



**SYDNEY COASTAL
COUNCILS GROUP**

2022-23 Annual Report

Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc.
www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au
info@sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au



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FROM THE CHAIR

As my second year as Chair of the Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG), I am pleased to see consistent strong and positive feedback from Member Councils on SCCG's capacity and collaboration programs and its advocacy work. I would also like to draw attention to some of the SCCG's key achievements this year.

Throughout 2022-23 the SCCG has continued to work towards a collaborative, effective and consistent approach to coastal and estuarine management between Local Government, State Agencies and other stakeholders. This has been achieved in several ways including the completion of Stage 2 of the Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program (CMP) and the works on the Greater Sydney Harbour Regional Litter Prevention Strategy along with the initiation of the Smarter Cleaner Sydney Harbour Project which is an exciting collaboration with CSIRO, Sydney Olympic Park Authority and the Parramatta River Catchment Group. All three projects seek to improve waterway health in one of the most iconic harbours in the world by reducing urban stormwater discharge and marine debris both of which are identified by the NSW Government as priority threats to the marine estate.

I'm also pleased to see the NSW Government's commitment to regularly engage with the SCCG through quarterly meetings set up with Sydney Water, Transport for NSW, NSW Coastal Council and the Department of Planning and Environment. I understand that these meetings have been highly valued by our members as it provides them with an opportunity to raise issues of concern, peer to peer learning, and to be engaged on each organisation's agenda.



Finally, I am proud of the number and breadth of submissions that were prepared during the 2022-23 period. Eleven advocacy submissions were produced in consultation with our nine member Councils on topics including shark meshing, NSW's Circular Economy, NSW Coastal Design Guidelines and the Review of the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act. It is also noted that the Annual Survey identifies that our advocacy work continues to be a priority for our members.

I would like to thank all those who have been involved in our various committees and supported the SCCG to ensure that continued successful outcomes were delivered this year. Thank you also to the SCCG Secretariat team for their dedication and hard work that supports member Councils create resilient and healthy coastal and estuarine environments for their communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Boyd', written in a cursive style.

Cr Jack Boyd
SCCG Chairperson



Image: Courtesy of Woollahra Council

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.

The 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 and led by an Executive 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 undertakes decision-making on specific strategic and governance matters. The Executive Committee for the 2022-23 representation are below:

Chairperson: Cr Jack Boyd, Sutherland Shire Council

Vice Chair: Cr Miranda Korzy, Northern Beaches Council

Treasurer: Mayor Paula Masselos, Waverley Council

Members: Deputy Mayor Scott Morrissey and Cr Heidi Lee Douglas, Bayside Council

Cr Dylan Griffiths, Inner West Council

Cr William Bourke and Cr Welch, North Sydney Council

Cr Kathy Neilson, Randwick Council

Cr John Moratelli, Willoughby Council

Cr Lucinda Regan, Woollahra 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.

Image: Randwick Council





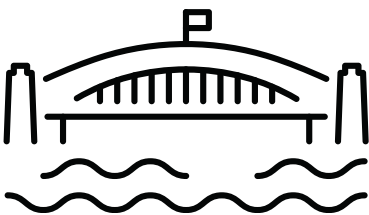
SCCG IN A SNAPSHOT

OUR WORK IN 2022-23

- Coordination of: **18** SCCG & Guest Presentations
- Involvement in: **50** External committees, meetings, workshops & events
- Facilitation of: **24** Internal committee meetings
- Advocacy via: **11** Comprehensive submissions

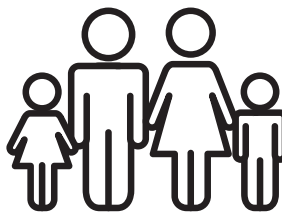
OUR REGION

Landscape



801.29km²
total land area
87 beaches/
swimming sites

Population



1.3 million
Sydneyiders across
9 LGA's

Economy



\$114 Billion GRP
19.9% of the NSW GRP



Image: Sydney Harbour, Source: Destination NSW

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The SCCG financial position for 2022-23 is provided below.

