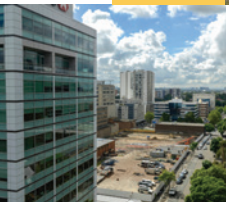
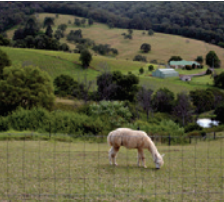




# ANNUAL REPORT

WESTERN SYDNEY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS

2016 - 2017



# WESTERN SYDNEY: A SNAPSHOT

POPULATION

**2,310,800**



**5,525 km<sup>2</sup>**  
GEOGRAPHIC AREA



ECONOMY (GRP)

**\$108.51  
BILLION**



HOME TO  
SYDNEY'S ONLY  
**NATURAL WORLD  
HERITAGE AREA**



**9.1%**

POPULATION GROWTH  
(OVER PAST 5 YEARS)



**OVER 200  
LANGUAGES  
SPOKEN**



**39% RESIDENTS  
BORN OVERSEAS**



**31% TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE  
REGION FOR WORK**



\*The above figures are based on the 2016/17 WSROC region including the Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Canterbury Bankstown, Cumberland, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Liverpool, Parramatta and Penrith local government areas.

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As a lifetime resident of Western Sydney, the way our region is constantly changing and evolving continues to amaze me.

In 1973 WSROC was formed because our leaders anticipated the massive development that was required to sustain the population growth of Western Sydney.

From a smattering of quarter acre blocks supported by jobs in factories, trades and market gardens, Western Sydney has rapidly become a network of regional cities.

As Western Sydney continues to grow, our lives are becoming more complex, our aspirations more sophisticated, and our communities more diverse.

Western Sydney councils have taken the lead in voicing our needs for appropriate large scale infrastructure projects and weighing in on state and federally managed issues.

As the collective voice for Western Sydney, WSROC has led the way on a number of issues requiring complex multi-sector discussion.

Urban heat mitigation, waste infrastructure planning, economic development, road tolls and fighting for a more transparent energy market are just some examples where WSROC is not only exceeding the jurisdiction of local government, but driving the discussion.

I would like to thank WSROC's members, partners and staff for their work over the past year – work that will ensure Western Sydney has a bright future.

**Councillor Stephen Bali**  
WSROC President



## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The conceptual shift from a singular CBD, to a 'three cities' narrative has dramatically changed the focus of planning and investment in Sydney over the past 12 months, and will alter the way in which Western Sydney is perceived for decades to come.

The growing role of local government in this new landscape has led WSROC to redefine what it is to live in Western Sydney, what our needs and aspirations are as a region, and how we will ensure these are met.

Increasingly, local government is being expected to play a strategic role in the vision for Sydney's future. An expectation which is both welcome and challenging.

Local government is well placed to inform and partner in strategic planning, however resource limitations make it critical that local governments work together and support each other through collective networks such as Regional Organisations of Councils.

WSROC's contribution to a more strategic and collaborative local government is a clear way to meet these challenges, and I look forward to working with our members to ensure the best outcomes for our entire region.

**Charles Casuscelli**  
WSROC CEO



# ADVOCATING FOR WESTERN SYDNEY

**26** submissions on behalf of Western Sydney councils

**428** media mentions over 122 million impressions

**20** meetings with ministerial offices

**65** forums on issues requiring regional collaboration

From public advocacy to direct political lobbying, for over 40 years WSROC has provided a forum through which key regional issues can be raised at the highest political levels.

