23/24 ANNUAL REPORT

WESTERN SYDNEY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS

WSROC

Advocating for the people of Western Sydney

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As an organisation, WSROC's advocacy, projects and partnerships have long produced many, many tangible, positive outcomes for the people of Western Sydney.

In this reporting period alone, WSROC in partnership with Resilient Sydney co-founded the world-first Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce to build the city's resilience to heat and climate change; embarked on a new Western Sydney Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2022- 2027; and conducted a technical review of the Western Sydney International Airport's proposed flight paths considering health, social and economic impacts for our region.

It was announced, too, that WSROC and seven participating Western Sydney councils will team up to action the Western Sydney Regional Litter Prevention Plan 2023-2027, an initiative which has attracted $450,000 in grant funding by the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) through the Litter Prevention Grants Program.

Largely thanks to work by WSROC in partnership with the environmental consultancy Ironbark Sustainability, councils are on track to save an additional $34 million in street lighting energy costs over the next five years.

There have been many other excellent initiatives throughout the year, much of it garnering public acclaim.

Throughout the reporting period, WSROC has been particularly keen to engage with the federal and state governments on creating local jobs in Western Sydney as well as building the necessary supporting social and other infrastructure around transport hubs, too.

I look forward to ongoing opportunities to partner with the NSW and Commonwealth governments to create solutions to such urgent issues as housing shortages, inadequate public transport provision, energy and waste management, along with many other pressing economic, environmental and social challenges.

I call upon the NSW and Commonwealth governments and all interested parties to join with us to make Western and South-Western Sydney a desirable place to live and work as we head towards a population of four million people.

Councillor Barry Calvert

2023/2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Excellence Award

WSROC's **Regional Waste Strategy** team members **Amanda Bombaci** and **Wendy Xing** were presented with the Local Government NSW '2023 Excellence in the Environment Award' for 'Innovation in Planning, Policies and Decision Making'.

Image: Amanda Bombaci and award sponsor Tim Stubbs of Wolf Peak.

Caring for Country

WSROC secured a service delivery partnership with the Department of Planning, Housing, Infrastructure & Environment, under the Cumberland Plains Conservation Plan (CPCP), to administer **the $1.5 million Caring for Country Grants** for councils and to conduct a **$1 million 15-month CPCP Compliance Strategy** pilot.

Western Sydney Airport

WSROC delivered a joint technical review of the **Western Sydney Airport Environmental Impact Statement** flightpaths in partnership with member councils to assess the reliability and technical accuracy of the aircraft noise assessment presented in the draft EIS, assisting member councils reach an informed view on potential aircraft noise impacts within their respective areas.

ADVOCACY AND POLICY OUTCOMES

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

In 2023-2024, our work led on:

WSROC President
Clr Barry Calvert and
NSW Premier Chris Minns

"You do the work because you care about community and want to be part of positive change."

- Chris Minns,
NSW Premier

Motorway Toll Relief:
WSROC's advocacy for a review of motorway tolls, urging the government to make toll roads fairer, saw the government impose toll price caps this year.

NSW Heatwave Subplan:
WSROC vigorously advocated for a review of the State Heatwave Subplan and will seek to ensure the review improves outcomes and provides clarity for local government.

Changes to Create Low and Mid-Rise Housing:
WSROC advocated for an improved system of planning controls that resulted in a sensible exclusion of bushfire and flood prone land.

Inquiry into the NSW Planning System and the Impacts of Climate Change:
WSROC urged the Inquiry to take account of how the planning system addresses extreme heat.

Funding Solutions:
After urging by WSROC, the NSW Government established an independent review of the financial arrangements for councils.

7
Meetings with Ministers

14
Submissions

27
Letters to Government

77
Professional Forums

FROM THE CEO

While WSROC and our various stakeholders and project partners can take considerable satisfaction in the many excellent performance outcomes reported in this brief summary of the year's achievements, be assured our team members are already busy and excited with an array of interesting regional projects for the next 12 months.

