

COASTAL CURRENTS SPRING 2012

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SYDNEY COASTAL COUNCILS GROUP ED 65



FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the Spring edition of Coastal Currents. It's a busy time for Local Government at the moment with the appointment of new councillors after the September elections, and new announcements in relation to the NSW Coastal Reforms and the NSW Planning Review, just to name a few. These are discussed on pages three and four.

Congratulations to all Councillors on their election or re-election and I am looking forward to welcoming new as well as re-elected delegates at our Full Group meeting on 8 December, where we will address the SCCG's initiatives and activities and determine a new Executive

Committee.

I am pleased to report that the Boundaries and Barriers Forum on 14 August and the Mapping and Responding to Coastal Inundation Project Launch on 4 October were a big success.

On behalf of the Group, I would like to extend a big thank you to Wendy McMurdo, our departing Chairperson, for her fantastic contribution and representation. Wendy departs the SCCG after several terms of support for the activities of the group. We wish her well in her future endeavours.

Clr Cathy Griffin
SCCG Interim Chairperson

SCCG PROJECTS UPDATE

Launch: Mapping and Responding to Coastal Inundation Project

Date: 4 October 2012

This Project, a partnership between the SCCG and CSIRO, mapped areas of Sydney at risk of sea level rise, utilising sophisticated modelling to determine risk and assist develop consistent model planning and management responses.

There were three key outputs, all of which were released at the launch:

1. A set of high resolution hydrodynamic model simulations incorporating storm tide return level estimates and sea level rise considerations.
2. An audit of sea level rise, coastal erosion and inundation legislation and policy.
3. The development of community risk disclosure information and corresponding community and stakeholder education program for Member Councils.

This project was funded by the Australian and NSW Governments under the Natural Disaster Mitigation Program.

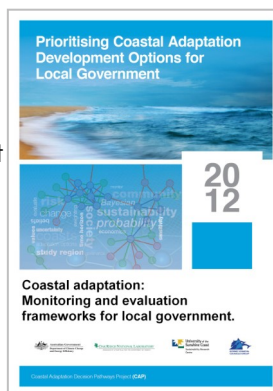
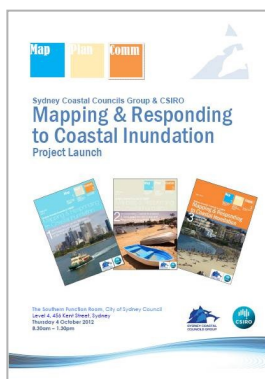
The launch addressed the project methodology and deliverables, with presentations delivered by Ms Rachel Walmsley from the NSW EDO, Dr Matt Inman, Dr Felix Lipkin and Anne Leitch from CSIRO and Kirston Gerathy from HWL Ebsworth Law Firm. There was also a Panel Discussion that provided the opportunity for Member Councils to ask questions regarding the project outcomes and materials.

If you would like more information, please see the project page www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/Project/Mapping_and_Responding_to_Coastal_Inundation

Forum: Multi-Criteria Approaches to Adaptive Coastal Development Project

Date: 6 September

Dr Ben Preston, the research leader from Oak Ridge National Laboratory (USA) visited Australia to present his latest work on the Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) Project. The SCCG organised three forums: the Sunshine Coast, Bega Valley and Sydney respectively. Two project team members, Dr Dana Thomsen and Professor Tim Smith, from the University of the Sunshine Coast also presented their work developing an adaptation Monitoring and Evaluation framework. Each forum had lively discussion with good suggestions to enhance the tools and deliverables.



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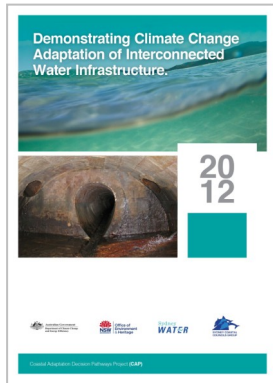
The SCCG was established in 1989 to promote co-ordination between Member Councils on environmental issues relating to sustainable management of the urban coastal environment.

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 represent over 1.4 million Sydneysiders.



