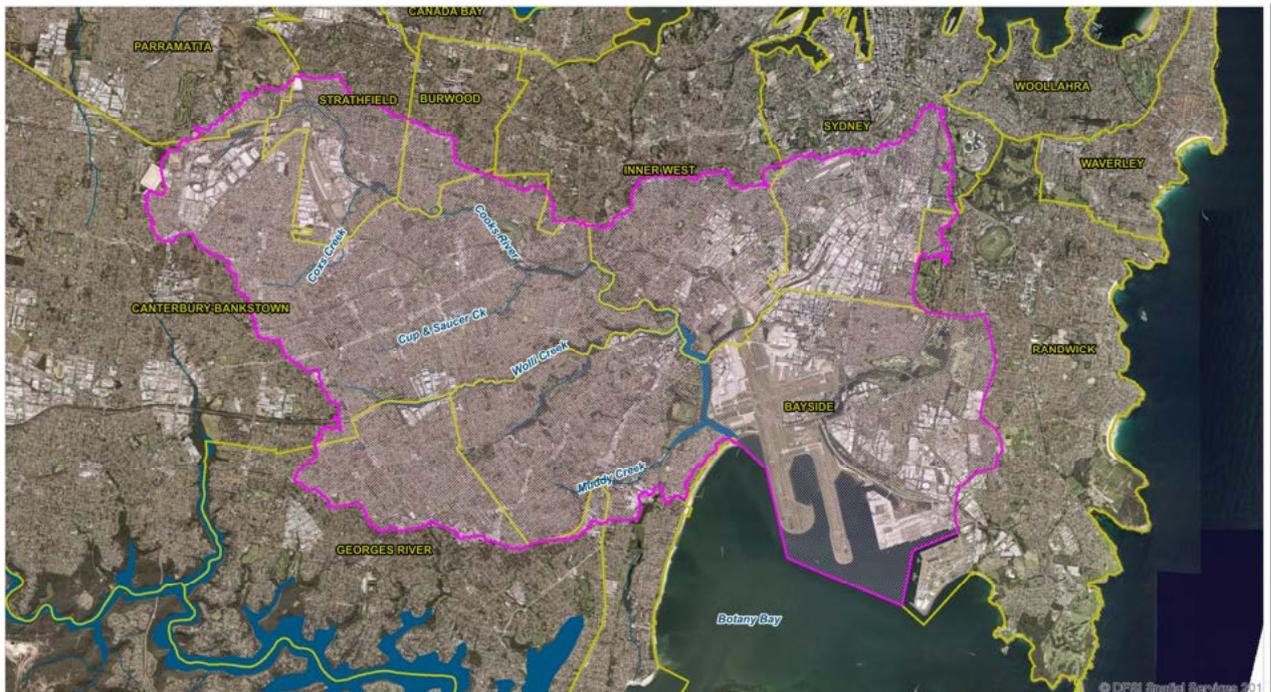


# Cooks River Catchment Coastal Management Program

## Stage One - Scoping Study Summary



Proudly funded by the NSW Government in association with:



## What is a Coastal Management Program?

Local councils that have areas of land containing coastal areas are required to manage coastal areas and activities in accordance with relevant state legislation, policies and plans in the Coastal Management Framework.