In coming weeks and months, WSROC will be announcing details of some exciting initiatives by the Greater Sydney Heat Task Force in building community resilience to climate change, along with new projects in land management, compliance, litter prevention, and the circular economy.

And of course, WSROC will continue with our strong advocacy on behalf of our member councils, communities, and other partners, engaging robustly with the state and federal governments and their various agencies for improved infrastructure, community services, and economic development for the people of Western Sydney.

Charles Casuscelli RFD

TURN DOWN THE HEAT

Western Sydney is at the coalface of Australia's heat challenge, but we are delivering world-leading solutions.

WSROC's Turn Down the Heat Strategy has delivered over $2.3 million of award-winning programs since 2018.

The final year of the Strategy has been its most ambitious yet thanks to $1.3 million funding for the **Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce.**

"WSROC is taking the lead on understanding and managing heat risk, and is working in close collaboration with a number of state agencies to ensure our work supports state plans and strategies..."

– Sam Kernaghan, Committee for Sydney

GREATER SYDNEY HEAT TASKFORCE

The Taskforce brings together government, industry and community sector leaders committed to building heat resilience in Greater Sydney. The Taskforce oversees delivery of four projects.

HEAT SMART CITY PLAN

A multi-sector heat resilience plan for Greater Sydney co-designed with over 40 organisations. Due for release in September 2024, the Plan will outline agreed priorities for building a city where all people can survive and thrive in a warming climate and extreme heat events.

Topics covered include: urban planning, emergency management, infrastructure, business, community empowerment, research and data.

HEAT RISK ASSESSMENT

What does a 10 or 100-year heatwave look like? And how does it affect communities in place? This heat risk assessment analyses a range of measures linked to heat-health outcomes including air temperature, humidity, windspeed, urban form, canopy cover, socioeconomics, behaviour and service access to produce a high-resolution mapping tool for councils.

COOL SUBURBS NSW

A science-led heat resilience assessment for urban development. Designed with leading researchers, government and industry, Cool Suburbs NSW allows heat assessment across eight NSW climate zones via an easy-to-use web interface.

HEATWAVE MANAGEMENT GUIDE

Demands for councils to actively manage heat are growing.

However, this is a new and emerging space with unclear roles and little guidance. This Guide provides frameworks, advice and real-world examples on addressing heat in operations, community development, communications and emergency management.

Australian Government

NSW GOVERNMENT

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

WESTERN SYDNEY ENERGY PROGRAM

The Western Sydney Energy Program aims to realise energy, cost and emission savings for Western Sydney councils and their communities.

Regional cost savings:

$55 million*

to date.

Emissions reductions:

656,886t CO_2e**

Equivalent to taking 142,801 cars off the road per year!

Image: *Endeavour Energy Business Services GM Andrew Pitman and Liverpool City Councillor Karress Rhodes, with new energy saving LED streetlight.*

"The Western Sydney Energy Program (WSEP) supports the type of collaboration and knowledge sharing that is required to rapidly reduce Australia's emissions. WSEP has enabled us to deliver a range of projects that would not otherwise have been possible."

– Robert, Blue Mountains City Council

KEY PROJECTS

Australian Energy Regulator pricing review

Advocacy to reduce councils' costs for street lighting.

- Advocacy on Australian Energy Regulator pricing review resulted in $34 million savings across the region.

EV Roadmap

Ensuring Western Sydney is at the forefront of the transition to electric transport.

- EV fleet transition and associated charging plans developed for four councils.
- Advocacy for a Regional EV Public Charging Infrastructure Master Plan.

Street light upgrades

Ongoing street lighting upgrade program in partnership with Endeavor Energy.

- To date 52,200 Western Sydney streetlights have been upgraded to LEDs.
- Implementation of the largest Smart & LED streetlighting upgrade in NSW. Allowing for lowering lighting levels where and when appropriate, achieving additional savings, as well as managing light pollution, and protecting wildlife.

