

Sydney Harbour National Park Community Safety & Environmental Management Partnership Agreement

Between

Primary Partners

- NSW Police – Harbourside Local Area Command (LAC)
- Mosman Council
- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)
- Member of North Shore
- Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (SHFT)
- Northern Sydney Central Coast Health (NSCCH) HIV & Related Programs

Secondary Partners

- Lesbian & Gay Anti-Violence Project, ACON

July 2007

An Environmental & Community Safety Partnership

Contents

Definitions	3
Preamble and Purpose	4
Context	4
Background	4 – 5
Violence and Safety	5
Principles of Agreement	5 – 6
Objectives	6
Partnership Development Process	6
Review and Monitoring of the Agreement	7
Memorandum of Understanding	8
Partnership Service Plan	9 - 11

Acknowledging Diversity

Is a commitment to the prevention of discrimination affecting people across gender, sexuality, race, culture, marital status, ethnicity, physical & intellectual ability.

Community Safety

Safe communities relates to the home, to the workplace and public environments and encompasses the physical, social and emotional needs of people. It is achieved by working in multidisciplinary teams alongside the relevant communities.

Harm Minimisation

Is an approach which aims to reduce the adverse health, social and economic consequences of (alcohol and other drugs) by minimising or limiting the harms and hazards of (drug use) for both the community and the individual without necessarily eliminating that use (Lenton & Single 1998).

Health Promotion

Aims to improve the health standard of the population (or sub-populations) by affecting the determinants of health and well being. Effective health promotion relies on creating opportunities for change to systems, environments and behaviours, as well as building the capacity of the workforce to act on these opportunities.

Homophobia

Homophobia is the irrational fear (&/or moral/religious prejudice) of sexualities other than heterosexual. This phobia may result in harassment and violence directed at a person because they are or thought to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (GLBT).

Heterosexism

Is the privileging of heterosexual relationships, that is, relationships between people of the opposite sex over all other types of relationships. This creates a discriminatory environment in which people make the assumption that everyone is heterosexual and those who are not, are abnormal.

Sexual orientation refers to a person's basic attraction to other people. This attraction may be to members of the opposite sex (heterosexual), members of the same-sex (homosexual) or members of both sexes (bisexual). There has been considerable debate around whether a person's sexual orientation is fixed or if an element of choice is involved. No objective conclusions have been reached. It would appear that many people believe their orientation to be fixed or inherent, with others reporting a change in orientation at a particular stage in their lives.

Sexual behaviour refers to what a person does sexually. In many cases this behaviour matches people's sexual orientation but in many cases it does not. In this sense a person may be involved in heterosexual behaviour but feel their orientation is homosexual or vice versa.

Sexual identity refers to how people see themselves and how they present themselves to others. At times, sexual identity can be different to people's sexual orientation and sexual behaviour which can cause a high level of personal stress. This is especially important in terms of the dominance of heterosexuality.

Working Collaboratively

Working collaboratively with key state government, local government and non-government agencies to facilitate opportunities for change by working towards a common goal. Working in partnership should acknowledge & seek to minimise differences in power and influence that each partner brings.

1. Preamble & Purpose

This agreement guides the working relationships of the following agencies and individuals: NSW Police – Harbourside Local Area Command (LAC), Mosman Council, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Member of North Shore, Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (SHFT) and Northern Sydney Central Coast Health (NSCCH) HIV & Related Programs in their respective roles of providing community safety and environmental management activities for Sydney Harbour National Park National Park.

2. Context

Beat, n. slang – a public meeting place for social connection, sex and/or intimacy between men who have sex with men (MSM) either gay identifying or non-gay identifying, often public toilets but not exclusively.

Public displays of explicit sexual acts whether between same-sex attracted or opposite sex attracted people are illegal in NSW under the Summary Offences Act, 1988.

Attitudes towards sexuality in Australia have undergone remarkable changes in the last 30 years. Gay men and lesbians in particular experience less social stigmatisation and personal hatred than what was once prevalent, and, there is increased visibility of people who are same sex attracted in mainstream social arenas. Despite these positive changes, a person who is same sex attracted cannot take their acceptance for granted—whether from their family, in local shopping centres, in their working lives, or from their health care provider. National research shows us that the rates of homophobia, despite a growing sense of public equality, have not diminished at all – over the past 15 yrs.

Beats, particularly in suburban and rural areas where there are no safe social or community venues for same sex attracted men to meet, will by default perform this function. Beats in such regions are often frequented, not only by gay identifying men but also by heterosexual identifying men, who are same sex attracted. (See *Definitions* for the difference between sexual orientation, sexual behaviour and sexual identity).