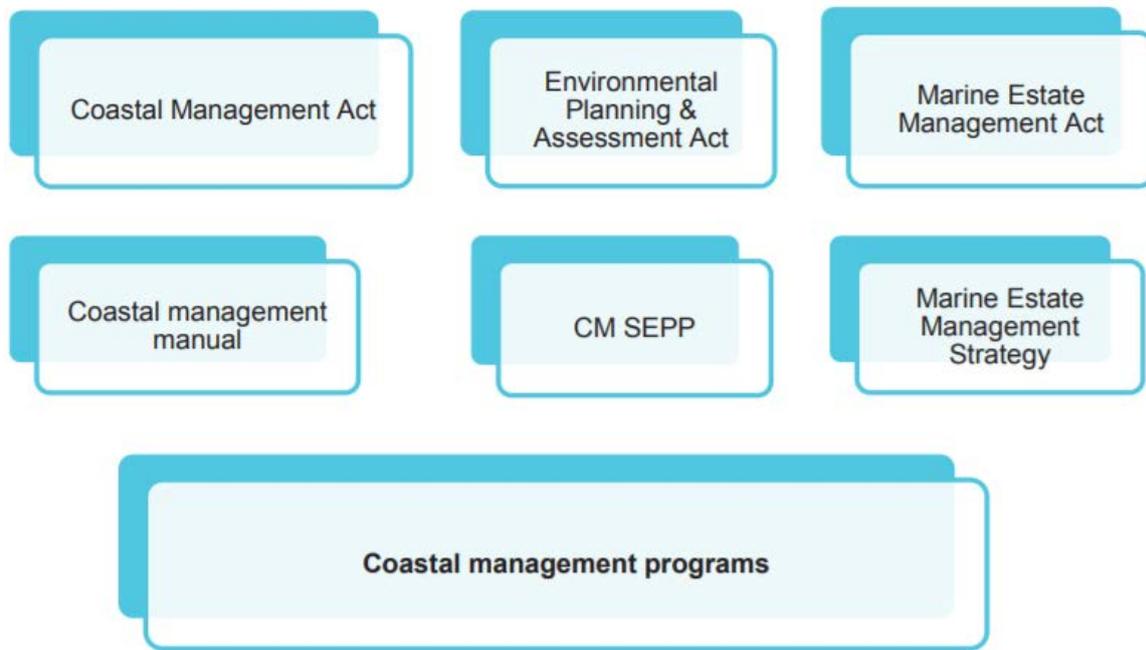


Figure 2: Coastal Management Framework

*The Coastal Management Act 2016 (CM Act 2016)* requires local councils to prepare a coastal management program (CMP) that sets the long-term strategy for the coordinated management of land within the coastal zone. The Act defines the NSW coastal zone by four coastal areas with associated specific management objectives for each of the areas. These areas are mapped as part of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018 (CM SEPP), except for the coastal vulnerability area.

Councils are required to prepare a CMP in accordance with the coastal management manual. The manual recommends councils follow a five-stage risk management process for the preparation and implementation of a CMP. Councils are to report on process, outcomes and achievements in line with reporting requirements under the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework.

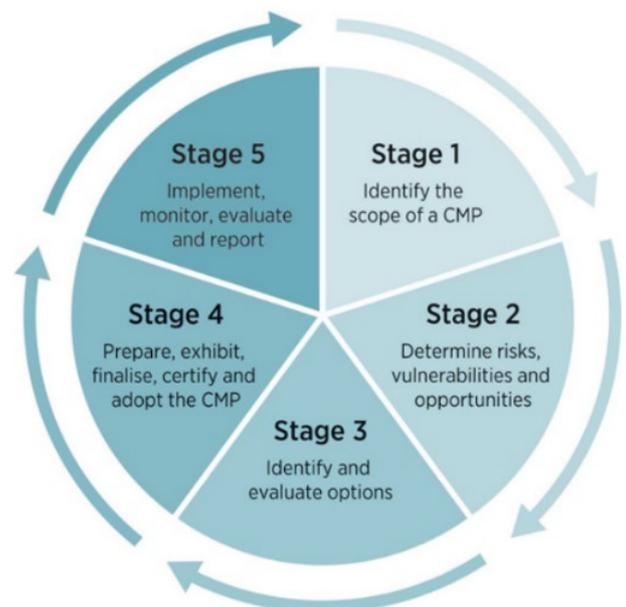


Figure 3: CMP Stages

Integrating catchment and coastal management is a complex and challenging task, more so in highly developed and urbanised areas such as the Cooks River catchment.

The issues facing the Cooks River and Botany area are catchment wide, overlapping multiple regulatory and administrative boundaries. This is recognised in the Alliance's Mission which is 'united action for a healthy Cooks River and catchment' and in the Alliance's long-term outcomes.

## **Aim and purpose of the Scoping Study**

The Cooks River Catchment CMP Stage 1 Scoping Study aims to develop a shared understanding of the Cooks River and the management issues and priorities, building on work by councils, state agencies and other stakeholders over several decades. Based on this shared understanding the study provides a forward plan for undertaking Stage 2 to Stage 5 of a CMP, consistent with the NSW Coastal Management Framework.

The study process has provided an opportunity for Cooks River Alliance members, catchment councils, asset owners, communities, public authorities and NSW Government agencies to work together towards achieving the objectives of the *CM Act 2016* within the Cooks River and Botany catchments.