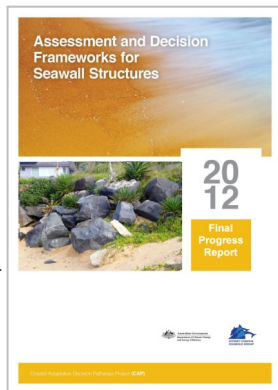
Demonstrating Climate Change Adaptation for Interconnected Water Infrastructure

Capacity building workshops for participants and stakeholders in August provided excellent feedback to the consultants to refine the tools and reports. The main outputs are the "User Guide" and "Interactive PDF", designed to lead users through all the stages in developing a Flexible Adaptation Pathway for interconnected water infrastructure. The tools break the process down into manageable steps and encourage an iterative approach where action and revision allow progress and learning without being stymied by the apparent complexity of the task. Integral to the process is the need for monitoring and evaluation to review progress and to monitor the drivers of change.



Assessment and Decision Frameworks for Existing Seawall Structures

A peer review workshop was held in August to discuss the technical aspects of the economic appraisal method developed to capture the full range of values to be considered in relation to seawalls. The consultant's report has added depth and useful outputs for assisting Local Government officers in managing the small, often undocumented seawalls along the foreshore. This legacy is a problem for Local Government and one of the priorities for this project is to raise awareness of the issue and, where Councils own the seawall, to promote the integration of these structures into Councils' asset management plans. Bringing such seawalls into the normal business of Councils is important to provide appropriate management and planning. The outputs the SCCG will deliver shortly include pro-forma Assessment Sheets, and information on new processes to map and characterise existing structures.



To read more about the CAP projects see www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/sites/default/files/cap_newsletter_october.pdf

Becoming Social

This SCCG Project will increase knowledge and skills in the use of social



NEWS IN BRIEF

Summerama is just around the corner! Summerama Champions from participating Member Councils have already started organising some great activities, with snorkel tours, bird watching, wetland touring, sustainable arts and crafts and the Eureka Prize Winner Dr Rob Brander presenting his Science of the Surf talk on the agenda. There will be lots to keep you busy during January; stay tuned for more information.



media as a policy development and relationship tool to engage, consult, and educate communities in relation to coastal environmental policy development and management issues. The Project is guided and informed by a Steering Committee comprised of social media, environment, Local Government and other specialists. A productive and inspiring inaugural meeting was held recently and the Committee is now reviewing social media research identified with a view to appointing an expert to address other dimensions necessary to underpin the Project.

Coastal Vulnerability to Multiple Inundation Sources Project (COVERMAR)

The SCCG have partnered with the University of New South Wales Australia - Pacific Tsunami Research Centre & Natural Hazards Research Laboratory (UNSW APTRC) and are undertaking a research project addressing Coastal Vulnerability to Multiple Inundation Sources (COVERMAR). The project will develop a multi-hazard tool to assess the vulnerability of buildings and critical infrastructure to extreme marine inundations caused by both storm surges and tsunamis. Inundation scenarios will be simulated using state-of-the-art numerical models, under present and predicted future climate conditions, and tested at three NSW study sites.

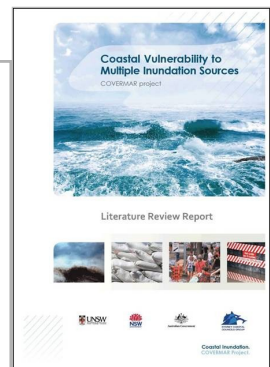
The project is coordinated by the SCCG and carried out by Dr. Filippo Dall'Osso and Assoc. Prof. Dale Dominey-Howes from UNSW APTRC. It builds upon the project "A Method for Assessment the Vulnerability of Buildings to Catastrophic (Tsunami) Marine Flooding".

If you are interested in this Project, be sure to read the COVERMAR Project Literature Review Report. The report comprehensively reviews extreme inundation events in the context of risk, hazard, vulnerability and exposure and the NSW policy framework on coastal and flood risk.

We'd like to congratulate Filippo Dall'osso for receiving a *People's Choice* award for his Project poster at the 2012 National Coastal Management Conference held in Brisbane.

If you would like to read the COVERMAR Literature Review, go to:

www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/sites/default/files/COVER_MAR_literature_review.pdf



MATTERS OF INTEREST

The Sydney Institute of Marine Science (SIMS) Sydney Harbour Research Project

SIMS is developing a multidisciplinary research project to identify, preserve and enhance the resilience of species and habitats in Sydney Harbour with high ecosystem and conservation value. A key output will be the creation of a publicly available central database of the species and habitat data. This will enhance the capacity of stakeholders to make key management decisions regarding the Harbour as well as providing an invaluable resource to educators.

