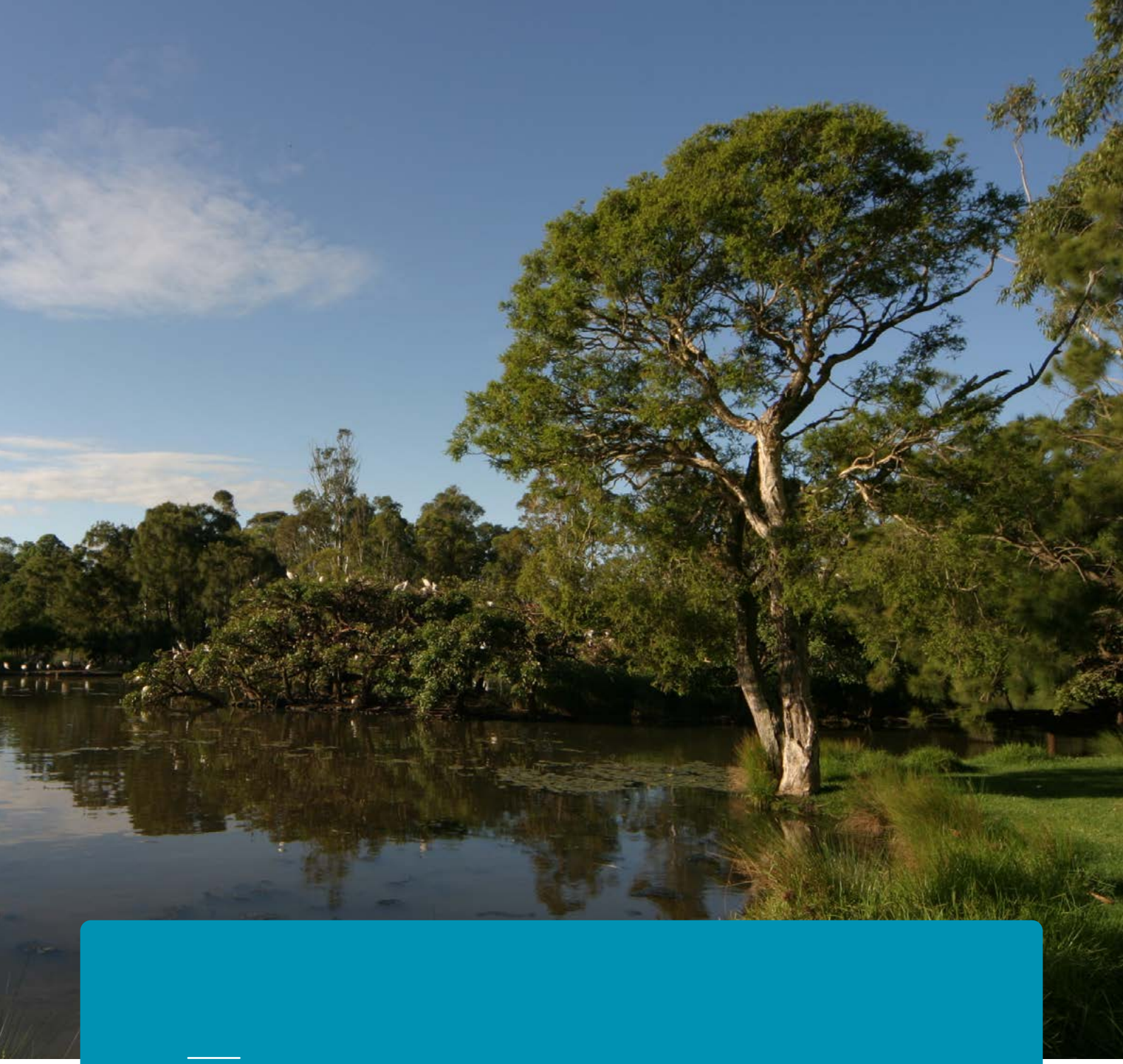
24/25 ANNUAL REPORT

WESTERN SYDNEY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS

WSROC

Advocating for the people of Western Sydney



WSROC acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters of this place we now call Western Sydney. We pay our respect to Elders past and present of the Dharug (Darug) and Gundungurra peoples.