## KEY ADVOCACY ISSUES FOR THE WSROC REGION

OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS INCLUDED

### FAIRER TOLLS FOR SYDNEY

- ✓ Weekly cap for road tolls
- ✓ Harmonisation of toll network
- ✓ WestConnex profits reinvested in the West

### LIVEABLE PLANNING FOR THE WEST

- ✓ Walkable neighbourhoods
- ✓ Prioritise funding for community facilities
- ✓ Build local economies

### SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENT

- ✓ Waste infrastructure planning
- ✓ Public lighting reform
- ✓ Container Deposit Scheme

### WESTERN SYDNEY RAIL NETWORK

- ✓ Two north south rail links
- ✓ Duplicate Western Rail Line
- ✓ Links to Western Sydney Airport

### REFUGEE SETTLEMENT

- ✓ Targeted funding for areas of high refugee intake
- ✓ Recognition of councils' role in settlement and community building

### PREVENT AND MITIGATE URBAN HEAT

- ✓ Develop multi-sector strategy
- ✓ Urban greening
- ✓ Planning reform

### WESTERN SYDNEY AIRPORT

- ✓ Rail connectivity
- ✓ Protections for residents and environment
- ✓ Economic and jobs strategy



# REGIONAL WASTE STRATEGY

Along with water and electricity, waste is an essential service for any city; one delivered almost solely by local government in collaboration with the private sector.

Right across Australia, councils are striving to deliver safe, affordable waste services in the context of growing populations, increasing household waste, and ever more expensive landfill costs. Nowhere is this pressure more acutely felt than in rapidly growing Western Sydney.

The Western Sydney Regional Waste Strategy was developed by 10 Western Sydney councils and funded by the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) in 2014.

Over the past three years the Strategy has allowed WSROC to drive a collaborative approach to waste management that seeks to reduce waste to landfill, tackle litter and illegal dumping, identify infrastructure gaps, achieve greater efficiencies and facilitate positive policy change.

In its final year, the Regional Waste Strategy successfully delivered

**\$3.5  
Million**



for Western Sydney initiatives, and has secured NSW EPA funding for a further four years.



## 2016/17 HIGHLIGHTS

### SETTING THE AGENDA



- ✓ 11 submissions to state and federal governments on critical waste planning issues for a growing Western Sydney.
- ✓ Engaged the Greater Sydney Commission in exploring waste planning as part of its District Plans.
- ✓ Put waste planning on the agenda at Australia's premier waste industry event.

### BETTER GOVERNANCE



- ✓ Selected to represent local government in the development of NSW Container Deposit Legislation alongside stakeholders such as Coca-Cola Amatil.
- ✓ Developed Western Sydney's first ever regional litter plan.
- ✓ Managed a review of local development control plans to support harmonisation of waste infrastructure standards across the region.

### BUILDING COLLABORATION



- ✓ Selected to represent local government on the NSW Tidy Roads Steering Committee alongside stakeholders such as Woolworths and Roads and Maritime Services (RMS).
- ✓ Worked in partnership with RMS and NSW EPA to reduce roadside litter across key sites.
- ✓ Managed a suite of working parties to facilitate joint programs, information sharing and professional development across councils.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



- ✓ Safely removed 44 tonnes of asbestos waste from Western Sydney homes.
- ✓ Developed a tool kit to help councils better engage with culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- ✓ Delivered 13 food waste avoidance classes to Western Sydney communities.

Participating councils: Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Cumberland, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, The Hills, Liverpool, Parramatta and Penrith.



# SUSTAINABILITY

## LIGHT YEARS AHEAD II

Following the success of the award-winning Light Years Ahead project (stage one), Western Sydney councils are seeking to pursue further energy efficiency projects at a regional level.

In addition to street lighting upgrades, the Light Years Ahead (LYA) II program will include a suite of sustainable building upgrades and renewable energy projects – including HVAC systems, lighting and solar – across a range of council facilities.

The program presents significant opportunities for councils to reduce costs, greenhouse gas emissions and improve operational efficiency.

With Western Sydney councils leading the way, the LYA II program has also drawn interest from a number of councils across NSW – bringing further collective benefits to participants.

**“It’s been a great experience working together under the WSROC banner. You feel like you’re not chipping away on your own.”**

– Council officer regarding participation in the LYA program



## PUBLIC LIGHTING ADVOCACY

Public street lighting is a complex issue.