SIMS is aiming to engage a large cross-section of the Sydney community in data collection and observations.

CAPACITY BUILDING

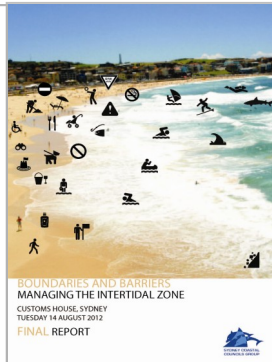
Boundaries and Barriers Forum Managing the Intertidal Zone

What an enlightening day our 14 August Forum was with presentations ranging from Council community engagement strategies to challenges experienced by Rangers on a daily basis to the varied roles played by State agencies. It was great to hear the multi-faceted experiences of foreshore managers and other stakeholders.

If you would like to know more, please visit

www.sydneycostalouncils.com.au/Boundaries_and_Barriers_Forum

for the Final Report and Speakers' presentations.



SCCG SUBMISSIONS, ADVOCACY, GRANTS AND AWARDS

Independent Local Government Review Panel

The NSW Minister for Local Government has appointed a panel to investigate and identify options for governance models, structural arrangements and boundary changes for Local Government via a four-stage consultation process:

1. Identifying key issues and exploring ideas (July-September 2012)
2. Options for change (October 2012 – January 2013)
3. Future Directions (February – May 2013)
4. Final report (June – July 2013)

The Panel has released its first paper – *Strengthening Your Community*.

(www.localgovernmentreview.nsw.gov.au/Index.asp?areaindex=LGR&index=50&acode=YS&mi=1)

The Panel invited submissions from Regional Organisations of Councils addressing the role of ROCs and how roles can be strengthened. We have taken advantage of this invitation to make a submission on how we can enhance our activities relating to sustainable coastal management.

NSW Government Planning Review Green Paper

On 14 June 2012 the NSW Government released *A New Planning System for NSW – Green Paper* (www.planningreview.nsw.gov.au/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=amJqcsb0Y0Q%3D&tabid=87) broadly outlining its proposed changes to the planning system. The changes centre on the following key areas:

1. Community participation
2. Upfront planning
3. Streamlining assessments
4. Linking planning and infrastructure delivery
5. Delivery mechanisms and responsibilities
6. Access to information

We are making a submission focused upon coastal management and related hazard and environmental protection issues. Coastal management is a key planning area and will be the subject of a specific NSW Planning Policy. Unfortunately, no such policy is currently available for consultation and comment.

We look forward to the opportunity of making a substantive contribution on this Policy once it is available.

NSW Sea Level Rise Policy Statement Coastal Protection Amendment Bill 2012 NSW Coastal Reforms

On 8 September 2012 (the date of Local Government elections when Councils were in 'caretaker mode'), without notice or proper consultation, the Special Minister of State, Hon Chris Hartcher MP announced that the Government will remove the need for councils to use state-wide sea level rise projections and allow land-owners to place sandbags on their property and for up to two years. The *Coastal Protection Amendment Bill 2012* giving effect to this announcement was introduced (again without notice) on 12 September and the First and Second Reading Speeches made on the same day.

The amendments to the *Coastal Protection Act 1979* do not address the issues we raised in regards to the 2010 amendments which deal with similar matters (see SCCG submission to DECCW dated 25 October 2010 on our website). In addition, we have concerns regarding the rights, responsibilities and liability of Councils, public safety issues and the lack of guidance provided to Councils and the community in terms of climate change risks.

The changes also remove the requirement for Councils to include coastal hazard risk category information from coastal zone management plans on section 149 certificates, even though many coastal councils have recently invested considerable time and money incorporating the projections. The Government relies upon a report by Mary O'Kane, NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, and advocates that SLR projections can be formulated for individual locations. This approach does not provide Councils with practical guidance and may produce the bizarre result that adjoining councils apply different projections for a similar stretch of the coast.

The Bill also permits private landholders to place 'temporary' protection works on their property, such as sandbags. These works can remain for two years and do not require any planning or environmental certification. These works can be placed even if erosion is not occurring or imminent. Protection works, such as seawalls and revetments, can transfer wave energy along the coast and a proper independent assessment is required to ascertain its nature and effect for individual works.

