

FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Coastal Currents – our first edition for 2015. It's shaping up to be a big year. With the State election held in March, and outcomes from the reforms to coastal management and Local Government anticipated later this year, we expect some significant changes to our operating environment. It's very timely then that we're reviewing our Strategic Plan and setting our strategic directions to lead sustainable coastal management for the next four years and beyond.

We started the year with our annual summer activities program, *Summerama*. This year's program saw over 6,000 participants attend more than 60 events held across 12 participating Councils. Now in its 12th year, *Summerama* aims to enhance

community awareness of sustainable coastal management through fun and engaging activities. Check out our update on p. 2 for details.

We're also making headway with our biodiversity project, *Sydney's Salty Communities*. Following a competitive application process in March, we'll soon be issuing grants to fill research and policy gaps, provide key resources and undertake on-ground planting, pest control and rehabilitation of remnant coastal vegetation communities and key habitats across Sydney. Check out our update below for details.

I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter.

Cr Geoff Stevenson
SCCG Chairperson



SYDNEY COASTAL COUNCILS GROUP

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The SCCG was established in 1989 to promote co-ordination between Member Councils on environmental issues relating to sustainable management of the urban coastal environment.

The Group consists of 15 Member Councils adjacent to Sydney marine and estuarine environments and associated waterways in Sydney; Botany, Hornsby, Leichhardt, Manly, Mosman, North Sydney, Pittwater, Randwick, Rockdale, Sutherland, Sydney, Warringah, Waverley, Willoughby and Woollahra. The Group collectively represents over 1.4 million Sydneysiders.

SCCG PROJECTS UPDATE

Sydney Harbour Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) Scoping Study

Drawing upon a literature review and stakeholder consultation, the consultant has prepared the draft scoping study which has been reviewed by the project team. The project team have requested certain revisions to the draft scoping study prior to its despatch to the project advisory committee for comment.



For more information on the project, visit:

www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/Sydney_Harbour_CZMP

Sydney's Salty Communities – Turning the Tide on Blue+Green Carbon



A grant development workshop held in March provided a forum for Council officers to canvass opportunities for joint work and hear best practice on community involvement, and monitoring and evaluation techniques. The primary grant round for Sydney's Salty Communities closed 30 March 2015. These are being assessed by members of our Expert Reference Group and successful applicants will be notified in May 2015. A supplementary round will be available mid-2015 which will build on the biodiversity

adaptation tool we are developing with the help of the Salty Working Group and our research partner CSIRO.

Our new project officer, Duncan Webb, started with the program in late March. He will provide valuable support to grant recipients and has already set up some great grant management systems. Much has been done producing a regional biodiversity map for Sydney's Salty Communities and we will be consulting with our working group and Local Land Services over the coming months to consolidate this. We are also near completion with the Literature, Data and Practice Review which we look forward to sharing soon.

Visit the project web page for more information:

www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/salty_communities



SCCG Web Sites

www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au
www.summerama.com.au
www.walkingcoastalsydney.com.au
www.monitor2manage.com.au

Printed on recycled paper

MATTERS OF INTEREST

Summerama 2015



What a Summer(ama) we had! The 60 Summerama events run across 12 of our Member Councils in January attracted more than 6,000 participants. Activities ranged from rock pool rambles, snorkelling tours and beach safety talks to craft workshops, film screenings and guided bushwalks.

We also held our annual Summerama Photo Competition, with the generous support of our prize sponsors, Sydney Sea Life Aquarium, Sydney Wild Life Zoo and Captain Cook Cruises. Check out our Facebook page for pictures and highlights of the program.

Now in its 12th year, Summerama has been successfully connecting Councils and their communities to enhance awareness of the value of Sydney's coastline and the need to manage it sustainably. The Program is run by Member Councils, with the support of our sponsors Landcare Australia and Coastcare. Visit www.summerama.com.au or check out our Facebook page www.facebook.com/Summerama

Policy Recommendations to political parties contesting the 2015 NSW Election



In the lead up to the NSW Election in March, we prepared a submission to political parties contesting the election identifying eight key policy priorities for coastal management in NSW over the next four years.

The purpose of the submission was twofold - to communicate our position in

relation to the key issues identified and to elicit responses from each political party on those issues. We received responses from the Liberal Party, the Labor Party, The Greens, the Christian Democratic Party and the Australian Democrats.

