

**Resolved that:**

- 1) The report be received and considered.
- 2) Delegates workshop specific issues requiring attention.
- 3) The first draft SCCG Strategic Plan be forwarded to the Directional Committee and the Full Group for comment. The final draft then be sent formally to Member Councils for consultation. It is intended that the final draft (Member Council endorsed) Strategic Plan will be tabled at the December Full Group meeting for adoption.

**10. REPORTS**

<b>Reports 10.1 - 10.6 FOR CONSIDERATION</b>
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**10.1 Reforms to Coastal Management in NSW**Proceedings in Brief

The EO advised of a recent 'initial' OEH workshop with SCCG Member Council staff, outlining the Stage 2 reforms. There will be formal consultations with Councils in November and December, with a view to releasing outcomes prior to the next State election. There was an indication that the State Government will be looking at re-setting SLR benchmarks through an independent panel and developing a new Act to replace the *Coastal Protection Act 1979*.

Prof Thom noted that there are two outstanding items from Stage 1 - hazard notations on s149 Certificates and SLR benchmarks. It is expected that further information on the s149 Certificates will be available shortly. Prof Thom also noted that Statewide Insurance is being advised by DLA Piper about potential legal liabilities and called on Councils to seek advice from the two organisations.

Prof Thom also noted that Minister Stokes has re-confirmed the three core components of the Stage 2 reforms and that the role of the Coastal Expert Panel and its membership is now publicly available on the OEH website.

Three key themes for the Stage 2 reforms are:

- Establishing a simpler and more integrated legal and policy framework for coastal management
- Providing improved guidance and technical advice to councils, while enabling and supporting local decision making
- Identifying potential funding options, particularly to implement coastal asset management strategies.

Prof Thom noted that the complexity of the reforms and the multiple agencies involved.

Prof Thom also noted recent developments at the Federal level, with Minister Hunt announcing a review of marine protected areas. However Minister Hunt is supportive of NCCARF working with Local Government on SLR-related issues. The NCCARF contract with Griffith University has been under negotiation for 7 months, with no final outcome. Prof Thom suggested the EO seek representation on the NCCARF Coastal Advisory Committee(s) once the contract is signed.

**Resolved that:**

1. The report be received and noted.
2. Prof Bruce Thom AM provide the Group with an update of activities from the Coastal Expert Panel (where possible).
3. Through discussion, the SCCG determine additional actions to address Member Council issues and concerns.

## 10.2 SCCG Capacity Building Program Report

### Proceedings in Brief

The CPO provided an overview of key capacity building activities over the 2013-14 financial year. There were three capacity building events and two project launches:

- Art of Communication – August 2013
- Tapping into Local Knowledge – November 2013
- ABC of Coastal Economics – November 2013
- COVERMAR Project Launch – February 2014
- Prioritising Coastal Adaptation Development Options for Local Government Project Launch – March 2014.

These five events attracted 248 participants, representing 75 different organisations, the majority of where were Local Government, followed by State Government, the private sector and research / academia.

**Resolved that** the report be received and considered.

## 10.3 Launch of the SCCG Emergency Management Planning - a Health Check for Local Government

### Proceedings in Brief

The Project Officer Dr Ian Armstrong reported on developments since the last meeting.

Consultation feedback on the draft health Check was initially limited, however the review process has been ongoing and the Project Officer has now followed up with respondents who did not initially respond.

The Project Officer emphasised that the tool is not meant as an 'audit' of Council, but as a guiding and support tool.

The latest version of the tool includes practical actions rather than KPIs, in an attempt to make it more forward-looking.

There was also sensitivity about Council's judging the LEMC, so the two roles have been portioned in the revised tool.

Project Outcomes are being launched on 17 September. Mr Phil Koperberg AO AFSM BEM, Chairman of the State Emergency Management Committee, will be the keynote speaker.

The EO noted that Ian will be leaving the SCCG after the completion of the project and the conclusion of his contract. The EO noted that Ian has worked for the SCCG periodically over the last 10 years in various contract roles and thanked Ian for his substantial contributions over this time.

### **Resolved that:**

1. The report be received and noted.
2. SCCG delegates attend, and/or encourage senior managers to attend the Project Launch Forum addressing project outcomes on the 17 September 2014
3. Dr Ian Armstrong be thanked for his substantial contributions to the SCCG.



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

### Proceedings in Brief

The EO provided a brief update on the project, noting the departure of Michael Dean from the organisation. The SCCG has advertised and secured applications for the Stage II Project Manager role. Interviews will be held in the coming weeks with the position scheduled to be filled toward the end of October. It was also noted that the project was slightly delayed but scheduled to be back on track by the end of December 2014.