The Sydney Harbour National Park has functioned sub-culturally as a meeting place for men who have sex with men for approximately eighty to one hundred years. It has also functioned as a secluded naturist retreat for a number of years, if not decades.

Many segments of the wider community use the Sydney Harbour National Park. Community for the purposes of this Agreement is constituted by the following groups: Local residents, beach users, beat users, sports oval users, landholders and employees of various commercial and government agencies.

3. Location of Sites

<Sue/Margaret - Insert Map of the National Park>

4. Background

Harbourside LAC has recently (May 2007) received five complaints from the general public relating to beat activity at Obelisk Beach in Sydney Harbour National Park National Park. Complaints have also been received by both Mosman Council and NPWS in relation to harassment and property damage at the Cobbler's Beach site.

There have been three incidents of a man or men taking photographs of school children. Two of these incidents occurred at or near Sydney Harbour National Park Oval (HMAS Penguin) and the third incident occurred at Balmoral Beach, Balmoral.

There has been a separate incident involving a man wrapped in a towel exposing himself to a mother and child near Cobbler's Beach, Sydney Harbour National Park.

During June 2007 in efforts to engage the local community of Mosman, Harbourside LAC released information to Mosman Daily calling for assistance identifying the perpetrator of picturing taking. The Mosman Daily subsequently published articles linking beat activity with the incidents of photographing of school children. A concern of NSCCH HARP Health Promotion is media attention of this nature can significantly escalate the risk of homophobic violence at such sites jeopardising the safety of men who have sex with men at this site.

During June 2007 the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service participated in a public health auspiced forum addressing the issue of beats. The purpose of this forum was to bring together stakeholders such as NSW Health, NSW Police, NSW NPWS and NSW LGA to discuss possible strategies required to proactively manage such sites.

The day following this forum articles appeared in the Mosman Daily highlighting beat use of Sydney Harbour National Park National Park. The NSW NPWS contact NSCCH HARP Health Promotion to discuss a partnership approach to the management of Sydney Harbour National Park in relation to beat users and associated environmental damage. Harbourside LAC also attended this meeting bringing wider concerns about community safety and risk incidents to young people.

Parallel to this process a gay community advocate concerned about the possible escalation of risk for homophobic violence due to the Mosman Daily articles contacted Harbourside LAC and the Member for North Shore. A meeting was convened on June 15th 2007 at Harbourside LAC. In attendance was Mosman LGA, Member for North Shore, NSCCH and Police. At the conclusion of this productive meeting a number of partnership strategies were agreed to in relation to the environmental and community safety management of the Sydney Harbour National Park site.

5. Violence and Safety

<Insert text about community safety from Robyn and Scott's perspective>

A study commissioned by the Attorney General's Department of NSW (2003), "You Shouldn't Have to Hide to be Safe", reported an alarming rate of violence towards lesbians and gay men in NSW. The results include:

- 56% of respondents reported having experienced one or more forms of homophobic abuse, harassment or violence in the past 12 months. This was almost exactly the same as found in the NSW Police Service's "Out of the Blue" survey in 1995.
- 85% had experienced such abuse sometime in their life.
- Gay men and lesbians were 4-6 times more likely to be assaulted in a 12 month period than other Sydney men and women.
- A total of 69% of respondents felt vulnerable to violence or harassment from strangers. Additionally, 19% felt vulnerable to violence or harassment from people they knew.
- 80% of respondents said they would feel confident about reporting abuse to the Police if they thought it was warranted however, most indicated they would prefer to deal with a Police Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officer (GLLO). However, there are still factors which contribute to some hesitation about approaching the police, leading to an overall under reporting of abuse and violence.
- There is often a trade off between "being yourself" and open about your sexuality, and reducing the risk of abuse and violence. This has far reaching effects on the way lesbians and gay men live their lives.

Public recreational sites such as Sydney Harbour National Park National Park that also function sub-culturally as beats are potentially dangerous places for anti-gay violence. The

potential risks for MSM using beats include: physical and/or verbal harassment or violence, and arrest by police under the Summary Offences Act.

The common experience of homophobic discrimination means that the health of MSM populations differs from that of the general population. For MSM individuals the impact of discrimination can lead to a poorer general health status, an under reporting of harassment or violence, break down in personal and familial relationships and diminished utilisation of public (govt. and non-govt.) facilities that could be accessed for support.¹

6. Principles that underpin this Agreement

This Agreement is intended to strengthen the working relationship between Key Partners:

- Key Partners agree to establish and support a mutually beneficial process to achieve agreed upon objectives. The objectives will be reviewed and evaluated annually.
- This is a multi-agency partnership, seeking to make the most effective use of resources available to the Key Partners.
- That working together should occur in a way that strengthens community capacity, supports social cohesion, ensures equity and promotes the health and well being of residents and visitors alike.

