

SCG Inc. Annual Report 2023

(October 2022 - November 2023)

The annual report for 2023 encompasses twelve months of activity in the Stockton Community. During 2023 the most notable activities undertaken were:

- A letter writing campaign to encourage all residents to write to our state politicians. This attracted a lot of attention and helped make Stockton Beach an election issue.
- Art competition, I Love Stockton Beach to promote Stockton Beach in a positive light. The competition ran over the summer of 2022/23.
- February meeting focussed on Candidates (Greens, Labor, Liberal, Social Alliance) for the State seat of Newcastle. Candidates answered questions from SCG Inc. on issues impacting Stockton.
- Increasing media profile for SCG Inc. In 2023 the group was interviewed in the Newcastle Herald, NBN media & ABC radio. Highlighting the issues associated with Stockton Beach & Pollution on Kooragang.
- SCG Inc. was also awarded Community Group of the Year for 2023 by City of Newcastle.

Perseverance has paid off as we see the Dredge delivering sand to Stockton Beach & construction of first buried protection structure on Mitchell St underway

2023 SCG Inc. President & Executive group:

Co- Presidents: Alison Rigby & Melanie Taggart.

Executive Group

Ian Taggart, Rainnie Carter (resigned May 2023), Carolyn Bailey, Keith Craig, Alan Newbery, Lindy Nisbett, Alison Rigby, Melanie Taggart.

As an Incorporated body, the group required an executive group with a minimum 7 members. The executive group met monthly, prior to the SCG meetings. The Executive developed key directions and governance for 2023. Special thanks to Melanie Taggart who is stepping down from her role on the executive this month.

1. SCG Inc. Achievements 2023

- SCG Inc. was awarded Community Group of the Year. This award was accepted on behalf of all SCG Inc. members, past and present, in recognition of 11 years of advocating for the Stockton Community.
<https://stocktoncommunitygroup.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Acceptance-speech-SCG-Inc.-Jan-2023.pdf>
- Citizen advocacy – Increased support from the community in raising issues with council & corporate bodies.
- Members of SCG Inc. continue to sit on community consultation groups for Port of Newcastle, NCIG & PWCS.
- Membership maintained at 180 members
- Attempted mediation with Shopping centre owners
- 7 meetings in 2023 (5 guest speakers from Stakeholder corporations around the port)
- 4 Newsletters (electronic and print – delivered to 2,000 households in Stockton)
- Stockton Beach advocacy by continuing to highlight the issues of erosion.

2. Key Strategies for 2023

2.1 Open Channels of Communication with all levels of government

City of Newcastle & Councillors Ward 1

- Communication with Ward 1 councillors is now regular, including updates of SCG Inc. meeting notes & newsletters. SCG Inc. members continue to log enquiries via the CN customer portal and email the Lord Mayors Office. Highlighting local issues, including the Shopping Centre & public amenities.
- Six SCG Inc. members are part of the City of Newcastle's Stockton Community Liaison Group. Ensuring the community is well represented on issues relating to Stockton Beach erosion.

State Government & Representatives

- After countless rounds of electronic communication with the Deputy Premier's office, State government ministers and related departments on a variety of topics, including Beach Erosions, CERMP. It was decided a different campaign was needed to highlight the issues facing Stockton Beach.
- A letter writing campaign was launched in November 2022 to encourage all residents to write to our state politicians. According to Pro Bono advice we received from 2 lobbyists, the best way to attract the attention of Politicians (both present and shadow) was mass letter writing.
- The campaign resulted in over 100 letters written at the November 2022 meeting plus individual participation over the summer. The letters highlighted the need for Stockton Beach to be an election issue in the NSW State Government Election (March 2023).
- Post election 2023 also saw increased communication with the state member for Newcastle Tim Crakanthorp.

Federal Government

- Members of the executive liaised with the Federal Member for Newcastle Sharon Claydon to lobby for support to stop the erosion. Focussing on the CERMP allocation & opportunities for Federal support on Stockton Beach. This work contributed to the \$6million CERMP grant.

