WSROC

Advocating for the people of Western Sydney

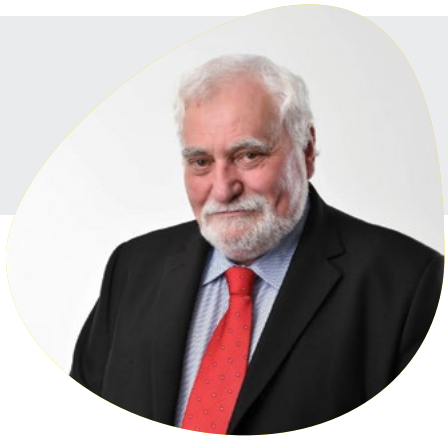
CELEBRATING 50 YEARS 1973 - 2023

ANNUAL REPORT

WESTERN SYDNEY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS

2022/2023

FROM THE PRESIDENT



In November, Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) will mark 50 years of continual service, advocating on behalf of the communities of Western Sydney.

Over the half century, WSROC has secured a host of improvements in public transport, infrastructure, urban planning and management, economic development, environmental management, and in employment creation, community services and many other areas of vital concern to our member councils.

Today, even during what have been exceptionally challenging times there is a sense that our member councils are well on the way to providing more sustainable, secure and prosperous futures for the people of Greater Western Sydney.

In keeping with such a positive outlook, WSROC has this year formally adopted a set of Strategic Priorities outlining the organisation's core work direction and objectives for the period 2022-2026.

Development of the 2022-2026 WSROC Strategic Priorities document involved a stimulating exchange of ideas and insights with fellow councillors and mayors from across the Greater Western Sydney region.

Their guidance was essential to ensure we are tackling the issues most critical for our region – whether supporting vulnerable communities, through leadership on social and affordable housing, by addressing the financial sustainability of councils, promoting climate resilience, working to improve local employment prospects, promoting integrated transport networks, waste management and resource recovery, and much else.

Among the many pleasing initiatives this year have been WSROC's founding of our world-first Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce to build the city's resilience to heat; the new Western Sydney Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2022-2027; our Future Proofing Residential Development in Western Sydney project; the excellent cross-cultural 'Moving House' illegal-dumping prevention campaign, and many other such excellent initiatives.

It was also gratifying that WSROC's Heat Smart Western Sydney project was acknowledged in the 2022 Excellence in the Environment Awards.

This brief report will give you some insight into what has been an especially productive year by WSROC.

Councillor Barry Calvert

2022-2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Environment Award

WSROC won the 'Climate Change Adaptation' category of the 2022 Local Government NSW Excellence in the Environment Awards for its 'Heat Smart Western Sydney' project.
The Awards celebrate outstanding achievements in managing and protecting the environment.

Great West Walk

The Great West Walk has been extended by 80 kilometres.

The Great West Walk now makes it possible to walk from Parramatta in the city's west to Katoomba in the fabled Blue Mountains, through some of Australia's most spectacular scenery and historic locations.

Strategic Priorities

WSROC formally adopted its Strategic Priorities outlining the organisation's core work direction and objectives for the period 2022-2026.

The Strategic Priorities document was formally endorsed at WSROC's Board of Directors Meeting on 25 August.

ADVOCACY AND POLICY OUTCOMES

WSROC actively advocates on key issues for the Western Sydney region.

In 2022-2023, our work led on:

L-R: Federal Member for Parramatta **Andrew Charlton MP**, Minister for Disaster Response **Senator Murray Watt** and WSROC CEO **Charles Casuscelli**.

"Working with WSROC to investigate heat-related issues in Western Sydney was rewarding, and their dedicated advocacy for heat resilience is commendable."

- Dr Anir Upadhyay, University of NSW

Heatwave Risk Funding
Heat was included as an eligible hazard under National Emergency Management Agency funding programs.

Electric vehicles
WSROC provided input to the development of the Australian Government's National Electric Vehicle Strategy.