CONTENTS

ABOUT WESTERN SYDNEY 4

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE 5

WINS FOR WESTERN SYDNEY 7

ABOUT WSROC 11

THE WSROC JOURNEY 13

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2022-2026 14

- **Strategic Priority:** Supporting our communities 15
- **Strategic Priority:** Financial resilience of councils 16
- **Strategic Priority:** Waste and circular economy 18
- **Strategic Priority:** Heat resilience 22
- **Strategic Priority:** Climate change and energy 26
- **Strategic Priority:** Environmental management 30
- **Strategic Priority:** Housing 32
- **Strategic Priority:** Transport and infrastructure 34

TRAINING, EVENTS AND NETWORKS 37

REMEMBERING CHARLES CASUSCELLI 40

ABOUT WESTERN SYDNEY

- Greater Western Sydney is a vast and diverse region spanning some 8,982 square kilometres.
- The region includes thriving communities and such iconic natural landscapes as the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, and key waterways like the Hawkesbury-Nepean and Georges Rivers.
- Western Sydney also features significant parklands, including the 5,280-hectare Western Sydney Parklands – a 27-kilometre green corridor connecting the North West Growth Area at Blacktown to the South West Growth Area at Liverpool.
- As Australia's third-largest economy, Western Sydney contributes an estimated $182 billion in Gross Regional Product, at an average annual growth rate of 2.5%.
- In the next five years, Western Sydney is projected to create 173,000 new jobs.
- Major projects including the Western Sydney International Airport, the new Bradfield City, and North South Metro Rail projects will transform the region.
- Western Sydney is also one of the nation's most culturally rich regions, home to nearly 2.8 million people, with 45.7% speaking a language other than English at home.
- Some 54,498 Western Sydney residents are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

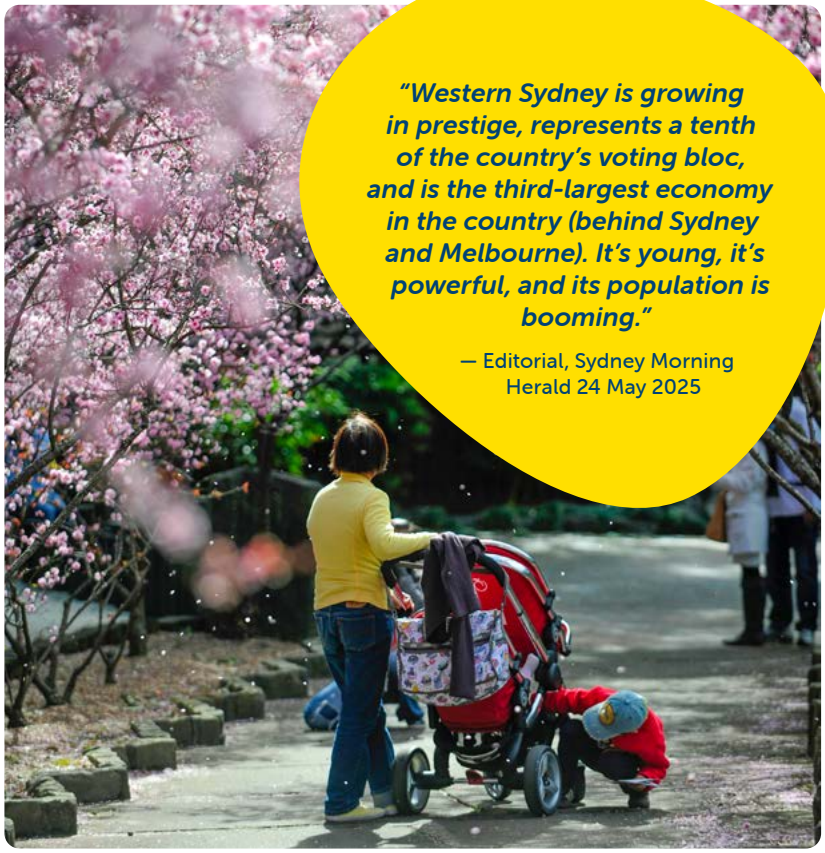
1 in 11 Australians
live in Western Sydney.