<b>Resolved that</b> the report be received and considered.
---

## 10.5 NSW Shark Meshing Program

### Proceedings in Brief

The Shark Meshing Program (SMP) commences each year from 1 September and concludes 30 April the following year. Manly Council has recently written to the SCCG seeking support for a review of the NSW Shark Meshing program at the end of the 2014 session. Cr. Candy Bingham provided an overview of the problems created by shark nets and the reasoning behind Manly Council's support for reform.

Cr. Bingham advised that 96% of what the nets collect are not sharks and that their physical protection is limited, with nets covering only part of the beach. Nets are 100m long and 6m wide

Cr. Bingham brought a sample of an eco-barrier which is reported to reduce by-catch. She also reported on the use of life buoys in Bondi, which alert lifesavers to the potential presence of sharks.

Cr. Bingham sought the Group's support on the following recommendations, as outlined in the SCCG AGM agenda:

- 1) The SCCG write to its Member Councils seeking they write to the Premier and the Minister for Primary Industries seeking support for a review of the NSW Shark Meshing Program to include consideration of non-lethal alternatives to shark meshing and a reduction in beach meshing days per year.
- 2) The SCCG write to NSW Premier and the Minister for Primary Industries noting the above and seeking a formal review of the NSW Shark Meshing Program.
- 3) The SCCG seek a Department of Primary Industries presentation at the next meeting to provide a briefing regarding the NSW Shark Meshing Program and to discuss possible non-lethal alternatives to shark meshing, including new technologies such as Clever Buoy.

The MPP asked whether independent data is being collected on shark nets to inform decision-making. George Cotis advised that DPI does report on net catch.

The EO noted that in 2009 the SCCG attended a Shark Summit at the Sydney Aquarium with South Africa and all Australian states except NT. It was revealed that, at the time, maintenance contractors for shark nets were not required to report net catch, and the Group successfully lobbied to ensure that this was reported to DPI moving forward.

Cr. Golstman noted that the Bondi SLS are not confident in the Clever Buoy technology. He was concerned that alternatives may not provide the same safety to humans.

Delegates agreed adding a resolution calling on the government to undertake an independent scientific review of technologies.

Cr. McMurdo noted that many Sydney beaches do not have shark nets and that the incidence of shark attack is no different, suggesting there is little or no correlation between nets and decreased risk.

Dr. Lambert suggested calling on DPI to provide whatever data they currently hold on shark nets and alternative technologies.

The EO distilled the conversation to the following recommendations:

- 1) The SCCG write to DPI requesting a full report on the NSW Shark Meshing Program, including the science behind it and considerations and current research activities looking at alternatives risk management strategies to netting and culling.
- 2) That DPI be asked to present this report at the December meeting of the SCCG.

**Resolved that:**

- 1) The address by Cr Bingham be received and noted.
- 2) The SCCG write to DPI requesting a full report on the NSW Shark Meshing Program, including the science behind it and considerations and current research activities looking at alternatives risk management strategies to netting and culling.
- 3) That DPI be asked to present this report at the December meeting of the SCCG.

## **10.6 Marine Estate Management Authority – Update Report**

**Resolved that:**

- 1) The report be received and considered.
- 2) The SCCG seek the MEMA to provide an update report for each SCCG meeting.

### **Reports 10.7 – 10.10 FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**Resolved that** reports for 'information only' be received and noted (pending inquiry).

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>10.7 Beachwatch Program Report (May - July 2014)</b><br/> <b>10.8 Greater Sydney Local Land Services Update - August 2014</b><br/> <b>10.9 NSW Department of Primary Industries Aquatic Pest and Health Update</b><br/> <b>10.10 Key Activities Report for June - August 2014</b></p> | <p>(tabled at meeting)<br/> (not provided by DPI)</p> |
|---|---|

## **11. TREASURER'S REPORT**

### **11.1 Annual Financial Statement for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014**

The EO tabled a revised Income & Expenditure Statement after an error was identified in consultation with the SCCG Bookkeeper.

**Resolved that:**

- 1) The amended Annual Financial Statement for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 be received and noted.
- 2) That Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc make the following statement (subject to the satisfactory audit of the SCCG finances):

In the opinion of the Members of the Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc:

(a) the accompanying general purpose financial report and special schedules of the Sydney Coastal Councils Group Inc for the period ending 30 June 2014 are drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of:



- (i) the state of affairs of the Group as at 30 June 2014, and the operating result and cash flows for the financial year ended on that date and all controlled entities; and
- (ii) the other matters required to be disclosed;
- (b) the general purpose financial report and special schedules are in accordance with the accounting and other records of the Group; and
- (c) the general purpose financial report is drawn up in accordance with accounting policy disclosed in the statement; and
- (d) no circumstances have arisen which would render the report false or misleading in any way.