WSROC worked with **Green Building Council of Australia** to develop heat resilience credits in version two of its Green Star Communities tool.

NSW Motorway Tolling Inquiry
After seven years of WSROC advocacy and urging the government to make tolling simpler and fairer, the NSW government agreed to a review of road tolls.

WestInvest
$5 billion from the NSW Government's WestConnex toll road sale was reinvested to help address Western Sydney's infrastructure and liveability needs.

Heatwave warnings
Bureau of Meteorology has updated heatwave warnings to include health advice.

Funding solutions
After urging by WSROC, the NSW Government is to establish an independent review of the financial arrangements for councils.

Western Sydney Energy Program
Western Sydney councils' efforts result in a reduction of 535,714t of CO_2e.

17
Submissions

43
Letters to Ministers

114
Forums

FROM THE CEO

While this has been an exceptional year of activity and achievement on behalf of our member councils, Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils' primary focus is on the future.

Supporting vulnerable communities will be a key consideration under all priorities defined by WSROC's strategic direction in the coming years.

Integral to that, of course, will be ensuring the financial resilience of our member councils to allow local government in Western Sydney to meet community needs and expectations.

Among the major issues confronting Western Sydney communities in the immediate future will be, of course the development of Western Sydney International Airport; both its flight paths and operations, as well as the area's ongoing development and infrastructure provision.

Charles Casuscelli RFD

TURN DOWN THE HEAT

Heat is arguably the greatest threat to Western Sydney's health, liveability, and productivity in the immediate future.

Western Sydney is leading the way in developing a resilience-based approach to heat management. WSROC projects and partnerships are driving this agenda.

"Evidence and tools being created by WSROC are not just valuable to Western Sydney but all of Australia."

– Andrew Gissing, CEO of Natural Hazards Research Australia'

OUR PROJECTS

GREATER SYDNEY HEAT TASKFORCE

WSROC secured $1.3 million from the NSW and Australian Governments to establish a multi-agency Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce that will:

- **Codesign a multi-sector plan for city-wide heat resilience.**
- **Expand and refine the award-winning heat resilience rating tool Cool Suburbs.**
- **Develop and pilot a holistic methodology for assessing local heat risk.**
- **Develop evidence-based tools to help councils advance heatwave planning.**

CLIMATE RESILIENT STREET TREES

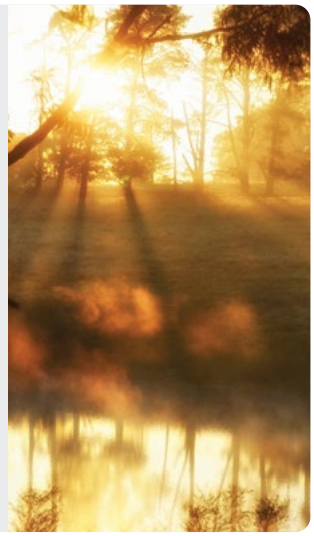
This project tests climate resilience of tree species with and without access to passive irrigation at demonstration sites across Western Sydney.

FUTURE PROOFING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

This project modelled the effectiveness of NSW BASIX standards in delivering safe Western Sydney homes today and in 2030 and 2050 future climates.

In 2022 - 2023, WSROC's work engaged across industry, state and national governments

- WSROC co-designed an Urban Cooling credential with Western Sydney University's Professor Sebastian Pfautsch.
- Worked with Green Building Council of Australia to develop heat resilience credits in V2 of its Green Star Communities tool.
- Worked with NSW Government and Western Sydney University to host Western Sydney consultation on National Climate Risk Assessment.
- Provided input to the NSW State Level Emergency Risk Assessment for heatwave.
- Delivered address on heat hazard management to 2023 Natural Hazard Research Australia Conference.
- Partnered with Hills Doctor's Association and NSW AMA to deliver Western Sydney Heat and Health Forum to health professionals.
- Heat Smart Western Sydney won the 'Climate Change Adaptation' category of the 2022 Excellence in the Environment Awards.