The primary purposes of Stage 1 of a CMP are to determine the scope and define a path for progressing further stages of the CMP. The Scoping Study comprises:

- the strategic context for coastal management
- the vision and objectives of the CMP
- geographic areas to be covered
- priority catchment and coastal management issues, as well as knowledge and information gaps requiring attention
- the communities and stakeholders to be involved
- the governance, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders on the CMP
- a preliminary business case and a forward plan to complete the CMP.

By June 2024, the final CMP will embody agreements from multiple land managers on the management and works required to ensure the long-term health and resilience of the Cooks River, Botany coastal areas, and the associated catchment.

## Benefits for Councils to develop a catchment wide CMP together

The development of a catchment wide CMP is a significant strategic opportunity to establish an integrated approach between multiple land managers, including public authorities, industry and NSW Government agencies to implement programs for the long-term health of the waterway.

Some of the benefits for councils in collaborating on the development of the CMP are:

- develop and deliver short and longer term agreed actions that mitigates the threats to the study area's community values, economic values and social values
- develop and deliver a long-term risk-based strategy to manage coastal hazards and other climate change risks likely to manifest over the next decades
- provide legislative weight and legitimacy for councils supported by the NSW Coastal Management Program
- a consistent management approach across councils, state agencies and public authorities that meet the community vision.

For councils that have coastal areas and are required to develop a CMP, working together reduces the duplication of studies and costs as well as ensuring that works are in alignment with other actions within the catchment. For councils that have an area of catchment only, it is an opportunity to include works that can improve waterway health and align with other actions in the catchment.

## The study area

The geographic scope of the Cooks River Catchment CMP covers coastal areas along the estuary and Botany. The Cooks River flows for 23 kms through the heart of highly urbanised and industrialised Sydney from Bankstown in the south west to Botany Bay. The inclusion of Botany recognises the original river entrance and connection to Botany wetlands.

The Scoping Study identified many of the highest threats to the health of coastal areas as arising from transboundary and catchment wide management issues including habitat loss, contamination, stormwater inputs and urban development. For this reason, the CMP study area includes the river's catchment, freshwater tributaries and upper streams.

The coastal areas included in the study area are in the following councils:

- Canterbury-Bankstown (Alliance member)
- Inner West (Alliance member)

- Bayside (Alliance member)
- City of Sydney (contributing to the CMP)
- Burwood

The entire study area with catchment and streams also includes the following councils:

- Strathfield (Alliance member)
- Georges River
- Cumberland (at the top of the catchment)
- Randwick (west end of the suburb of Kensington).

As part of the catchment each of these councils have a level of influence over the health of the coastal areas. For example, as a foundation Alliance member, Strathfield Council has been active in developing the Scoping Study as the local government area contains a significant area of freshwater stream and catchment.

All Councils have been actively involved in developing the Scoping Study through participation in the Catchment Advisory Group. Over 20 organisations participated in this group providing advice and direction.

## The Vision

***‘A loved and healthy river valley and its catchment enriching the heart of Sydney.’***

A range of stakeholders and community members participated in developing the vision through workshops, meetings, events and online surveys. Subsequently, ten passionate local community members volunteered to form the Cooks River Community Assembly to disseminate key information and develop the final vision to lead the CMP.

## Objectives

Thirteen objectives are proposed for the Cooks River Catchment CMP that are consistent with the objects of the *CM Act* 2016. These are categorised into four focus themes that were identified by the Community Assembly:

- A biodiverse river valley supporting a clean river
- Every community accessing and enjoying the river
- Aboriginal ways of thinking are valued from Yana Badu to Kamay

- Holistic cooperative approaches are guiding river restoration.

## Values and management issues for the study area

The values and key management issues were identified through consultation and review. These issues are consistent with the regional risks identified through the Threat and Risk Assessment undertaken as part of the Marine Estate Management Strategy (2018).