2.2 Continue to champion Stockton Beach and prevent further erosion

Art competition | Love Stockton Beach

- Promoted Stockton Beach in a positive light. The competition ran from over the summer of 2022/23 (November - February) It was a great success over 60 entries were received. It revealed the wealth of talent that exists in our community and the love and respect the community has for their beach.

Stockton Beach Campaign 2023

- Posters were placed in key locations around town and flyers delivered to every household in Stockton to inform all residents of our campaign & the need for community action.
- Received long awaited Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) report, which will be placed on website and sent to CN.

2.3 Continue to represent the community on Stockton Community public works /Environment /Crown Land

Group members continue to advocate for improved amenities for the Stockton community and visitors. Work has included:

- Liaison with CN to address issues with the privately-owned shopping arcade and adjacent car park has been ongoing. Some work to improve car park flooding has been undertaken, however issues of maintenance and cleanliness continue. Formal attempts to engage with the owner have remain unsuccessful.
- Following communication with NSW Department of Lands and Environment the holiday cabins stored on Crown Land were offered for public sale. Removal of the cabins is anticipated to occur by early 2024. Proceeds from the sale are to go to the Rawson Reserve Trust for ongoing beach restoration.
- Public toilet amenities across Stockton is an ongoing issue. Of particular concern is the lack of child appropriate toilets adjacent to the Stockton Active Hub, access to a public toilet in the shopping precinct, and access to toilet facilities and water at the North breakwater. SCG Inc. will continue to campaign for these facilities over summer.

2.4 Continue to monitor Air Quality & Environment – Ammonium Nitrate Storage Kooragang Island & NCCCE

- SafeWork NSW proposed new measures to strengthen the safety of ammonium nitrate storage facilities in NSW which involves introducing mandatory separation distances for storing ammonium nitrate. SCG Inc. wrote a submission supporting these changes. (Correspondence available on SCG Inc website)
- Following an emergency shut down event on 23/03/23 by Orica. SCG Inc. sent a letter to Orica, Tim Crakanthorp and journalists, as the press release by Orica did not address the concerns of the community. (Correspondence available on SCG Inc website)

- NSW EPA confirmed creation of a new Hunter Environment Advisory Group (HEAG). This will replace two former committees, the Newcastle Community Consultative Committee on the Environment (NCCCE) and the Upper Hunter Air Quality Advisory Committee (UHAQAC)

3. Successful Grant Applications & Community Donations

- Stockton RSL and Citizens Club \$3000 for Letter campaign (Dec 2022)
- Port of Newcastle for microphone and speakers (Feb 2023)
- NCIG for Newsletters production (Oct 2023)

4. Treasurers Report

- Report for June 2022 – June 2023 available on SCG Inc website
<https://stocktoncommunitygroup.com.au/meetings/>

5. Future Directions for 2024

- Crown Lands rezoning to ensure the community voice is heard & Crown Land is utilised in a manner that suits the needs of Stockton
- Transparency of Rawson Reserve Trust Funding & use.
- Maintain pressure on State Government re beach erosion
- Continue to fight for Stockton Beach via new campaigns
- Traffic management on Kooragang
- Increase stakeholder engagement by ensuring SCG Inc. representation on community consultation groups
- Maintain membership
- Campaign for better public amenities on Stockton

Once again, we would like to thank members for their support throughout the year. Providing community outreach by delivering newsletters and discussing the SCG Inc. Campaigns far & wide. We would also like to thank Heartwood Construction, Prism Design and Stockton Surf Life Saving Club for their ongoing support.

2023 has been a year of results, we've seen works commence on erosion prevention and SCG Inc. remains committed to advocating for Stockton on Crown Land, amenities & beach erosion.

Alison Rigby & Melanie Taggart

(Co-Presidents SCG Inc.)