NSW GOVERNMENT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NSW

The Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce is funded through the joint Australian Government–NSW Government National Partnership Agreement on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Future Proofing Residential Development is a collaboration between WSROC, UNSW, WSP, DPE (BASIX), Blacktown City Council, Hawkesbury City Council, Liverpool City Council, Waverley Council, proudly funded by the NSW Government in association with Local Government NSW.

Climate Resilient Street Trees is part of the Greening Our City grant program that is proudly funded by the NSW Government in association with Local Government NSW.

WESTERN SYDNEY ENERGY PROGRAM

Regional cost savings:
$36 million*
to date.

Emissions reductions:
535,714t CO_2e**
Equivalent to taking 124,585 cars off the road per year!

Renewable energy:
100% renewable Power Purchase Agreement
facilitated with Local Government Procurement, joined by 34 councils to date.

"We are pleased to partner with our Western Sydney councils to achieve both environmental and financial benefits for their communities.."

– Andrew Pitman, General Manager Business Services, Endeavour Energy

KEY PROJECTS

Street lighting

By June 2024, more than 100,000 streetlights will have been changed to LEDs across eight local government areas. Savings have been:

- $12.6 million in estimated regional energy costs annually, and
- 56,000 tonnes of CO_2e to date.

NSW's first smart street lighting trial was implemented in Parramatta.
Ongoing advocacy resulted in lower streetlight tariffs and maintenance charges for councils.

Liverpool **Deputy Mayor Karress Rhodes**, Blacktown **Mayor Tony Bleasdale** and WSROC's **Nic Pasternatsky** inspect new LED streetlight.

Electric vehicle transition

Eight councils have joined WSROC's Western Sydney Electric Vehicle (EV) Roadmap, with a focus on:

- assisting councils with EV transition plans, policy and charging for fleet.
- advocacy and policy development to support public uptake of EVs.

Planning and design

- Environmental Sustainable Design (ESD) standards and equipment specifications for council buildings.
- Ongoing advocacy for more ambitious BASIX and National Construction Code (NCC) standards for energy savings and thermal performance.

Knowledge exchange

- 90 workshops, forums and/or knowledge-sharing sessions.
- 250 stakeholders engaged across sustainability, transport, planning asset management, health.

Advocacy

WSROC made submissions to:

- The Australian Government's Fuel Efficiency Standard for new light vehicles.
- Endeavour Energy's Electricity Distribution Price Review for the 2024-29 period.
- The National Electric Vehicle Strategy Consultation.
- ARENA in support of Endeavour Energy's proposal for community batteries.

WSROC is a member of...

Endeavour Energy's Peak Customer & Stakeholder Committee, Future Grid Reference Group, and the Regulatory Reference Group.

**To date, over life of the program; energy costs, maintenance costs, capital costs. ** Over the 20-year life of the assets.*

REGIONAL WASTE STRATEGY

This program strengthens councils' provision of sustainable, affordable waste services, supported by policy and regulatory decisions.

In partnership with Western Sydney councils, WSROC works closely with the NSW Environment Protection Authority and councils throughout NSW.

2022-2023 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Western Sydney Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2022-2027** with eight Western Sydney councils.
- A new bus advertising campaign to **promote Community Recycling Centres/Mobile Community Recycling Services** across Western Sydney was just a part of WSROC's ongoing promotion and education initiative to address household problem waste.
- Worked collaboratively with major community housing providers across Western Sydney to promote WSROC's ***'Moving House'*** illegal-dumping prevention campaign materials and support residents with bulky household waste disposal.
- Investigated methods to collect organic waste in apartments and developed guidance for councils to implement planning controls to support **organic waste service delivery.**
- WSROC delivered **Contestability Training in Waste Contracts** for council staff to better understand the role of contestability frameworks specific to waste procurement and purchasing.