## 12. GENERAL BUSINESS

### Discussion Items

- **Cabinet in Confidence study on risk to life from flash flooding document** – access to document sought by Pittwater Council to assist it in undertaking a Risk to Life Assessment which will form a base document to its Risk to Life Policy.

Pittwater Council is concerned about risk to life from flash flooding. The SES advocates evacuation as the appropriate response, however Pittwater Council is attempting to promote earlier intervention / awareness by identifying flood risk through appropriate land use planning controls

A paper was prepared by the State Government on the issue, however this has been declared Cabinet-in-Confidence. At its last meeting, the TC formally recommended that the FG be asked to support Pittwater's efforts to gain access to the paper.

Cr. Stevenson proposed to revise the recommendation to read that the SCCG would support Pittwater's application. The final wording of the resolution will be forwarded to the Executive out of session following further discussion with Pittwater.

### Resolved that:

- 1) The SCCG support Pittwater Council application to obtain the access the NSW government study on risk to life from flash flooding document
- 2) The final wording of the resolution will be forwarded to the Executive out of session following further discussion with Pittwater.

### Resolved that:

1. The SCCG support Pittwater Council's application to obtain the access the NSW government study on risk to life from flash flooding document
2. The final wording of the letter be forwarded to the Executive Committee out of session for approval following further discussion with Pittwater Council.

- **10/50 Vegetation Clearing Code of Practice**

TC representatives expressed significant concern about the amended Bushfire Protection Laws and sought the assistance of the Full Group to:

- a) access all submissions made
- b) obtain details of the scientific evidence underpinning the Code
- c) ascertain how consultation informed the final version of the Code
- d) identify how the RFS will restore habitat cleared by landowners.

The EO explained the implications of the recent changes to vegetation clearing and related concerns about impacts on clearing and native species.

- a. The 10/50 Clearing Code of Practice that is currently in place in NSW was adopted after an inadequate consultation period of just three weeks. There appears to have been little, if any, consideration of consultation feedback, with the final Code released just two days after the close of submissions and largely replicating the consultation draft.
- b. The 10/50 Code overrides all protections for trees and vegetation in "10/50 vegetation clearing entitlement areas" that are found in Councils Tree Protection Orders, Local Environment Plans and Development Control Plans.
- c. The Code also overrides all State Legal protections for threatened species and endangered ecological communities.
- d. The 10/50 Code is not supported by peer-reviewed evidence that says clearing mature trees up to 350 metres from bushfire prone land protects residences from ember attack during a fire.

Dr. Lambert noted that there is significant angst in the local bushfire management committee, of which she is a member. Dr. Lambert opposed recommendation (d), noting that it may have the unintended consequence of sanctioning the use of offsets.

The EO outlined revised recommendations:

**SCCG write to the Premier / Minister and relevant agencies recommending:**

- i. A suspension of the 10/50 code until a review is undertaken
- ii. Comprehensive mapping of the clearing entitlement areas in the LGA be made publicly available, including the criteria for defining such areas
- iii. A scientific review into the ecological impacts and actual bushfire hazard reduction benefits of these provisions, across urban and non-urban areas and/or local and regional scales
- iv. A process under which local councils can seek to opt out of some of all of the provisions of the 10/50 Code
- v. A detailed public education process be undertaken to clarify what is and what is not permissible and associated consequences for illegal actions and other useful public compliance, management and further information details.

It was noted that there was concern that the areas had been mapped without any ground-truthing and that recommendation 2 should be amended to address this.

Prof Thom noted the risk of destabilisation of land due to clearing and increased potential landslide risks.

**Resolved that the SCCG write to the Premier / Minister and relevant agencies recommending:**

- 1) A suspension of the 10/50 code until a review is undertaken
- 2) Comprehensive mapping of the clearing entitlement areas in the LGA be made publicly available, including the criteria for defining such areas (with all mapping being ground truthed)
- 3) A scientific review into the ecological impacts and actual bushfire hazard reduction benefits of these provisions, across urban and non-urban areas and/or local and regional scales
- 4) A process under which local councils can seek to opt out of some of all of the provisions of the 10/50 Code



- 5) A detailed public education process be undertaken to clarify what is and what is not permissible and associated consequences for illegal actions and other useful public compliance, management and further information details.

#### 12.1 Remaining 2014 Meeting date / Next Meeting

##### Dates

- Saturday 6 December 2014 at 12 noon

##### Location

(City of Sydney – pending)

#### 12.2 Items for Press Release

Inquiry was made regarding press activity in relation the SCCG 25 year celebrations. The EO informed delegates that substantial efforts were made to secure media coverage, including the development of a combined SCCG and Sydney Water press release and developing of supporting materials, however no local press was secured.

