



Outer Sydney Harbour CMP Stage 2 – 4

Factsheet –Scope

THE IMPORTANCE OF MANAGING SYDNEY HARBOUR

Sydney Harbour is one of the world's most iconic urban waterways. It is highly valued both locally and internationally for its beautiful beaches and parks, numerous recreational opportunities and significant Aboriginal and European heritage. The harbour also plays a vital role as a working port, a premier tourist destination and a haven for diverse marine life.

Yet, like many urban waterways, however, the harbour faces threats such as stormwater pollution, sewage overflows, litter and coastal inundation. These threats are likely to intensify with continued population growth, urban expansion and the impacts of climate change.

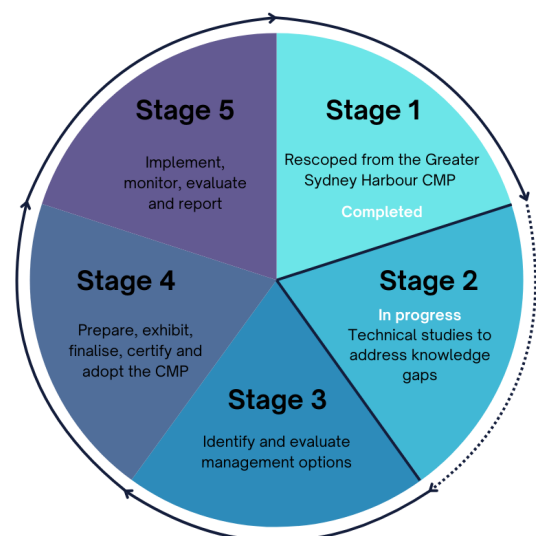
To address these threats and protect the harbour's values, the Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG) is preparing a coastal management program (CMP) for outer Sydney Harbour. This initiative is being undertaken in partnership with local councils and state agencies, with financial assistance from the NSW Coastal and Estuary Grants Program.

The CMP will provide a long-term direction for the coordinated management of the coastal zone in outer Sydney Harbour. Through a series of targeted actions, the CMP aims to enhance ecological health, improve public amenity and strengthen resilience to coastal hazards, ensuring the harbour remains a vibrant and sustainable asset for generations to come.

A STAGED APPROACH TO COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

In 2016, the NSW Government introduced the NSW Coastal Management Framework to support thriving and resilient coastal communities. CMPs are the primary means of implementing the framework in accordance with the [Coastal Management Act 2016](#) and the [NSW Coastal Management Manual](#) in order to provide for the coordinated management of coasts and estuaries.

CMPs are prepared and implemented based on a staged approach.



Stage 1 was completed by the Greater Sydney Local Land Services in 2018 as reported in the Greater Sydney Harbour Estuary Coastal Management Program Scoping Study.

Stage 2-4 is being undertaken now by SCCG and consultants. It will conclude with a CMP report that is expected to be adopted by council partners, supported by state agencies and certified by the Minister for the Environment.

Stage 5 will involve the ongoing implementation of actions listed in the certified CMP.

STUDY AREA FOR THE CMP

Sydney Harbour is a drowned river estuary stretching from the tidal limits of the Parramatta River and its tributaries to the ocean entrance between North and South Head.

Sydney Harbour can be divided into the inner harbour comprising Parramatta River and Lane Cove River to the west, and the outer harbour extending eastwards from the confluence of the Parramatta River and Lane Cove River to encompass Port Jackson, Middle Harbour and North Harbour.



The study area for the Outer Sydney Harbour CMP encompasses the coastal use area within:

- the local government areas (LGAs) of City of Sydney, Ku-ring-gai, Mosman, North Sydney, Northern Beaches, Willoughby and Woollahra
- Sydney Harbour National Park, including harbour islands, and Garigal National Park
- Sydney Water's area of operations

The study area comprises a variety of built and natural foreshore environments. These include sandy beaches, rocky foreshores, mangrove wetlands and saltmarsh, littoral rainforest and coastal cliffs. It also encompasses public assets and private development affected by coastal processes such as seawalls, open space, roads, buildings and utility services.

The CMP will also consider the catchment that drains to the harbour to the extent that any actions proposed for the catchment are able to benefit the coastal zone, help achieve the management objectives for coastal management areas and the objects of the *Coastal Management Act 2016*, and assist in addressing key coastal management issues. This includes actions within that part of the Waverley LGA that drains to the harbour.

CMP SCOPE AND TIMELINE

CMP Stage 1 - Scoping Study (Completed)

A CMP [Stage 1 Scoping Study for Greater Sydney Harbour](#) was completed in 2018. Drawing from a review of available data and from workshops with local councils and state agencies, the study identified the key values, threats and management issues for the harbour, identified knowledge gaps, developed a draft vision statement for the harbour and proposed a plan for progressing the CMP.

CMP Stage 2 – Risks, Vulnerabilities and Opportunities (Underway)

CMP Stage 2 commenced in mid-2025. Following additional data collection, studies were initiated into stormwater and sewage pollution, coastal hazards affecting natural assets, and coastal inundation with sea level rise affecting public assets and private property. A comprehensive risk register will be developed. Opportunities for coastal management will be identified.

CMP Stage 3 – Option Identification and Evaluation

CMP Stage 3 will identify and evaluate coastal management options. These include site-specific or LGA-specific options for managing natural coastal assets, preventing litter and improving water quality. Regional frameworks will also be scoped and developed covering seawalls, coastal adaptation, monitoring and governance.

CMP Stage 4 – CMP Preparation, Finalisation, Exhibition and Certification

CMP Stage 4 will involve writing up the most feasible and cost-effective options into a business plan and draft CMP report. The draft CMP report will be publicly exhibited, updated to reflect community feedback and finalised. The final CMP report will be submitted to the Minister for the Environment for certification. This is expected to occur by the end of 2027.

CMP Stage 5 – Implement, Monitor, Evaluate and Report

CMP Stage 5 will involve progressively implementing actions described in the certified CMP report. Partner councils will be eligible to apply for grant funding under the NSW Coastal and Estuary Grants Program for selected actions.

USEFUL LINKS – GREATER SYDNEY HARBOUR CMP

[Sydney Harbour Estuary Processes Study 2018](#)

[Sydney Harbour Coastal Zone Management Plan – Scoping Study 2015](#)

[Sydney Harbour Water Quality Improvement Plan 2015](#)

[Sydney Harbour – A Systematic Review of the Science 2014](#)