



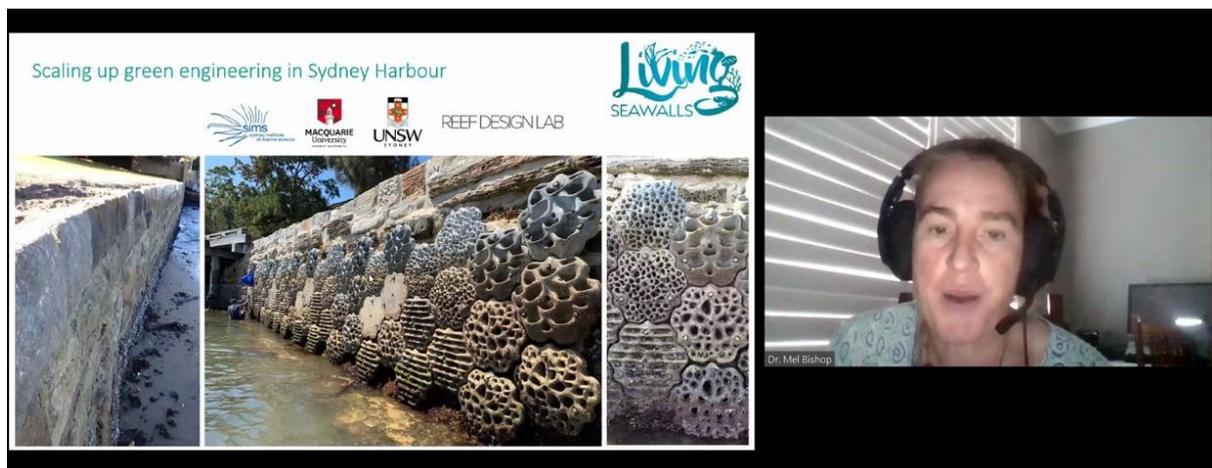
'Living Seawalls' **By Richard Lawson**

On 22 April the Cruising Division undertook our first online presentation, in order to stay connected with our Members during these most unusual and difficult times.

The Sydney Institute of Marine Sciences (SIMS), based at Chowder Bay, is a returning presenter. Approximately 18 months ago three of their highly qualified staff presented an excellent session on how they are monitoring the oceans of the world by using satellite transmitters epoxy fastened to the rears of turtles and seals. These scientists are truly happy to share their knowledge with whoever will listen, as was demonstrated by their willingness to accept our invitation to return with another of their favourite subjects, living seawalls.

Our webinar was ably chaired by John Taylor who, along with fellow Squadron Member Dorset Sutton, introduced Assoc. Professor Melanie Bishop as the prime presenter and her colleague Stephanie Morrison. Dorset is not a scientist but is a great supporter of the work that SIMS undertakes, mainly through his interest in the sea and all that grows on the seabed. It was fortunate to have him involved and explain the role he and his wife are playing in supporting the organisation.

As Prof. Bishop explained, the SIMS 'Living Seawall' project has been five years in the making. Working with local authorities, they are endeavouring to change the face of manmade seawalls to be more environmentally friendly. This process involves the fabrication of pre-cast concrete panels or 'tiles' which are attached to the manmade seawall. The tiles are in various three-dimensional shapes, designed to enhance the growth of seaborne creatures in the nooks and crannies of the tiles, bringing back life to the seawall.

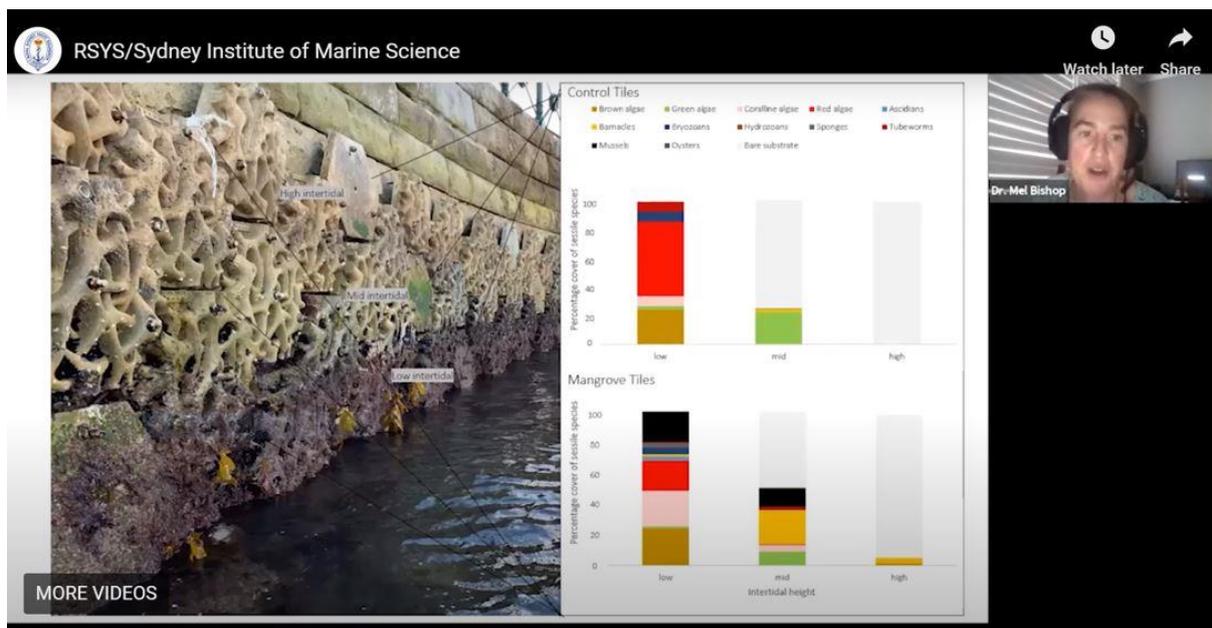


The overall intention is to replicate the effects that are created by rocky shorelines with tidal movements. In most cases, but not all, new seawalls are vertical, smooth or sloped at 45 degrees. The standout exception are the manmade retaining walls at Barangaroo.

The work is being undertaken by selected scientific personnel from UNSW and Macquarie University who collaborate with universities from around the world, along with their supporting sponsors. Our

own North Sydney Council has been a wonderful partner in this project, allowing installations at Sawmillers Reserve in two locations (2018), McMahons Point (2018) and South Bradfield Park, adjacent to Jeffery Street Wharf (2019.)

More recently, thanks to Dorset’s ongoing support, there are new installations at Clontarf and Fairlight pools which took effect in February of this year. All the installations are constantly monitored by a group of volunteers who assess the level of growth at different tidal levels. By far the majority of regrowth is by native species which is very pleasing from the scientists’ point of view.



Future installations for the SIMS group are planned at Rushcutters Bay, adjacent to the stormwater outlet, and then Thornton Park in East Balmain. The next part of the project is to develop ‘panels’ which can be used on piles and columns, along with the replacement of blocks in the seawall at Hayes Street, Neutral Bay.

Many Members have expressed to me how they had wished the presentation did not have to end, as the information was both fascinating and so beautifully presented. From a yachtsman’s point of view, it was a captivating subject. On the day, XX Members tuned in to the webinar and subsequently XX more viewed the recording of the presentation on the RSYS website or on YouTube (see below.)

Our sincere thanks to Melanie, Stephanie and Dorset for your time and effort in making this presentation happen in such a seamless manner. This was a first for both organisations and was extremely successful, as all our feedback has indicated!

RSYS webinars are published online at
<https://www.rsys.com.au/news-events/video-gallery>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrCcxg73iPjp1NfHWpNA9dw/playlists>