The responses have been compiled into a report and can be viewed along with our original submission on our website at www.sydneycostalouncils.com.au/submissions.

These responses provide a benchmark for future coastal advocacy activities and we will monitor and evaluate the newly elected Government's performance against our recommendations.

SCCG Strategic Plan 2015-2019

Following an extensive review in 2014, we are now finalising our new Strategic Plan for the period 2015-2019. This four-year document sets out the strategic direction for the Group and provides a framework to guide our activities. We will be consulting with our members on the draft Plan over the coming months and hope to release the final Plan in mid-2015.

SCCG Annual Survey

Over December and January we conducted our Annual Survey of Member Council delegates. The Survey is designed to gather feedback on our performance and the continuing and future needs of Member Councils. Results assist us to identify ways to enhance our support and tailor activities.

We presented the results to the Full Group and Technical Committee earlier in the year and they have helped to inform the drafting of our new Strategic Plan. We will continue to integrate this feedback into our work in 2015 and beyond.

2015 Funding Guide now available

Our 2015 Funding Guide is now available. The Guide is produced and updated annually to assist Member Councils and coastal managers identify funding opportunities to support the management and protection of Sydney's coastal and estuarine environments. The 2015 edition includes over 60 funding programs as well as award opportunities for Member Councils to present their outstanding achievements.

To download the Guide, visit: http://www.sydneycostalouncils.com.au/Funding_Guide

Happy Beaches Competition

On 21 March, a unique nation-wide competition was launched to find Australia's saddest beach. The winning beach will be blitzed from sad to happy with the help of the Happy Beaches' Expert Panel, which includes lead coastal academics and environmentalists. The competition is designed to connect experts from a range of coastal environmental disciplines with communities who need help managing beach issues.



To enter the competition coastal communities need to enter their sad beach story to Australia's Happy Beaches competition at www.happybeaches.org. Applications close on Monday 20 April 2015.

COASTAL NEWS

Stage 2 Coastal Reforms

Announced in November 2014, the Stage 2 Coastal Reforms have three key elements:

- replacing the current legislation with new coastal management legislation - a proposed *Coastal Management Act*
- arrangements to better support council decision making, including a decision support framework, a new coastal management manual and improved technical advice
- funding and financing for coastal management.

Following stakeholder workshops in November and December 2014, the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) are developing the new legislation and the Manual for Local Government. A draft Coastal Management Bill (exposure draft) is expected to be available for public consultation in the middle of the year.

For more information visit: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/coasts/coastreforms.htm>

Public consultation on establishment of national parks



The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is considering opportunities to improve the process for creating new national parks and reserves in NSW. The NPWS acquires land for the establishment of new national parks through various means

such as the transfer of other public land, the voluntary sale or transfer of private land, bequests and donations, or through biodiversity offsets. Land acquisition is necessary to achieve the objectives of *the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

In response to a call for feedback, we prepared a submission supporting the conservation values identified by NPWS, but calling for specific targets to expand and enhance the national parks estate. We also recommended improvements to the socio-economic assessment undertaken as part of the establishment process, and the level and nature of community involvement.

Our submission is available at: www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/submissions

For more information on the review, visit <https://engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/establishing-national-parks>

Review of Sydney Water Licences



The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) is conducting an end of term review of

Sydney Water's operating licence. The review will inform a new operating licence for the period 2015-2020. IPART is considering ways the licence can be amended to improve Sydney Water's operational efficiency and reduce costs for customers, while maintaining appropriate service standards.

A draft operating licence was released for consultation in February. Submissions on the draft licence closed on 7 April. Final recommendations are due to the Government in May, with the new operating licence to commence from 1 July 2015. For more information, visit: http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home/Industries/Water/Reviews/Licensing_-_Sydney_Water_Corporation/End_of_Term_Review_of_Sydney_Waters_Operating_Licence_2010_-_2015

In a separate process, the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is undertaking a statutory review of the Environment Protection Licences held by Sydney Water for the operation of its sewage treatment systems. Through these licences, the EPA regulates both Sydney Water's sewage treatment plant discharges and discharges from the sewage reticulation system. These licences specify environmental performance requirements, generally negotiated with Sydney Water, taking into account factors such as the likely impact of activity on the environment including the surrounding environmental conditions and best available technology.