7. Objectives of the Agreement

- A. To establish and maintain an effective model of working collaboratively to deliver services within a harm minimisation framework that promotes community safety (inclusive of MSM who use beats) and environmental management of Sydney Harbour National Park National Park.
- B. To work in partnership to prevent harm associated with homophobia for MSM and ensure the safety of young people and families who use the recreational areas of Sydney Harbour National Park in the Mosman LGA.
- C. To develop the work force capacity of Key Partners (I.e. NSW NPWS employees, Mosman LGA rangers and Harbourside police) with regard to working with MSM clients and implementing community safety interventions at Sydney Harbour National Park National Park.

8. Partnership Development Process

A meeting consisting of members from each of the nominated partners convened to discuss and coordinate an agreed set of partnership interventions designed to promote community safety and environmental management at Sydney Harbour National Park National Park.

The working group drafted a Partnership Agreement with agreed principles, objectives and minimum indicators that would guide the strategic initiatives of the group. After drafting the Partnership Agreement members met to discuss and ratify the document.

The following objectives were identified by the working party and form the basis for the priority action areas as outlined in the Partnership Service Plan (Attachment 1). The Partnership Service Plan lists the outcomes, strategies/actions and milestones for the priority areas.

¹ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health: Findings and Concerns, Gay & Lesbian Medical Association (USA) and Colombia University School of Public Health, January 2002

Priority 1: To increase community safety for all users of Sydney Harbour National Park and adjoining recreational areas.

Priority 2: To provide workforce development support to Key Partners in the management of MSM activity at Sydney Harbour National Park National Park.

Priority 3: To promote the environmental management of Sydney Harbour National Park National Park.

Priority 4: To target illegal activity in Sydney Harbour National Park.

Each Key Partner will have responsibility and accountability for the implementation of the strategies outlined within the partnership agreement, in line with the **Action Plan – Appendix 1.**

9. Status of this Document

This Agreement is a statement of intent. It does not operate as a legally binding document on the parties or to create legal relationships between them.

10. Resources

It is agreed that all issues regarding use of administrative, human and financial resources will be negotiated between the Key Partners.

11. Monitoring and evaluation

It is agreed that strategies within this document will be monitored via an agreed set of impact evaluation indicators, such as conducting the risk audit, number of outreach sessions, training of employees, adjustment to relevant LGA community safety plans, installation of signage and environmental management of the sites. Additional to this a brief evaluation report will be compiled that reviews the effectiveness of this multi-agency partnership.

12. Review

This agreement will be **reviewed biannually**, or prior to this, if either party has serious cause to request an earlier revision.

- All Key Partners agree to pursue a range of planned and integrated activities, including workforce development initiatives, risk auditing, outreach, community awareness, policy adherence and community and environmental safety strategies.

An Environmental & Community Safety Partnership

Memorandum of Understanding

This is an agreement between NSW Police – Harbourside Local Area Command (LAC), Mosman Council, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Member of North Shore, Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (SHFT) and Northern Sydney Central Coast Health (NSCCH) HIV & Related Programs in their respective roles of providing community safety and environmental management activities for Sydney Harbour National Park National Park.

The aforementioned parties are committed, by way of this Partnership Agreement, to a genuine, cooperative working relationship.

A Partnership Service Plan, appended to this document, describes the areas of collaboration to be undertaken as part of this Partnership Agreement.

We the undersigned hereby agree and commit our respective services/organisations to operating according to the Principles of this Service Partnership Agreement.

Mosman Council

Harbourside Local Area Command

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service (NSCCAHS);
HARP Manager

Sydney Harbour Federation Trust

Member for North Shore

Date: August 2007

July 2007

APPENDIX 1**ACTION PLAN 2007 – 2008: OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, RESPONSIBILITIES & TIME FRAME**

Priority 1: To increase community safety for all users of Sydney Harbour National Park and adjoining recreational areas.