$182.52 billion
GRP: Western Sydney is Australia's third largest economy.

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

2%
of residents are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

29.9%
or 327,795 of our resident workers commute outside the region.



"Western Sydney is growing in prestige, represents a tenth of the country's voting bloc, and is the third-largest economy in the country (behind Sydney and Melbourne). It's young, it's powerful, and its population is booming."

— Editorial, Sydney Morning Herald 24 May 2025

Fast facts

263,599 Local businesses
1,112,721 Local jobs
1,353,201 Employed residents
2,799,641 Population
35 Median age
8,982 km² Area

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Responding to growth: Advocacy and action for Western Sydney's future

Councillor Brad Bunting — President

Western Sydney is growing at an unprecedented rate.

By 2036, more than half of Sydney's population will live west of Parramatta, and Greater Western Sydney's population is set to surge from 2.8 million today to 4.1 million by 2041.

In response to the pressures and opportunities arising from this growth, our member councils have worked together to identify strategic priorities that guide WSROC's regional programs and advocacy. These include:

- Supporting our communities
- Financial resilience of councils
- Waste and circular economy
- Heat resilience
- Climate change and energy
- Environmental management
- Housing
- Transport and infrastructure.

WSROC's work and outcomes in each of these areas are outlined in this report.

Central to all our work, is seeking to build the capacity and resilience of councils. For too long, local government funding has fallen short of what is needed to deliver essential services.

This is a challenge across Australia, but in Western Sydney, rapid population growth makes the situation even more urgent.

Growth areas mingle with suburbs that have a long history of inadequate spending on the facilities, spaces, and services essential to community life.

This lack of investment has impacted the quality of life and wellbeing of our communities.

WSROC's strong advocacy has driven national conversations around the need to deliver the investment to address Western Sydney's backlog in public transport infrastructure, reduce congestion and carbon emissions.

Critical skills and labour shortages at the local level are also impacting Western Sydney communities, putting a brake on local economic development and service delivery by councils.

WSROC has engaged with all levels of government to find better ways to help councils attract, train and maintain staff in areas of skills shortage.

Indeed, in all the priority areas we have identified, WSROC has itself shown the way.

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

We are proud of the outcomes achieved through our collaborative programs and partnerships, including:

- **The Heat Resilience Program** – In December 2024, WSROC launched a five-year, multi-sector plan to protect Sydney from Australia's deadliest natural hazard - extreme heat.
  The Heat Smart City Plan has been prepared by organisations across health, planning and design, infrastructure, emergency management, community and corporate sectors who recognise the need to act collaboratively and decisively on Sydney's heat challenge.
- **The Western Sydney Regional Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy** – A partnership with eight councils that is laying the groundwork for a circular economy transition in the region: supporting waste avoidance, recycling and reuse, and protecting our communities and environment from waste pollution.
- **The Western Sydney Energy Program** – Delivering energy, cost and emissions savings through collaborative action between councils.

- **The Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan** – WSROC is working with councils to deliver this landmark initiative that protects strategically important biodiversity areas while enabling sustainable urban growth across the Cumberland Plain.

Looking ahead, WSROC remains committed to championing the interests of Western Sydney's communities. We will continue to advocate for better infrastructure, stronger local government support, and more sustainable development across our region.

Finally, I was deeply saddened by the recent passing of Charles Casuscelli, WSROC's long-serving Chief Executive Officer and lifelong advocate for the people of Western Sydney.

Charles brought boundless enthusiasm and a remarkable depth of experience to public life. Throughout his career, he remained a tireless and principled voice for his community, committed to better outcomes for the Western Sydney region.

Charles led his team at WSROC with integrity, strength, and unwavering dedication. He will be greatly missed.

