



SYDNEY COASTAL COUNCILS GROUP Inc.

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13 March 2023

Thank you for your patience since I last provided an update to you on the Greater Sydney Harbour CMP back on the 15 December 2022. I have been awaiting consideration of the SCCG's grant application (with PRCG) to the NSW Coastal and Estuaries Grants Program, submitted in October 2022, before providing you with this communique.

Our grant application for preparing frameworks for catchment and waterway management and for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting, as part of progressing to CMP Stage 3 has been 'unsubmitted'. The reasons given is that it does not comply with the 20% cap on project management costs.

I supported the SCCG and PRCG's request to the Minister for Local Government to either relax the cap or seek agency contributions to cover the significant costs of managing such a complex multi-Council CMP. Unfortunately, this was not supported although the Minister agreed to write to state agencies seeking funding.

I am very concerned that this 20% cap inhibits multi-council groups from building capacity that will save individual councils committing resources on issues such as climate change adaptation which can be best approached as a collective. This is a matter to take up with the NSW Government after the election.

The importance of this work on a catchment approach to waterway health for Greater Sydney Harbour is recognised by the many agencies and Ministers that I consulted this past month at the request of the Minister for Local Government. The complex nature of the problems of managing this iconic Harbour is recognised in the absence of a coordinating authority.

This will be a challenge for a future government and now that through this CMP we have provided the evidence for leadership, consistency, and coordination in management, there can be no turning back. It is only through the collective engagement of councils as part of this CMP as permitted by using the Coastal Management Act that we have got this far.

In more positive news, I wish to congratulate SCCG and PRCG on obtaining NSW Government funds to deliver the new Smarter Cleaner Sydney Harbour project. This is an exciting collaboration with CSIRO and the Olympic Park Authority working with councils to use smart technology to improve waterway health. Receipt of this grant along with work by our team and EPA on a marine litter strategy demonstrates the commitment these multi-council groups can make in keeping the Harbour clean.

Finally, we appreciate your continued commitment to the GSH CMP and your patience. We will be in touch again to advise on the outcome of our discussions with the incoming Government as well as other grant support we are seeking such as through the Disaster Ready Fund.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Thom', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Prof. Bruce Thom
Chair, Greater Sydney Harbour CMP Steering Committee