- **The China Daily**

On an interesting note, through various SCCG contacts the China Daily ran an opinion piece on the event and how Chinese coastal cities could learn a lot from the activities of the SCCG:

[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2014-09/17/content\\_18610625.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2014-09/17/content_18610625.htm)

**Resolved that** items for press release be considered.

#### 12.3 Agenda items for the next SCCG meeting

**Resolved that** delegates suggest additional agenda items including presentations for the next SCCG meeting proposed for 6 December 2014 starting at 12 noon.

#### 12.4 Next Meeting

**Resolved that** the next meeting of the Group be held on 6 December 2014 at the City of Sydney (pending confirmation).

Cr Stevenson closed the meeting and thanked delegates for their attendance and contributions.

The meeting closed at 4.55pm.

Confirmation of Minutes: .....  
/ /

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### **Chairperson's Annual Report 2013-2014**

It has been my pleasure to Chair the SCCG this year particularly as we celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Group. Congratulations to the staff and member Councils for reaching this milestone.

I am humbled by the work done over the past 25 years. Since 1991 shortly after the Coastal Councils was convened 193 staff from member Councils have participated in the Technical Committee, 202 Councillors have been nominated at Full Group delegates and 46 staff employed at the secretariat.

That represents a lot of expertise, knowledge sharing and professional development and advocacy over 25 years.

Our most valuable assets are the ocean, harbour, beaches and bushland that surround us here in Sydney. The beauty of our special environment is the reason why we all live or visit the coastline.

Coastal councils have been so successful in their advocacy, and work around the coastline that Tourism Australia has nominated Sydney Harbour and its surrounding coastline as one of Australia's National Landscapes

'The natural and cultural landscape of Sydney, stretching beyond its harbour, along its coast and waterways, is a vibrant tapestry waiting to be explored.

In fact for several paragraphs Tourism Australia eulogizes the Sydney coastline, inviting the world to visit and see for themselves how wonderful it is.'

All things coastline, the surf, sandy beaches, rock platforms, cliff faces, harbours, lagoons are deeply embedded in our national psyche, and SCCG members are more aware than most about the importance of understanding and maintaining the cultural, heritage and economic value of this coastline.

Sydney Coastal Councils has worked hard this year, as it has in the past to manage this national coastline asset.

But whilst the SCCG has worked hard to advocate to get our beaches and estuaries to look and feel clean and we now face different and different challenges from the pressures of increasing urbanisation of our natural environment.

It was easy to deal with a single government entity over the past 25 years. Sydney Water has spent billions to reduce the pollution effects of the city's two major Sewage Treatment Plants, now known as wastewater treatment plants.

But now the challenges are more diffuse and difficult to resolve because there is no single cause as we tackle coastal erosion and pollution of our environment.



The pollution is not necessarily gross any more, the stormwater might not contain large bits litter but certainly the stormwater pipes that empty onto our beaches and estuaries continue to be polluted.

I am confident that the future of the Sydney Coastal Council is bright and that we will rise to the challenges and be here in another 25 years celebrating more good work of hundreds of people who care passionately for the coast and the marine environment.

Thanks to Geoff and the staff for their continuing work in the secretariat and to the Full Group delegates for their commitment to the SCCG.



Cr. Cathy Griffin  
**Chairperson**

## EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S

# ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014



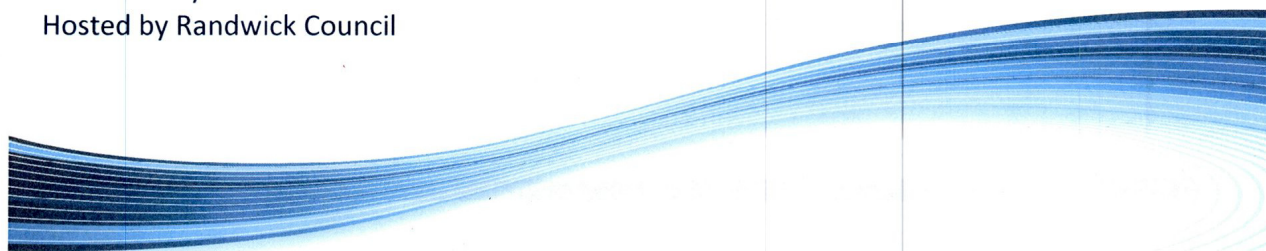
### PREPARED BY

**GEOFF WITHYCOMBE**

EXECUTIVE OFFICER /  
REGIONAL COASTAL ENVIRONMENT OFFICER  
/ PUBLIC OFFICER

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

13 September 2014  
Prince Henry Centre  
Hosted by Randwick Council





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### DISCLAIMER

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