Strategies	Responsibility	Time Frame
To conduct an audit of Sydney Harbour National Park recreational areas to assess safety & environmental integrity.	NSW NPWS, Mosman LGA, Harbourside LAC and NSCCH	August 1 st 2007
To work with parents and young people using the HMAS Penguin recreational areas to promote community safety and reporting of risk incidents.	Harbourside LAC	
Recommendations from the audit reviewed. Agreed recommendations implemented.	Key Partners	
Conduct uniformed patrol of Sydney Harbour National Park National Park.	Harbourside LAC	July – Sept 2007
Conduct limited seasonal outreach to MSM networks at Sydney Harbour National Park National Park to promote safety and raise awareness of environmental management.	Harbourside GLLO and NSCCH	
Conduct uniformed patrol of Sydney Harbour National Park National Park.	Harbourside LAC	
To not release information to media that identifies the location of the beats.	Harbourside LAC	
To have transparency of process and include Beat Management in the Crime Prevention or Community Safety Plans of Mosman LGA.	Mosman LGA	
Beach Users encouraged to report illegal incidents to Harbourside LAC on a regular basis.	Beach Users	
NPWS to send weekly or fortnightly report of complaints received to Harbourside LAC.	NPWS	

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Safety & environmental audit conducted.
- Community safety messages delivered to parents and young people using the HMAS Penguin recreational areas.
- Recommendations reviewed three months post audit at a meeting with all Key Partners present and agreement is reached on implementation.
- High visibility policing conducted periodically in & around the HMAS Penguin recreational areas.
- Limited seasonal outreach conducted at Sydney Harbour National Park National Park.

An Environmental & Community Safety Partnership

- High visibility policing conducted periodically in & around Sydney Harbour National Park National Park.
- Recommendations from audit incorporated into Partnership Agreement.
- Information released to media concerning beat activity will not identify the location of these site(s).
- Mosman Community Safety or Social Plan updated to include management of Beats, including the promoting of safety and awareness for Parents and young people in relation to risk incidents.

Priority 2: To provide workforce development support to Key Partners in the management of MSM activity at Sydney Harbour National Park National Park.

Strategies	Responsibility	Time Frame
To implement 'beat management' training for Harbourside LAC, Mosman Rangers and NSW NPWS employees.	NSSCH	July 25 th , 31 st & August 1 st
Additional strategies to support employees to be explored in the future – such as use of resources to provide to the MSM community.	Key Partners	
Explore the development of NSW NPWS 'local' management policy in relation to beat activity.	NSW NPWS	
To liaise with Mosman Daily concerning the inaccurate reporting of incidents at Sydney Harbour National Park National Park.	Harbourside LAC	

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Beat workforce development conducted for Key Partner employees.
- Evaluation of training conducted.
- Newcastle/Hunter & Western Australian approaches to beat management reviewed for applicability & use.
- Letter sent to Mosman Daily.

Priority 3: To promote the environmental management of Sydney Harbour National Park National Park.

Strategies	Responsibility	Time Frame
To conduct an audit of Sydney Harbour National Park recreational areas to assess safety & environmental integrity.	NSW NPWS, Mosman LGA, Harbourside LAC and NSCCH	
To partner with the Gay Community to promote environmental ownership & responsibility for the Sydney Harbour National Park National Park site.	NSCCH, Harbourside LAC and NSW NPWS	
To provide the Gay Community information on the future environmental management plan for the Sydney Harbour National Park National Park site.	NSCCH and NSW NPWS	

An Environmental & Community Safety Partnership

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Environmental and community safety audit conducted.
- Audit report written and distributed to key Partners for review.
- Media article(s) generated for Sydney Star Observer promoting environmental responsibility by beat users at Sydney Harbour National Park National Park.
- To establish a community green volunteer group to assist NSW NPWS in the management of Sydney Harbour National Park National Park.

Priority 4: To target illegal activity in Sydney Harbour National Park.

Strategies	Responsibility	Time Frame
Signage through park nominating where to report suspected crimes eg Crime Stoppers.	Police, Mosman Council and NPWS members conducting safety audit.	1st September, 2007
All illegal activity/behaviour reported to N.P.W.S. and Citizens representing beach users, to be recorded and reported to police in a monthly report, or sooner if necessary.	N.P.W.S. Citizens representing beach users	1st of each month.
Police to conduct pro-active high visibility patrols in the Sydney Harbour National Park.	Police - Harbourside LAC	Ongoing
Police to conduct targeted operations to address reported crime.	Police - Harbourside LAC	Ongoing

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Crime Stoppers signage installed in park and key locations in Sydney Harbour National Park.
- Monthly reports, **for a trial period of 12 months??**, given to Harbourside LAC
- Number of pro-active high visibility patrols in the Sydney Harbour National Park conducted over a period of 6 – 12 months.
- Number of target operations to address reported crime.