



An independent coastal advisory body for Australia

The SCCG believes the creation of an independent Commonwealth Coastal Advisory Body based on the NSW Coastal Council model, comprising the appropriate departmental, Local Government, community, industry and research representatives, would assist in providing guidance to the Commonwealth, State and Local Governments and assist communication between all coastal stakeholders. The body should be made up of representatives with experience and expertise in coastal zone management and could broadly assist in:

- Identifying emerging issues relevant to national coastal management;
- Advising on the development and direction of coastal policy and projects;
- Ensuring new planning instruments are consistent with sound coastal policy and the objectives of Ecologically Sustainable Development;
- Providing general and specific guidance to Councils on land use planning, infrastructure and population pressures;
- Finalisation and implementation of coastline and emergency management planning; and
- Identifying opportunities to support stakeholder involvement in integrated coastal zone management.

The SCCG would like to know your position on:

1. The establishment an independent Australian Coastal Advisory Body
2. In the absence of an independent Australian Coastal Advisory Body how you would party the goals outlined above?

A strategy for managing the impact of climate change on the coastal zone

Climate change will have a significant impact on the work of councils and the well being of their communities. To assist councils and the community address these impacts the SCCG believes the following strategies, processes and frameworks should be developed and implemented:

- Processes for the integration of climate change into the strategic planning process for coastal management;
- Processes for gathering, storing and reporting information on climate change impacts and vulnerability;
- The implementation of a risk management strategy for managing impacts;
- A framework that prioritises actions related to mitigation and adaptation;
- Strategies for engaging all relevant stakeholders; and
- Coordination of state strategies with existing national and international strategies.

Each of these strategies, processes and frameworks must to be supported by a comitment from State Governments and the Commonwealth to provide the necessary funding and support for councils to implement local actions that are consistent with state and national strategies.

The SCCG would like to know what strategies and actions you have to ensure climate change adaptation and mitigation will be undertaken in effective manner in the coastal zone?

Funding for Local Government and community coastal programs and initiatives

SCCG believe Commonwealth funding commitment for coastal initiatives that provides protection, restoration and capacity building activities is required. The SCCG is alarmed that the reduction in State and Commonwealth support for coastal programs in recent years has forced councils to rely on limited budgets or compete for restricted grant funding to undertake coastal initiatives previously supported by the State and Commonwealth Governments.

The loss of many successful coastal initiatives undertaken by State and Local Governments is a significant concern. SCCG believes the end of the very successful Coasts and Clean Seas Program and the recent demise of Coastcare in NSW have significantly limited councils and the community's ability to protect and enhance coastal areas. The impact of this was noted at the NSW Coastal Conference (November 2006) when conference delegates moved to request in writing that that the State and Commonwealth Governments consider new funding strategies that will fund major coastal management and protection works.

SCCG strongly urges the allocation of funding for initiatives and activities that are specifically undertaken in coastal environments. Funding that supports coastal monitoring programs, marine habitat protection, coastal planning and capacity building would enable councils to protect the threatened environmental, social and economic values of the coastline zone.

The SCCG would like you to state your commitment to the allocation of funding for initiatives and activities that must be undertaken to assist councils and communities preserve threatened coastal assets and values.

Public participation in the strategic planning and development assessment in the coastal zone

Recent reforms to NSW Planning legislation, including the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2006* and *Draft State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2006*, have reduced the opportunity for public participation and consultation on state significant developments in NSW, many of which are occurring within the coastal zone.

The SCCG supports the view of the Local Government and Shires Association of NSW that these reforms have occurred without sufficient consultation or scrutiny. These reforms significantly limit councils and the communities they represent from effectively participating in the development assessment process for large scale developments in the sensitive coastal zone.

Effective public consultation and participation facilitated through the Integrated Framework for Coastal Zone Management is essential to the planning process and should be encouraged before decisions are made. For participation to be effective, the public requires sufficient information and opportunity to be involved in setting local strategic planning direction and development assessment.

The SCCG would like you to outline the actions you will take to ensure that through the Integrated Framework for Coastal Zone Management:

1. Local Government and the community are provided with sufficient information and opportunity to meaningfully participate in strategic planning and development assessment processes.
2. Thorough, consistent and transparent environmental assessment for all development proposals occurring in the coastal zone will be undertaken.

Maintenance of public ownership and public access in the coastal zone

Increasing population, development and recreational demand in peri-urban coastal areas is placing increased pressure on publicly owned land in coastal areas. The SCCG supports the retention of public land in the coastal zone and urges all political parties to support actions that protect coastal public lands in perpetuity and ensure the provision of adequate funds for their management. Additionally, SCCG is seeking a commitment for increased funding for programs that assist with the management of commonwealth owned lands as well as the acquisition of private properties of environmental or social significance in the coastal zone.

Public access to coastal and foreshore areas is necessary for a wide range of recreational, tourism and commercial uses. The SCCG promotes appropriate public access in the coastal zone. To achieve this objective councils nationally require assistance through the development of policy and guidelines that balance a number of issues including appropriate types of access, public risk and the protection of sensitive coastal environments. The SCCG opposes all coastal developments that deny or restrict responsible public access to coastal beaches, foreshores and waters.

The SCCG would like you to state what actions you would take to:

1. Protect coastal public lands in perpetuity and ensure the provision of adequate funds for their management.
2. Increase funding for initiatives such as the Coastal Lands Protection Scheme.
3. Ensure public access and use of foreshore areas is maintained and managed so that fragile ecosystems and habitats are preserved.
4. Oppose coastal developments that deny or restrict responsible public access to coastal beaches, foreshores and waters