Values	Key Management Issues
V1. Biodiversity and ecosystem integrity	I1. Biodiversity degradation and habitat disturbance
V2. Accessible waterways and foreshores	I2. Land use intensification
V3. Clean waters	I3. Stormwater, flooding and sediment management
V4. Naturalness	I4. Water quality
V5. Amenity and recreation	I5. Industrial activities
V6. Aboriginal, heritage and cultural	I6. Climate change, sea level rise and coastal hazards
V7. Accessibility and safety	I7. Aboriginal and cultural heritage degradation
V8. Socialisation and participation	I8. Governance and compliance
V9. Education and scientific	I9. Resource use conflict, access availability and public safety
V10. Trade, tourism and commerce	I10. Recreation and tourism
V11. Stormwater drainage and flood resilience	I11. Shipping
V12. Land value	I12. Fishing

## What are the risks to be assessed and managed?

The key management issues were ranked as high, medium or low using a first-pass risk assessment which considered the severity of known threats in the study area, and the effectiveness of existing management actions to deal with the threats.

The results of the preliminary risk assessment were used to inform the Scoping Study and the forward plan for Stages 2-4 of the CMP.

Key Management Issue	Overall Risk / Priority
I1 – Biodiversity degradation and habitat disturbance	High
I2 – Land use intensification	High

Key Management Issue	Overall Risk / Priority
I3 – Stormwater, flooding and sediment management	High
I4 – Water quality	High
I5 – Industrial activities	High
I6 – Climate change, sea level rise and coastal hazards	High
I7 – Aboriginal and cultural heritage degradation	High
I8 – Governance and compliance	High
I9 – Resource use conflict, access availability and public safety	High
I10 – Recreation and tourism	Medium
I11 – Shipping	Medium
I12 – Fishing	Low

## Forward Plan

A forward plan was developed to identify the next stages in the preparation of the Cooks River Catchment CMP (Stages 2–4). This includes reviewing and providing recommendations for studies, investigations and assessments including indicative costs and timelines for certification, adoption and implementation of the CMP.

CMP Stage	Timing	Overview	Cost Estimate
<b>Stages 2 to 4</b> CMP Project management and implementation of engagement strategy	Years 1-4	CMP project management Implement engagement strategy	Low ~\$300K High ~\$600K
<b>Stage 2</b> Determine risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities	Years 1-2	Technical studies: threats/hazards and values/assets Strategy, ownership and socioeconomic profiling studies	Low ~\$700K High ~\$1,200K
<b>Stage 3</b> Identify and evaluate options	Years 2-3	Full-scale risk assessment Options development and assessment Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA)	Low ~\$350K High ~\$650K

CMP Stage	Timing	Overview	Cost Estimate
		Prepare planning proposal Develop business plan	
<b>Stage 4</b> Prepare, exhibit, finalise, certify and adopt a CMP	Year 3-4	Prepare and exhibit draft CMP Exhibit, review and finalise Planning Proposal Review, finalise and certify CMP	Low ~\$50K High ~\$100K
<b>Stage 5</b> Implement, monitor, evaluate and report	Year 4+	CRA and Councils implement through IP&R frameworks Other organisations implement through relevant work programs	<i>TBD</i>
<b>Total CMP Planning Costs</b>			<b>Low ~\$1.4M High ~\$2.5M</b>

## Post Submission - Next steps (June 2020)

For many years the Cooks River has had strong support from councils and the community and groups such as the Alliance have provided opportunities to work collaboratively. The Cooks River Catchment CMP can only move forward with this broad range of support. The Cooks River Alliance has successfully lobbied for increased funding from the NSW Government to complete the next stages of the CMP, with an increased funding ratio of 2:1 for coastal and estuary grants (both planning and implementation) to be implemented in the next funding round in August 2020. Further partnerships for ongoing support throughout the CMP are currently being finalised with Sydney Water and NSW Government agencies.

A Project Management Working Group comprised of key CMP stakeholders has been formed to assist in refining the delivery and scope of Stage 2 studies. The Alliance is also currently seeking the ongoing involvement of catchment council staff and other project stakeholders to participate in working groups for stages 2-4 of the CMP.

As the CMP progresses the Cooks River Alliance will continue to deliver on other goals identified in the Alliance's Strategic Plan, including further research, enabling community activities, professional learning for council staff and advocating for funding for river health works and research.

For further information on the Cooks River Coastal Management Program or for a copy of the document contact:

Tom Sinclair  
Senior Catchment Officer  
Cooks River Alliance  
[Thomas.sinclair@cbcity.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Thomas.sinclair@cbcity.nsw.gov.au)

