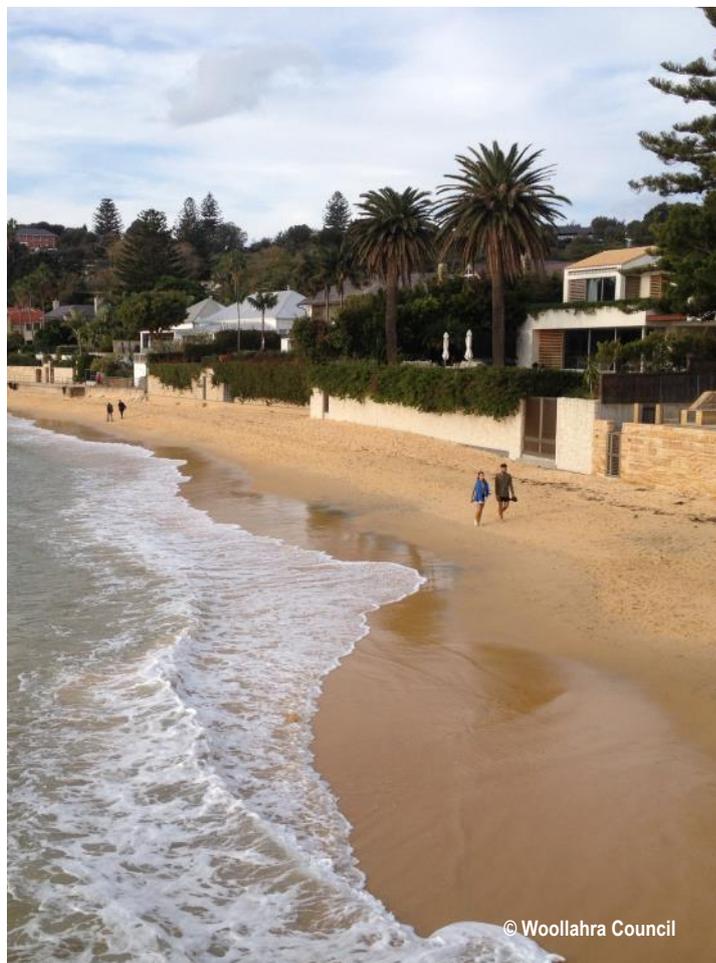
As part of the Annual Survey, the SCCG seeks feedback on how the SCCG is performing against our goal to provide a regional and cohesive voice representing our Member Councils and advocating for their interests.

- ⇒ In the survey, Of all respondents, 92% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that *“Overall, the SCCG is performing well at advocating on behalf of Member Councils”*
- ⇒ 90% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG submissions were comprehensive and of a high standard

## Coastal Management Programs

The Sydney Coastal Councils Group and Parramatta River Catchment Group were successful in obtaining a Stage 2 planning grant under the NSW Government's Coastal and Estuary Grants program. This is a first for the state's capital, with the NSW Government awarding \$274,000 to support 20 local councils joining forces to protect over 480 square kilometres of Sydney Harbour.

As identified by Minister for Local Government, Shelley Hancock "540 tonnes of harmful nutrients enter Sydney Harbour each year, as well as 340,000 tonnes of solids including soil and rubbish. The grant funding will help consolidate all urban stormwater data and enable individual councils to develop management actions to be considered in the CMP, in coordination with the management programs of state agencies".



## Advisory Committee—Building Capacity to Implement the 'Risk Based Framework

In 2017, the NSW Government released the Risk-based Framework for Considering Waterway Health Outcomes in Strategic Land-use Planning Decisions. The framework presents a structured approach that decision-makers, such as Councils, can use to help manage the impacts of land-use activities on the health of waterways in NSW. Since the release of the framework, it has been piloted in several Councils in NSW, including Northern Beaches Council, and recognized in the Greater Sydney Commission's district plans and the Marine Estate Management Authority's 10-year Strategy.

Action 1.2 of the MEMA's Stage 2 Implementation Plan focusses on building capacity for stakeholders to implement the framework through delivery of guidance materials, industry forums and an online portal. To achieve this, an advisory committee has been established. The SCCG Executive Officer, Sarah Joyce, sits on the committee and provides feedback on behalf of SCCG's members to ensure councils interests are represented.



## GOAL 4: Research



Identify and address current and emerging regional coastal issues.

### Summary

During 2020-21, SCCG continued to engage with our government and academic partners to further our knowledge and promote and distribute research outcomes to our member councils.

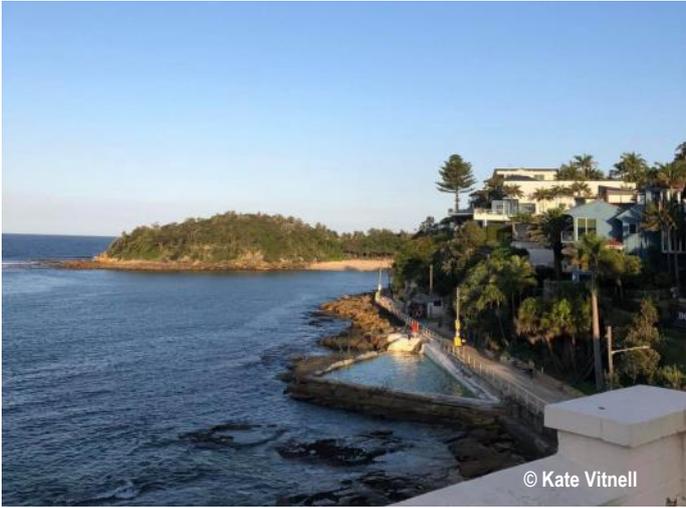
Highlights include:

- ⇒ Review of member councils Local Strategic Planning Statements and LEPs in relation to stormwater management
- ⇒ 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 grant applications and CMP development
- ⇒ Membership on the Network for Ecological Research on Artificial Light (NERAL)

### SMART Places Acceleration Program

The SCCG Secretariat in collaboration with the Parramatta River Catchment Group and CSIRO submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the NSW Government's Smart Places Acceleration Program which has been accepted to the next stage. The project involves deployment of smart technologies in four Sydney councils to assist in the management of stormwater including identifying hot spots of marine litter. It involves installing 60-80 of sensors in stormwater assets within the Greater Sydney Harbour catchment area coupled with camera traps to record floating litter along waterways. A business case is currently being developed in collaboration with EPA, as our co-partner.





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