The amendments have halved the penalties for offences dealing with carrying out certain unauthorised beach anti-erosion work:

The Minister foreshadowed additional amendments in 'Stage 2 Reforms', the specifics of which remained vague.

The implementation of the proposed Bill was delayed due to the outcry from many stakeholders, especially the SCCG.



Stage 1 Coastal Reforms Continued

Workshops are now being held by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) in October/November to discuss the Bill and Stage One Reforms. Details will also be presented at the NSW Coastal Conference on 7 November (see Conferences and Meetings section later).

We are very concerned regarding potential and additional safety, environmental and economic risks for coastal communities. We wish to ensure that Councils are able to take a coordinated approach to sustainable coastal management and climate adaptation.

We have written to the Minister requesting that further action regarding the reforms be deferred pending proper consultation.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Keep Australia Beautiful NSW Clean Beaches, Connecting Our Coasts

This Award encourages and recognises coastal communities, local councils, volunteers and surf lifesaving clubs who protect NSW's beautiful coastline. Entries are open –

www.kabnsw.org.au/programs/CleanBeaches.aspx

National Awards for Local Government

For more than 26 years the National Awards for Local Government have provided an avenue to celebrate and highlight some of the extraordinary effort of individuals within councils. By submitting an entry, your project has the opportunity to:

- receive recognition amongst your peers
- share new ideas that add value to local government
- promote the project and highlight the benefits.

Entries will open in December 2012 with a variety of categories that can be submitted via an online entry form:

www.regional.gov.au/local/awards/index.aspx

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COASTAL NEWS

No Coastal Management Program for Alaska

In August 2012 Alaska voted against establishing an Alaska Coastal Management Program that would have enabled the State Government to manage the coastal zone with localised input.

Alaska is now the only American state that doesn't have a coastal zone management program (CZMP) and Alaskans have lost the opportunity to have a say about how their coastal resources are managed.

Three fourths of the funding for opponents of the CZMP was contributed by external bodies such as infrastructure and mining companies, with Shell Oil contributing the largest amount (\$150 000).

The Alaska Dispatch has been covering these issues comprehensively see

www.alaskadispatch.com/article/coastal-management-prop-2-fight-local-control-alaskas-natural-resources

UPCOMING CONFERENCES & MEETINGS

NSW Coastal Conference: Coming of Age

The 21st NSW Coastal Conference (6-9 November 2012) is being hosted by Kiama Municipal Council, and there is still time to register. The Conference has been held annually for the past 20 years and has grown to become one of the most successful coastal industry events held in Australia. The conference attracts between 250 - 300 delegates who are interested in or working within the field of coastal and estuary management research, education and service provision and policy, as well as representatives from government, user groups and community volunteer organisations

Go to www.coastalconference.com/ for more information and to register.

OEH Coastal Protection Reforms Workshops

The Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) has arranged workshops to discuss the Coastal Protection Bill and the Stage 1 Coastal Reforms. Staff from coastal councils are invited to the workshops. Details of the venues and dates are provided below:

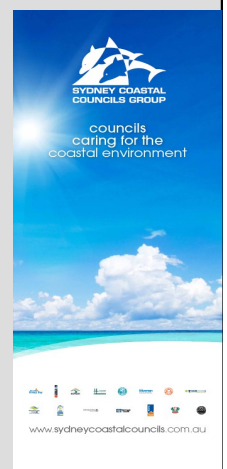
Region	Venue	Date
North Coast	Ballina Council Chambers	10am – 12 noon, 29 October 2012
Mid North Coast	Glasshouse, Port Macquarie	10am – 12 noon, 30 October 2012
Hunter	Travelodge, 12 Steel St, Newcastle	10am – 12 noon, 31 October 2012
South Coast	Council Chambers, Moruya	10am – 12 noon, 2 November 2012
Illawarra	84 Crown Street, Wollongong	10am – 12 noon, 5 November 2012

If you wish to attend a workshop, please RSVP to Bronwyn Ritchie/ Denise Wallace of the OEH on 02 9995 6050 or email coast.flood@environment.nsw.gov.au.

SCCG Information Booth

Make sure you drop by our stall at the NSW Coastal Conference and find out more about our all our projects and activities.

Project reports and materials will be on display.



www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au

www.walkingcoastalsydney.com.au

www.monitor2manage.com.au