Written submissions on the review are welcome until **Friday 1 May 2015**. We are preparing a submission to the review. For more information visit: <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/licensing/sydney-water.htm>

National Review of Environmental Regulation

On 19 March, the Australian Government released the Interim Report of the National Review of Environmental Regulation. The Review is focusing on identifying unworkable, contradictory or incompatible regulation and seeking opportunities to harmonise and simplify regulations. A wide range of matters in seven key themes have been assessed, ranging from the listing process for threatened species, to simplifying the environmental aspects of land use planning, to integrated waste management.

The Interim Report has been developed in conjunction with states and territories. It identifies some current themes in environmental regulatory reform, and some areas where further work could be undertaken.

For more information, visit: <http://www.environment.gov.au/node/38549>

COASTAL NEWS cont.

Review of Australia's emissions reduction targets



The Climate Change Authority is reviewing Australia's greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals as part of a

special review requested by the Federal Minister for the Environment. The Authority will build on its [Targets and Progress Review](#), and will publish draft recommendations on Australia's targets for public consultation in April.

It is understood the Government plans to announce Australia's future emission goals by mid-2015. It has [established a taskforce](#) led by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to propose targets. The Authority's review will provide additional, independent advice to assist government decision making.

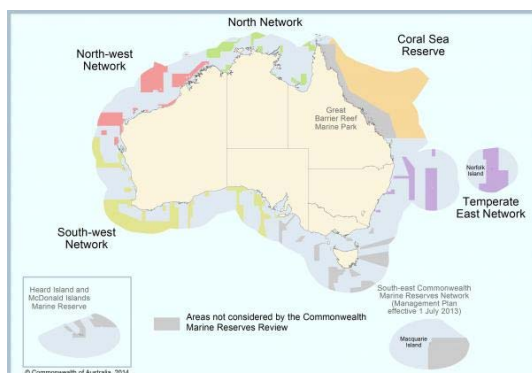
Over the course of the review (which will conclude in June 2016), the Authority will also assess whether or not Australia should have an emissions trading scheme and the actions Australia should take following the international climate negotiations in Paris in December 2015. For more information, visit: <http://climatechangeauthority.gov.au/Node/295>

Commonwealth Marine Reserves Review

Submissions have recently closed on the Commonwealth Marine Reserves Review. In 2014, the Commonwealth Government set aside a suite of management plans for Australia's marine reserves. The plans were to come into effect in July 2014, but instead will be replaced by a new set of plans to be prepared following the Marine Reserves Review currently underway. The Government states it is delivering on its election commitment for a 'More Competitive and Sustainable Fisheries Sector'.

We completed the Commonwealth Marine Reserves Review Online Survey in March. Our responses highlighted the need for integrated management of the reserve network, underpinned by an intergovernmental National Marine Strategy.

For more information on the review, visit: <http://www.marinereservesreview.gov.au/about>



Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Blue Star Sustainability Awards

The Blue Star Sustainability Awards are Keep NSW Beautiful's new sustainability awards program. The Blue Stars recognise and celebrate the hard work of NSW citizens who promote responsible environmental management in their local area.

Short form submissions are due 20 May 2015. For more information, visit: <http://knswb.org.au/our-programs/the-blue-stars/>



Environment and Conservation Grants - The Ian Potter Foundation

Through its Environment & Conservation program area, the Ian Potter Foundation supports urban and regional communities to live sustainably, and preserve biodiversity, in the face of challenges such as land degradation, limited water resources and climate change. Landscape-scale programs that work to protect areas of high conservation value are also a priority.

EOIs open 30 March to 11 May 2015. For more information, visit: <http://www.ianpotter.org.au/environment-conservation>

Fenner Conferences on the Environment - Australian Academy of Science (AAS)

The AAS conducts a series of environmental conferences on the environment and conservation issues in Australia and its environs. The purpose of the conferences is to bring together those with relevant scientific, administrative and policy expertise to consider current environmental and conservation problems in Australia.

Funding of up to \$10,000 is provided to support organisers of the Conference. EOIs close 15 June 2015. For more information, visit: <https://www.science.org.au/research-conferences>