Councillor Brad Bunting
President

Heat Smart City Plan Co-Design Workshop.

L-R: **Ms Melinda Dewsnap**, Chief Resilience Officer, Resilient Sydney; **The Hon. Jihad Dib**, NSW Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice; **Cr Brad Bunting**, WSROC President; and **Mr Charles Casuscelli RFD**, WSROC CEO.

WINS FOR WESTERN SYDNEY COUNCILS

WSROC has delivered significant benefits for its members through regional funding, advocacy, and economies of scale.

- Saving **$75 million** across the region through a suite of energy projects.
- Successfully challenging streetlighting costs through the Australian Energy Regulator, saving local government across the Endeavour Energy area **$34 million** over the next five years.
- Attracting **$450,000** in grant funding to action a Western Sydney Regional Litter Prevention Plan partnered by seven participating councils.
- Securing **$9.5 million** to date in grant funding to deliver waste reduction and circular economy projects.
- Securing **$1.5 million** for a Caring for Country grants program for councils.
- Securing **$1 million** to conduct the 15-month compliance strategy pilot under the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan.
- Securing **$2.5 million** to date to deliver guidance, tools and strategies to support local heat management.

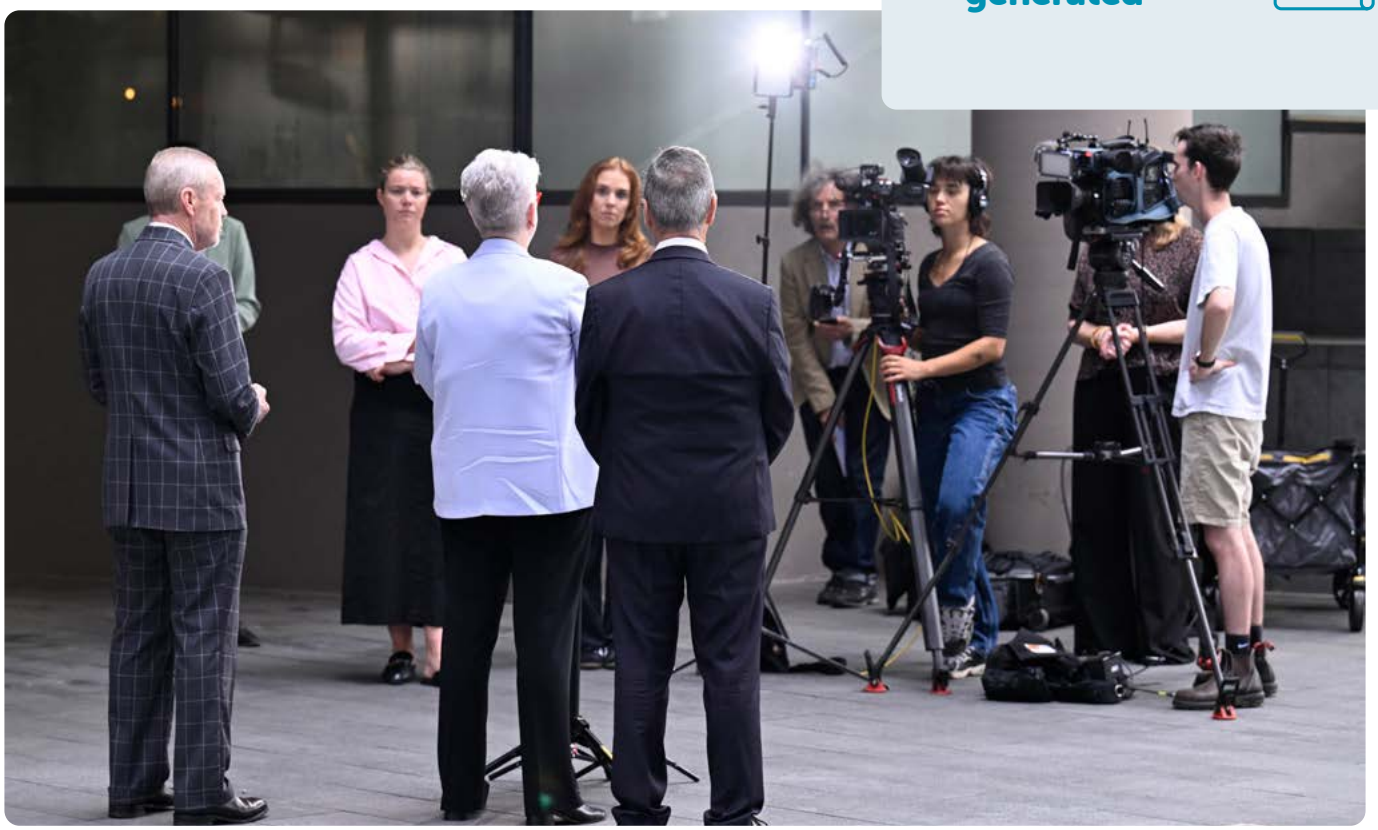
7
Meetings with Ministers

17
Submissions to government

27
Letters to Ministers

87
Professional forums

154
Media articles generated



Chair of the Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce, Mr Kerry Robinson OAM, Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, The Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC and WSROC CEO, Charles Casuscelli RFD address a media conference at the launch of the Heat Smart City Plan

WINS FOR WESTERN SYDNEY

WSROC has delivered the following policy and program outcomes over the reporting period.

Motorway toll reform

Western Sydney residents are more greatly impacted by motorway tolls than other parts of Sydney, due to their greater dependence on private vehicles and longer commutes.

WSROC advocacy has delivered a range of measures including a $60 weekly toll cap for commuters, rego rebates, and establishment of NSW Motorways; a publicly owned body that will oversee toll reform and advocate for commuters.

Reducing litter

Cigarette butts are among the most littered items in Western Sydney.

WSROC joined forces with seven Western Sydney councils to undertake a coordinated education program and social media campaign over the summer to urge smokers to 'bin their butts' as the bushfire season approached, mitigating both bushfire risk and litter in our environment.