The regional waste program provides support on:

- **Supporting councils to deliver household waste and recycling services.**
- **Advocating for the needs of councils and the community in government policy and programs.**
- **Delivering resource recovery programs and community campaigns.**

"This training was some of the most useful training I have attended in this contract space!"

– WSROC Contestability in Waste Contracts training participant

Regional Waste Strategy

Eight Western Sydney councils are working with WSROC to deliver new regional waste strategy programs.

Moving House

The *Moving House* campaign supports people to responsibly manage waste, with online resources in six languages.

Council Resources

We developed a FOGO resources library to support councils with community engagement for new waste service delivery.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP: THE BOTTOM LINE

WSROC projects generate significant economies and regional improvement. Collaboration has already resulted in millions of dollars in savings for member councils.

"The Urban Transformations Research Centre has welcomed working closely with WSROC ... Joining forces is key."

– Professor Nicky Morrison, Western Sydney University

OUTCOMES

$2.1 million
worth of grant-funded programs managed on behalf of WSROC member councils

$1.3 million
in joint Australian and NSW Government funding to address heat risk in Greater Sydney

$36 million in energy savings
to member councils to date in energy costs, capital costs, and maintenance charges through sustainable energy projects

100% renewable
power purchase agreement through Local Government Procurement

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- **Great West Walk**
  The Great West Walk was extended by 80 kilometres, making it possible to walk from Parramatta in the city's west to Katoomba in the fabled Blue Mountains.
- **Moving House**
  Multicultural resources to help people who are moving house to responsibly manage waste, followed up with a successful social media campaign.
- **Problem Waste? No Problem.**
  Direct advice for residents to help safely dispose of hazardous waste that can't go into garbage bins.

SUPPORTING COUNCILS

- **Research and analysis**
  Our regional approach to researching community attitudes and analysing waste data saves councils time and money.
- **Training and development**
  WSROC provides tailored training to help council staff navigate emerging issues such as waste contracts and heatwave preparedness.
- **Networking and sharing**
  Our inter-council networking encourages practice-based learning and support.
- **Working together**
  WSROC partnered with councils to develop the Western Sydney Regional Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2022-2027.

POWER IN PARTNERSHIP

WSROC works in partnership with councils, industry leaders, research academics and policy makers, including:

- Codesigning the **'Basics of Urban Cooling'** micro-course with **Western Sydney University.**
- Forming a partnership with the **NSW Environment Protection Authority** to deliver local training for council staff.
- Forming a partnership with **Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils** and **Southern Sydney Organisation of Councils** to deliver waste industry and infrastructure information sessions for metropolitan councils.
- Worked with stakeholders around Australia to develop a heat hazard research agenda for **Natural Hazards Research Australia.**
- The **Western Sydney Energy Program** is a collaboration between eight Western Sydney councils to provide strategic direction, guidance, set priorities and assist in developing a work plan.

WORKING FOR WESTERN SYDNEY

With a reputation for considered policy analysis and bipartisan advocacy, the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) brings a collective voice to those issues that are crucial for Western Sydney's growing population.

Established in 1973, WSROC represents local councils in the Greater Western Sydney region. In addition to advocacy, WSROC is a forum that facilitates stronger partnerships, professional development, and opportunities for regional collaboration between Western Sydney councils and their stakeholders.

1,088,199
Local jobs

2,268,329
Population

35
Median age

9,391km²
Area

23.4%
of households speak a language other than English at home

$157.21
Billion GRP: Western Sydney is Australia's third largest economy

2.36%
of people are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent

+300,000
resident workers commute outside the region

WORKING FOR WESTERN SYDNEY

WSROC welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with any group or individual working towards the betterment of Western Sydney. To learn more, or to work with us, please get in touch.

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Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC)

Blacktown City Council

blue mountains City Council

CUMBERLAND CITY COUNCIL

Hawkesbury City Council

LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL