



Reference: 018-24
Your reference: MD24/3280

23 September 2024

The Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC
Minister for the Environment
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister

Re: Future of the NSW Beachwatch Program

The Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG) is seeking a response to our last letter dated 13 May 2024 (009-24) regarding the future of the NSW Government's Beachwatch program and to advise that your Department is yet to consult with our member Councils on this matter as committed to in your letter dated 3/5/24 (MD 24/3280).

In our recent correspondence to you, we reiterated our member councils' unwillingness to financially contribute to the NSW Beachwatch Program in part because councils do not have a legal responsibility for water quality monitoring. We believe it should remain a fully funded state program.

We understand that NSW Beachwatch Program staff from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) have recently reached out to councils regarding the Department's development of a swim site prioritisation tool. We have been advised by DCCEEW that this work is being undertaken separately to consultation with councils on the future of NSW Beachwatch Program that you announced on the 13 May 2024.

In your 13 May 2024 letter, you advised that consultation on the future of the Beachwatch program has been extended by 12 months and DCCEEW would be in contact shortly. However, to date, no further consultation with Councils or SCCG has occurred. As Councils will shortly commence budget planning for the 2025/26 financial year, it would be appreciated if you could please advise when you expect consultation to commence and the form it will take. We would also appreciate a response to our substantive concerns regarding legal responsibilities and Sydney Water's role raised in our previous correspondences.

Finally, we would also like to follow-up on our request to Mr Floro from your office, on obtaining a copy of the 2021 independent assurance review that was used as a basis for the government's decision to seek financial contributions from Sydney councils.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Joyce
SCCG Executive Director