Mitigating airport impacts

WSROC has held the federal government to account on airport impacts by commissioning several independent peer reviews of Western Sydney Airport Environmental Impact Statements — WSROC being the only organisation to do so.

This work has successfully delivered a range of federal policy changes including a fairer distribution of noise impacts away from Springwood, and federal commitments to noise amelioration and property acquisition to protect communities.

WSROC continues to advocate for stronger community consultation on ongoing airport operations and impacts.

The 'Red Fleet'

Following long-term advocacy from WSROC councils, in May 2025, the NSW Public Accounts Committee recommended that the state's Rural Fire Service fleet be legally recognised as NSW Government assets, taking them off council ledgers, one of 14 recommendations of the Inquiry into the assets, premises and funding of the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Rural Fire Service fire truck in action of the Bells Line of Road. Image courtesy of Hawkesbury City Council

Heat in NSW policy

After many years of advocacy, heatwave achieved its first formal legislative acknowledgement in the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022.

Heat hazard has now been formally integrated into state policy with dedicated actions in major state plans and strategies.

These include: the State Disaster Mitigation Plan (2022), NSW Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan (2024), and the Heatwave Emergency Subplan (2024).

Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan

The Cumberland Plain and surrounding subregions are unique Australian ecosystems that have been significantly disturbed or cleared, affecting the health of the region.

WSROC with the support of the Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure has successfully attracted money and staff to support councils to address the growing issues in the region, under the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan - saving councils both time and money.

FOGO mandate conditions

WSROC worked collaboratively with the NSW EPA for improved FOGO mandate conditions for councils.

Postgraduate Certificate in Business (Local Government)

To foster skill development in councils, WSROC and Western Sydney University have established a postgraduate certificate course focusing on enhancing management skills of staff within local government.

The Postgraduate Certificate in Business (Local Government) is designed to be relevant to councils regardless of their size.

The initiative may eventually provide a pathway to a Master of Management (Local Government) qualification.