Total Income:	\$1,108,984
Total Assets:	\$1,143,004
Total Expenditure:	\$926,377
Total Liabilities:	\$516,473
Total Equity:	\$626,531

ANNUAL MEMBERS SURVEY SNAPSHOT

- 100% of SCCG members surveyed agreed that SCCG's letters and submissions prepared on behalf of member Councils were of a high standard.
- 100% of SCCG members surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that SCCG submissions were of a high standard
- 92% agreed or strongly agreed that the SCCG has built the capacity of their staff regarding coastal management and estuarine management.
- Presentations by experts, peers and state government representatives at meetings was identified as the most useful capacity building service that SCCG provides.
- 100% of SCCG members surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with SCCG's performance in relation to access to expert/government stakeholders, access to additional information, access to networking and relationship building, and capacity building benefits.

Image: Rockdale, Bayside Council, Courtesy of Dee Kramer



GOAL 1 - COLLABORATION

Facilitate cooperation between, and coordination of actions by Member Councils

SUMMARY

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

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Completion of Stage 2 of the Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program (CMP) which seeks to improve and sustain waterway health along with support to the Chair of the CMP to deliver a Recommendations Report to the NSW Government.
- Completion of the first year of the Greater Sydney Harbour Regional Litter Prevention Project in partnership with Parramatta River Catchment Group and delivered through \$100,000 funding from NSW EPA's Own It and Act: Round 7 Community Litter Grant funding stream.
- Implementation of the Smarter Cleaner Sydney Harbour Project which is funded under the NSW Government's SMART Places Acceleration Program Grant in collaboration with Parramatta River Catchment Group, Sydney Olympic Park Authority and CSIRO.
- SCCG's involvement in the Get the Site Right with other Councils and agencies across the Sydney region. This program saw a significant improvement in compliance at building sites compared to the previous year.
- Seagrass mapping updated and added to Transport for NSW Maritime's Deckee app to guide boat anchoring to avoid seagrasses.
- Continued quarterly meetings with the NSW Coastal Council to discuss issues, challenges and opportunities of coastal management programs.
- 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

ACTIVITIES

Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program

In September 2021, the SCCG was successful in securing a \$274,000 grant through the NSW Government's Coastal and Estuary Grants Program. This funding was used to complete Stage 2 of the Coastal Management Program which focussed on the impact of urban stormwater discharge on Greater Sydney Harbour. SCCG led the assessment in partnership with the Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) and 20 councils in the Greater Sydney Harbour catchment. It also involved working collaboratively with other government agencies including the Department of Planning and Environment, Sydney Water, Transport for NSW, EPA, NSW Coastal Council and Sydney Institute of Marine Science.

The outputs of Stage 2 were used by the Chair of the CMP Prof. Bruce Thom to develop a Recommendations Report to the NSW Government. This report called for changes to be made by the State to assist Councils and other stakeholders manage health of Greater Sydney Harbour. This report is currently awaiting NSW Government consideration. The SCCG is seeking to continue its role in progressing the CMP and is currently scoping the further stages.

Greater Sydney Harbour Regional Litter Prevention Strategy

The SCCG in collaboration with PRCG completed the first year of implementation of the Greater Sydney Harbour Regional Litter Prevention Strategy – For a Litter Free Greater Sydney with \$100,000 funding provided by the NSW EPA. The funds enabled employment of a Regional Litter Coordinator and delivery of the Strategy's recommendations which contributes to the NSW Government's target of 60% litter reduction by 2030 and 30% reduction in plastics items by 2025.

Through the project, Councils across Greater Sydney Harbour were engaged to participate in on-ground projects at key sites in each of the four sub-catchments, being Parramatta and Lane Cove Rivers, Port Jackson and Middle Harbour. On-ground projects involving Don't be a Tosser signage were carried out at litter hot spots. Results of Local Litter Checks showed reductions in littered items of 85%, 58% and 20% litter reduction at 3 signage sites, respectively.

School education and awareness sessions were conducted by external education providers to deliver sessions for schools in LGAs which are representative of the 3 sub-catchments. Participants Included 573 primary school students. The SCCG also hosted two community litter forums in partnership with the PRCG, an online forum and a catchment bus tour. Following the tour, 60% reporting increased understanding of the catchment impacts of litter.

Image: Sydney Harbour, Source: Inner West Council



Smarter Cleaner Sydney Harbour Project

The SCCG was successful in obtaining a grant application under the NSW Government's SMART Places Acceleration Program to deliver the Smarter Cleaner Sydney Harbour project which seeks to trial smart technologies designed to improve the management of stormwater and reduce marine litter entering our waterways. This project is a collaboration between SCCG, Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA), PRCG and the CSIRO.

This project commenced in December 2022 and has involved the installation of up to 25 sensors in stormwater assets across Sydney Olympic Park and five partner Councils. These sensors alert land managers when stormwater devices are at capacity and need emptying. This information assists asset managers make better informed decisions about the maintenance requirements of their assets and prevents litter spilling out into our iconic harbour,

The trial also involves the use of artificial intelligence (AI) supported technology and 40 cameras which record and identify floating litter in waterways. This information will assist Councils and SOPA better target litter prevention activities and infrastructure.

The trial is due for completion in June 2024.

Image: Northern Beaches Council Source: Department of Customer Service



Get the Site Right

The SCCG helped coordinate the eighth annual Get the Site Right Campaign in partnership with the PRCG, Cooks River Alliance, Georges River Keeper, WaterNSW, NSW EPA and NSW Department of Planning and Environment. The campaign targets erosion and sediment control on building sites with a particular focus this year on construction litter. The campaign aims to improve compliance with controls and raise awareness of the effects of sediment and litter laden runoff on our waterways.

All nine SCCG member councils participated in the month-long compliance and education campaign in May as well as a follow-up 'blitz week' in October. During May, SCCG member councils inspected 279 development sites, issued about \$61,000 in fines.

Importantly, compliance rates more than doubled during the month-long campaign from 29% on the first inspection to 61% on the second inspection. This was an improvement in overall compliance from last year but is around the average long-term compliance rate.

Seagrass mapping to guide boat anchoring

The SCCG has successfully advocated to Transport for NSW, working with DPI Fisheries for better access to seagrass mapping for the purpose of informing boaters about anchoring in appropriate places that will not impact seagrass beds. Whilst there were links to mapping, it was not in a useful form to guide anchoring and the format and scale of the seagrass mapping has been largely updated for the purpose of boater information. The improved mapping is available through Transport for NSW's Deckee app.

Image: Woollahra Council



GOAL 2 - CAPACITY BUILDING

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

SUMMARY

The SCCG continued to build Member Council and stakeholder capacity through a range of forums. Twelve capacity building meetings with member Council staff were delivered through the Sand Management Working Group, Technical Committee and Coastal Management Program Leaders meetings. Eighteen expert presentations and/or peer-to-peer learning presentations were also made available to members through these forums.

MEETINGS - 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 2022/23:

- **Marine Biodiversity** - included presentations on the effects of chemical contaminants on marine ecosystem functioning and the impacts of restoring and rehabilitating marine ecosystems by University of NSW and the Marine Debris Threats and Risk Assessment by NSW Department of Environment and Planning.
- **Coastal and Estuarine Hazards** - included presentations on urban planning for climate change from University of Canberra and progress of the Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program by the SCCG.
- **SMART and Sustainable Cities** - included presentations from Manly Hydraulics Laboratory on its underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle and its applications for coastal and marine research and management and Parramatta City Council presented on their Smart City and Innovation Strategy and sensor network
- **Water Quality** - Sydney Water presented on water quality monitoring at swim sites and Department of Planning and Environment presented on the NSW Government's Water Quality Objectives.



MEETINGS - Sand Management Working Group

The SMWG continues to meet quarterly to identify and workshop key issues relating to beach management. In 2022/23 the group heard several presentations on the following:

- Stockton Beach Mass Sand Nourishment project by Department of Planning and Environment
- Everything you ever wanted to know about Manly Beach by Water Research Laboratory
- Warilla Beach Rock Revetment Renewal Project by Shell Harbour Council
- National-scale beach erosion early warning system by Water Research Laboratory
- Long term monitoring at Bengello Beach by Uni NSW
- North Cronulla Beach works by Sutherland Shire Council
- Port Hacking dredging and beach nourishment project by Sutherland Shire Council
- Long term instability of four estuaries on the NSW coast by Angus Gordon, group member

These presentations have guided representatives on coastal processes, information availability and potential management strategies for the ongoing threats posed by sea level rise and beach erosion.

Image: Port Hacking River, Courtesy of Sutherland Shire Council



GOAL 3 - ADVOCACY

Provide a regional and cohesive voice representing Member Councils.

SUMMARY

Advocacy was a major focus for the SCCG in 2022-23, taking three main forms: i) formal submissions to government, ii) participation in relevant external committees and/or advisory bodies and iii) direct communications / correspondence with government agencies, elected representatives, and Ministers. The SCCG saw the development of over 11 advocacy submissions to the NSW Government on issues that relate to the SCCG's strategic objectives.

SUBMISSIONS

- SCCG Submission – Review of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016, April 2023
- SCCG Shark Mitigation Advocacy Statement, March 2023
- SCCG Submission – Driving NSW Circular Economy Discussion Paper, December 2022
- SCCG Submission – Draft terms of reference for IPART to monitor the NSW Biodiversity Credits Market, November 2022
- SCCG Submission – draft EPA Climate Change Policy and Action Plan, November 2022
- SCCG Submission – Six Cities Region Discussion Paper, October 2022
- SCCG Position Statement for the 2023 NSW State Elections, September 2022
- SCCG Submission – draft NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2022, September 2022
- SCCG Submission – Proposed Associations Inc. Regulation 2022, July 2022
- SCCG Letter – Request to Minister Tuckerman re: Future Directions Statement, July 2022.

SCCG submissions are available at www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/submissions/



WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO SAND MANAGEMENT

The SCCG has continued to advocate for councils regarding access to sources of sand for beach nourishment and the need for a whole of government approach, in recognition of the support needed by councils in managing beaches.

As well as beaches being of value to residents, they are major attractions for tourism and support coastal economies. In 2016, the total value of Sydney's coastal beaches was estimated at \$1.3 billion per annum. These values go beyond the jurisdiction of councils and it should not be up to councils alone to maintain beaches.

Beaches are subject to periodic loss of sand from storms and require renourishment; sand may eventually return naturally but the time taken is extending due to increasing frequency and severity of storms. Climate change and sea level rise create tipping points now and increasingly into the future where sand loss from storms will not return to beaches.

Whilst there are a variety of sand sources such as land-based, nearshore sources and large offshore sources, the approval processes to access and deposit sand on beaches are complex and lengthy, adding time and cost to councils.

QUALITY OF OUR SUBMISSIONS

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.

Consistent with last year, 100% agreed that the SCCG's submissions were of a high standard and that of all the activities that the SCCG undertakes, advocacy is the most important to member Councils.



GOAL 4 - RESEARCH

Identify and address current and emerging regional coastal issues.

SUMMARY

During 2022-23, 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:

- Participation in Project Restore, under the NSW Government's Seabirds to Seascapes program. The project involves restoration sites for Posidonia seagrass and kelp forests and installation of Living Seawalls and artificial reefs. Outcomes of the research will inform restoration projects in other locations.
- Participation in Botany Bay (Gamay) project for integrating management with ecosystem ecology to ensure a sustainable future for the bay. The project will synthesise risks and threats, integrate traditional knowledge and develop an ecosystem model to inform specific management needs. SCCG members in Botany Bay include Randwick, Bayside and Sutherland are expected to benefit from the research outcomes.
- Research partnership with the CSIRO through the delivery of the Smarter Cleaner Sydney Harbour Project to better understand the quantity and type of marine litter entering our waterways.
- Continued facilitation of member Councils engagement with academic partners through the Grants Committee, Technical Committee and Sand Management Working Group.

Image: Shelley Beach, Courtesy of Northern Beaches Council