Community Renewable Energy Program

Reducing emissions and securing more resilience in the energy network.

- Development of a bulk-buy solar and batteries program working towards a virtual power plant.

Knowledge exchange

Ongoing collaboration and skills building on topics such as EV transition, community renewable energy, street lighting and sustainable design for councils. We hosted:

- 27 workshops and information sharing sessions.
- Two Western Sydney Energy Forums with Western Sydney councils, Endeavour Energy and the NSW Government.

*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' capacity to deliver 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.

2023-2024 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- **$851,945 secured in grant funding** to deliver waste and circular economy projects committed to in the **Western Sydney Regional Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy** over coming years.
- Joint advocacy with industry and councils to ensure waste is considered in the NSW Government's Low and Mid-Rise Housing reforms.
- WSROC partnered with the **NSW Environment Protection Authority** urging do-it-yourself home renovators and building trades to **'Be Asbestos Ready'** before working on homes built before 1990 because of the threat of deadly asbestos.
- **16 professional officer forums for councils** with over **297 total attendees** across events covering organic waste service implementation, infrastructure prioritisation and understanding regulatory changes.
- **$833,381 of value** in resources provided to and projects delivered for councils in 2023 - 2024.

"... innovation in the application of integrated environmental management and sustainability practices in planning, policies and decision making..."

– Local Government NSW Award citation

The regional waste program supports councils by:

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

Regional Litter Strategy

WSROC worked with seven councils and NSW EPA to develop a coordinated strategic direction to prevent litter and reduce costs of cleaning up litter to the community.

International Collaboration

We hosted Dutch consular and businesses representatives to tour local resource recovery facilities to foster collaboration on circular economy transitions and supporting infrastructure.

Backing Councils

WSROC supported councils in policy and legislation changes including waste tendering regulations, FOGO mandates, housing reform and infrastructure planning.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

WSROC's strength is collaboration. We work with councils, industry leaders, research academics, policy makers, and community organisations to build knowledge, improve practice and deliver outcomes.

CONNECTING RESEARCH WITH PRACTICE

- Supported pilot of **University of Sydney HeatWatch** app with Western Sydney communities.
- Partnered with **Western Sydney University** and **NSW AMA Beat the Heat** event to build sector risk awareness.
- Worked with the **Urban Transformations Center** on climate governance research.
- Engaged a multi-university science panel in updates to **Cool Suburbs NSW.**

SUPPORTING COUNCIL LEADERSHIP

- WSROC supported regional waste solutions including **Liverpool City Council's Mattress Shredder.**
- WSROC worked with **Hawkesbury City** community organisations on **Person-Centred Preparedness Program.**
- WSROC supported **Blacktown City Council's** calls to open **Prospect Reservoir** to the community.

Image: Mattress Shredder, courtesy Liverpool City Council

CUMBERLAND PLAINS CONSERVATION PROGRAM

WSROC in partnership with the NSW Department of Planning, Housing, Infrastructure & Environment is delivering the Cumberland Plains Conservation Program (CPCP) with two regional initiatives, Caring for Country Council Grants Program and a Compliance Strategy.

The CPCP is a conservation plan for Western Sydney that identifies strategically important biodiversity areas within the Cumberland Plains to ensure that future urban development will also support a vibrant, green and liveable region until 2056 and beyond.

COLLABORATIVE FORUMS

WSROC's collaborative forums bring together councils, state government, and key stakeholders to discuss regional issues, share information and plan potential solutions to common challenges.

Forums this year included:

- The Western Sydney Asbestos Forum,
- The Greater Sydney Waste Planning Forum,
- The Western Sydney Energy Forum and
- Western Sydney Regional FOGO implementation Forum.

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.

45.7%
of households speak a language other than English at home

$170 Billion
GRP: Western Sydney is Australia's third largest economy

2.10%
of people are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent

32%
of of our resident workers commute outside the region

989,150	2,734,168	35	8,982km²
Local jobs	Population	Median age	Area

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