In the first round, 19 students have been enrolled.

Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan

WSROC's advocacy led to the release of the Draft NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Plan.

The plan focuses on building infrastructure to manage waste, particularly food organics and garden organics (FOGO), and addressing the critical shortfall in landfill space.

University staff members and students of the first intake for the Western Sydney University's Postgraduate Certificate in Business (Local Government)

WINS FOR WESTERN SYDNEY

Battery safety

The incorrect disposal of batteries in garbage bins is a critical safety risk.

The issue is a priority concern shared by councils across the region.

WSROC worked with councils to undertake widespread education using consistent messages across Western Sydney to help residents safely dispose of household batteries.

Caring for Country

WSROC launched the Caring for Country Grant Program in partnership with eight Western Sydney councils and the NSW Department of Planning, Housing & Infrastructure (DPHI).

Caring for Country is overseen by the Caring for Country Council Working Group to support and empower First Nations people and groups and realise Western Sydney communities' vision for healthy Country.

Heat Smart City Plan

The Greater Sydney Heat Smart City Plan was launched in December by NSW Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage, the Hon. Penny Sharp MLC (pictured).

The Plan outlines 40 actions with input from across the health, planning and design, infrastructure, emergency management, community and corporate sectors.

ABOUT WSROC

Formed in November 1973, the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC - pronounced 'wesrock') is one of Australia's oldest and most well-respected local government organisations.

A champion for the Greater Western Sydney region, WSROC advocates on a range of issues affecting its member councils and their communities.

WSROC has a reputation for considered policy analysis and has delivered policy reform, programs and projects across issues affecting Western Sydney.

These include transport and roads, economic development, urban planning and management, the environment, waste management, employment, community services, and local government funding.

WSROC Board of Directors

President
Mayor Brad Bunting
Blacktown City
from November 2024

Senior Vice President
Cr Julie Griffiths AM
Blacktown City
from November 2024

Junior Vice President
Cr Amanda Kotlash
Hawkesbury City

Treasurer
Cr Mary Lyons-Buckett
Hawkesbury City
from November 2024

Cr Claire West
Blue Mountains City
from November 2024

Cr Nyree Fisher
Blue Mountains City

Mayor Ola Hamed
Cumberland City
from November 2024

Cr Suman Saha
Cumberland City
from November 2024

Cr Ethan Monaghan
Liverpool City

Cr Fiona Macnaught
Liverpool City

Cr Barry Calvert
Hawkesbury City
up to November 2024

Cr Chris Quilkey
Blacktown City
up to November 2024

Cr Karress Rhodes
Liverpool City
up to November 2024

Cr Glenn Elmore
Cumberland City
up to November 2024

Mayor Lisa Lake
Cumberland City
up to November 2024

Cr Mick Fell
Blue Mountains City
up to November 2024

ABOUT WSROC

Our purpose and vision: **Stronger together**

WSROC exists to make its member councils stronger by supporting councils to:

- Identify and respond to emerging issues
- Deliver staff professional development and training
- Improve efficiency in the delivery of services, within and across local government areas
- Increase effectiveness in responding to community expectations and needs.

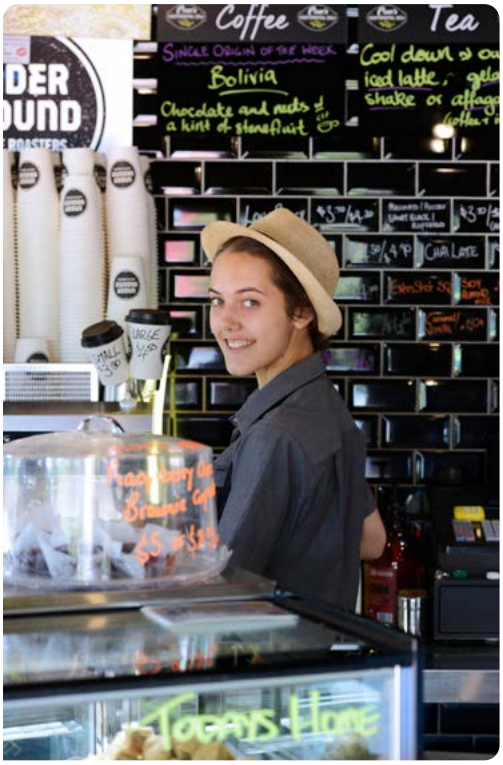
WSROC exists to make Western Sydney communities stronger by advocating for:

- Increased investment in public infrastructure that is better aligned to economic and population growth
- More equitable levels of public services for Western Sydney
- Liveable, sustainable development that supports community resilience and reduces cost-of-living
- Healthy environments that support community wellbeing and quality-of-life.

We do this by being a champion for Western Sydney through:

- Offering a considered, bi-partisan voice for advocacy
- Delivering research, policy analysis and joint submissions on issues that matter to our region
- Promoting the region's economic, industry and business opportunities
- Seeking infrastructure investment to support the region's growth and ensure equity between east and west of Sydney
- Fostering social cohesion through the celebration of Western Sydney's unique history and cultural heritage.

Advocating healthy environments that support community wellbeing and quality-of-life: A family walking together in a park



Promoting the region's business opportunities: A barista in her Western Sydney café

THE WSROC JOURNEY

For over 50 years, WSROC has consistently advocated for a better quality of life for the people of Western Sydney.

WSROC has been credited with a host of improvements in urban planning and management, public transport, roads, infrastructure, economic development, environment, employment, community services and a range of local government issues.

WSROC has helped to create many of the region's most important institutions and agencies.

Successful WSROC campaigns and regional initiatives over the last 50 years have included the 1970s' 'Beds for the West' campaign for more hospital beds and other health services in the region.

Over the last 10 years, WSROC has attracted around $20 million in project grants for councils.

WSROC campaigned to create the University of Western Sydney (1980s); lobbied to establish the Greater Western Sydney Economic Development Board (1990s); and to create a Minister for Western Sydney in the NSW Government (1997).

WSROC was able to fast-track the Westlink M7 Motorway (2000s) and successfully lobbied for WestConnex, ensuring easier commuting for Western Sydney workers (2015 – 2018).

WSROC has secured $5 billion for Western Sydney infrastructure development through WestInvest (2022).

Other projects that have benefitted from WSROC advocacy include the South-West Rail link, the Parramatta Light Rail, the M4 duplication, and the North-South Rail Corridor from Tallawong to Western Sydney Airport, and links to Leppington.

The issues of most concern to our members today include housing affordability, climate change and resilience, waste management and resource recovery, and transport.

WSROC continues to push all levels of government hard on those issues, not just because they matter to our member councils and the people of Western Sydney but also because improvements in those areas will be a benefit to NSW and Australia more broadly.

In addition to advocacy, WSROC has a proven track record bringing councils together for joint procurement, co-funded project work and shared community activities, achieving significant operational efficiencies and cost savings for councils.

Over the last 10 years, WSROC has attracted around $20 million in project grants, allowing it to run major regional projects, prepare original research, undertake community engagement programs, strategic planning and professional development for council staff; achieving significant economies of scale for its members.

NSW Premier, The Hon. Chris Minns (left) attends WSROC Board Meeting chaired by Councillor Barry Calvert, WSROC President up to November 2024

Former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam addresses a 'Beds for the West' rally, 1983

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2022 - 2026

WSROC's work is guided by a set of strategic priorities developed by its member councils.

These priorities outline issues that are important right across the Western Sydney region. WSROC's current priorities include:

- Supporting our communities
- Financial resilience of councils
- Waste and the circular economy
- Heat resilience
- Climate change and energy
- Environmental management
- Housing
- Transport and infrastructure.

WSROC's number one priority - supporting our communities - is a principle embedded in everything we do and is referenced across our work from policies on housing to transport, climate resilience and waste resource recovery among others.

The following pages outline how WSROC has been working towards these priorities with its member councils.