While utility companies own the street lights (the assets) and conduct maintenance, the responsibility for providing street lighting to the community lies with councils.

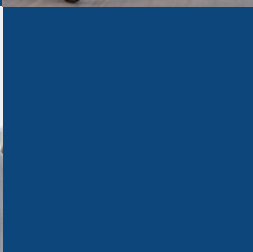
The current public lighting model is problematic for local government due to a lack of clear governance and pricing transparency. This is particularly significant given public lighting accounts for approximately 55 per cent of WSROC councils’ energy costs and around five per cent of total budget expenditure.

### WSROC is working with its member councils and other ROCs to advocate for:

- ✓ A mandatory and updated public lighting code: Amongst others, a new code should include a standard for minimum service delivery.
- ✓ Reduction of street lighting costs: including maintenance charges and supply and installation costs.
- ✓ Support for projects similar to Light Years Ahead, financially or otherwise.

## OTHER SUSTAINABILITY ACTIONS:

- ✓ Review of NSW Biodiversity Conservation Reforms.
- ✓ Response to NSW Climate Change Fund Strategic Plan.
- ✓ Working towards increased recycling and resource recovery.
- ✓ Provided feedback to the Greater Sydney Commission regarding the need for improved urban green cover and water management practices.



Urban heat refers to the tendency of cities to be much warmer than their rural counterparts. It occurs when urban surfaces such as roads and roofs absorb, hold, and re-radiate heat; raising the temperature in our towns. Human activity such as traffic, industry and electricity usage add to the effect.



# LIVEABILITY

## TURNING DOWN THE HEAT

**Urban heat is a significant and growing challenge for rapidly developing Western Sydney.** (Professor Phillip O'Neill, Director Centre for Western Sydney, Western Sydney University)

Western Sydney is hot and is set to get hotter as green fields make way for new housing developments; exacerbating what scientists call the urban heat island effect.

Extreme heat causes major liveability and resilience problems with critical impacts for human health, infrastructure, emergency services and the natural environment.

The WSROC-led Turn Down the Heat initiative aims to tackle urban heat in Western Sydney through a cross disciplinary network and multi-sector strategy that work towards a cooler, more liveable and resilient future.

The initiative has secured support from organisations including: Western Sydney University, the Greater Sydney Commission, Resilient Sydney, NSW Health, Office of Environment and Heritage, and NSW Department of Planning.

## PUTTING PEOPLE BACK INTO PLANNING

**There is no simple answer to Western Sydney's liveability challenges. But at the centre of anything we do should be the notion that we are planning for people.** (Professor Bill Randolph, Director of City Futures, UNSW)

The Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) offers tremendous opportunity for developing a more liveable Western Sydney. However, we must actively strive to ensure that this process reflects the whole community.

In March 2017, WSROC hosted the Planning a Liveable Western Sydney forum which sought to engage professionals working in Western Sydney's arts, cultural development, community services and non-profit sectors to contribute to the GSC's District Plans.

Over 100 people attended the event, which offered the opportunity to speak with GSC Social Commissioner Heather Nesbitt, hear from social planning expert Professor Bill Randolph, and contribute to a collective submission to the draft District Plans.





# PRODUCTIVITY

**WSROC exists to make its member councils stronger through joint initiatives, economies of scale and opportunities for knowledge and resource sharing. Stronger councils mean stronger communities.**



## PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

WSROC's professional networks offer council officers the opportunity to work collaboratively, build partnerships and access professional development.

- ✓ General managers
- ✓ Strategic planning
- ✓ Human resources
- ✓ Environment and sustainability
- ✓ Procurement
- ✓ Communications and media
- ✓ Waste planning
- ✓ Economic development
- ✓ Waste managers
- ✓ Arts and cultural development
- ✓ Environmental educators
- ✓ Community development

## JOINT PROCUREMENT

Through strength of numbers WSROC councils are able to achieve greater economies of scale in the procurement of goods and services such as asphalt, office supplies, mattress collection and hazardous waste disposal.

By working together WSROC councils have been able to save in excess of \$1.2 million collectively on key procurement contracts in 2016-17.

## BUSINVEST

WSROC acknowledges the need for attracting new business and investment opportunities to the Western Sydney Region.

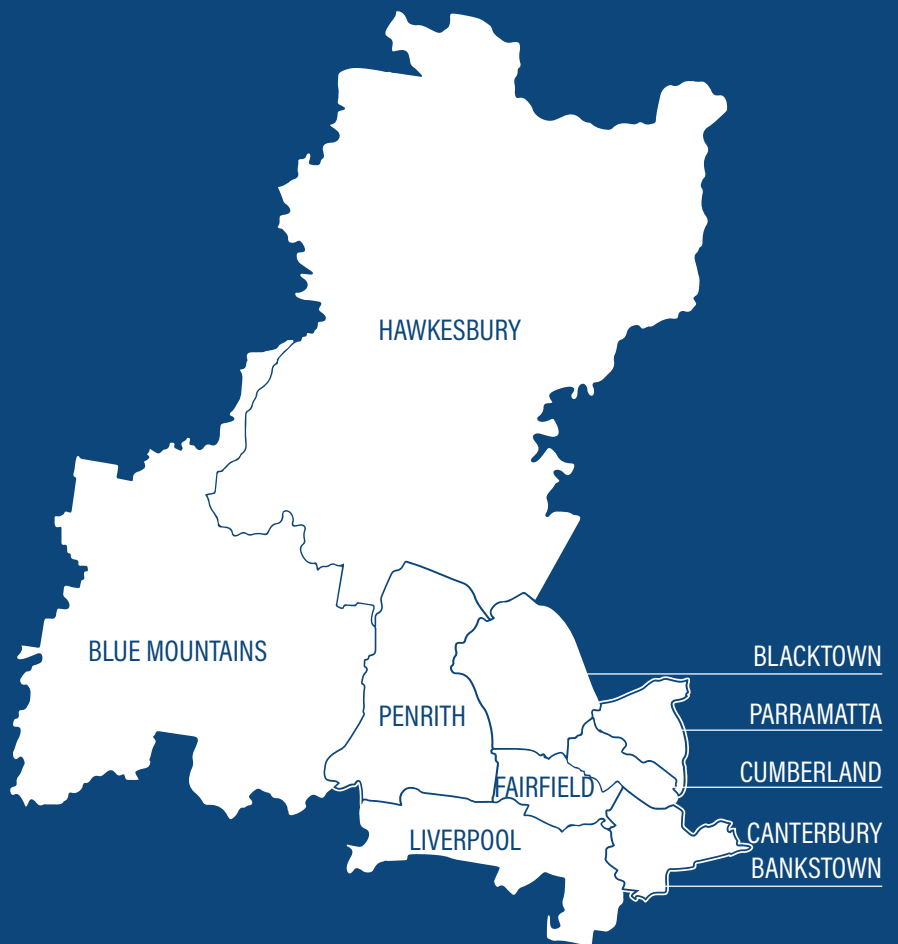
Its state government supported BusInvest initiative seeks to develop a coordinated approach to marketing of investment opportunities across the region.

## ANIMAL HOLDING FACILITIES

During 2016-17 WSROC commissioned a study into animal holding facilities and animal welfare programs in Western Sydney.

With current facilities either at capacity, closing down or relocating, there is a need to develop long term sustainable solutions, taking into account the region's projected population growth and potential legislative changes over the next twenty years.

Participating councils: Blacktown, Canterbury Bankstown, Cumberland, The Hills, Fairfield, Liverpool and Parramatta.



## WORK WITH US

WSROC welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with any group or individual working towards the betterment of Western Sydney. To learn more about the work we do please do not hesitate to get in touch.

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