WSROC Strategic Planning and Priorities Workshop, 2022

STRATEGIC PRIORITIY

Supporting our communities

Supporting communities is at the heart of everything WSROC does. Focusing on equity and inclusion, WSROC works with councils and partners to build a resilient Western Sydney; where every individual and community can survive, adapt and flourish.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT...

Greater Western Sydney is home to some of Australia's most diverse, dynamic and resilient communities. Its people — who speak over 185 different languages — are its greatest strength.

WSROC is committed to ensuring these communities have equitable access to opportunity, safe and affordable housing, meaningful employment, quality education, healthcare, transport, and spaces for connection and wellbeing.

WSROC's work is grounded in the principle that all communities deserve the opportunity to thrive.

We recognise that some face greater barriers due to longstanding service gaps, cost-of-living pressures, and the impacts of disasters.

Our priority is to listen, respond, and advocate — ensuring communities are supported not only in times of need, but empowered to shape their own futures.

WHAT WE'VE DELIVERED...

Advocacy for equity

WSROC advocates strongly for equitable outcomes for our communities. In the last 12 months this has included advocacy for improved standards for social housing, rental conditions, and energy, and to support adapting to climate change impacts.

Supporting First Nations communities

WSROC is working with councils and communities to build cultural competency, and programs that support First Nations communities' connection to Country.

In-language resources

WSROC works with councils to deliver in-language resources to support linguistically diverse communities access services and information.

This has included campaigns for emergency preparedness and waste management.

First Nations women at a Harmony Day event

STRATEGIC PRIORITIY

Financial resilience of councils

Well-funded councils are essential for delivering quality local infrastructure and services. From roads to swimming pools, libraries and waste collection, council services are the backbone of local communities – yet their funding is uncertain.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT...

In recent years, council finances have been under growing pressures, particularly in Western Sydney.

WSROC councils are juggling the costs of rapidly growing populations, natural disasters, increasing material costs, and increasing workloads from federal and state governments.

While financial burdens increase, councils have been subject to funding freezes and an increased reliance on competitive, short-term grants.

There is an urgent need to reform council funding to allow long-term strategic planning and to ensure communities receive the infrastructure and services they need.

Landslip on Megalong Road. Natural disasters have impacted council finances in the last five years. Image supplied by Blue Mountains City Council

WHAT WE'VE DELIVERED...

Economies of scale

WSROC is constantly working to deliver member savings through collective action.

Examples include:

- **Solar and battery bulk-buy program:** A joint procurement process with councils to establish a trusted and cost effective solar and battery bulk-buy program for communities.
- **Power Partnership Agreement (PPA):** WSROC worked with Local Government Procurement to establish a 100% renewable PPA. Now joined by 34 NSW councils, this program has saved councils $6.4 million to date.
- **Joint training:** WSROC develops tailored regional training programs for council staff including in:
    - Business Management
    - Litter Enforcement for Authorised Officers.

Parliamentary Inquiry into financial sustainability

Recent reviews of council funding have failed to consider the full scope of council operations and the broader contexts in which councils operate.

In 2023, WSROC commenced advocacy to establish a Parliamentary Inquiry into the ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services including consideration of cost shifting, cost-of-delivery and socio-economic impacts.

The Inquiry was referred in March 2024, and in May 2025 the government responded, acknowledging the need for reform.

WestInvest funding

In 2017, WSROC began advocacy to reinvest the proceeds of WestConnex's sale into infrastructure for Western Sydney – supporting both councils and communities to address shortfalls.

The WestInvest funding program was first announced in 2021 and has since transformed into the Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program which is delivering $2 billion of social infrastructure across Western Sydney.

Waste Levy advocacy

WSROC has long advocated for the full reinvestment of the NSW Waste Levy into local waste diversion initiatives.

This has become increasingly important as councils face increased costs due to limited landfill capacity, and the introduction of new services such as green organics bins.

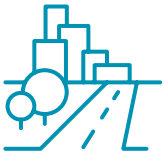
In 2024, this work has expanded to Sydney-wide partnerships with Resilient Sydney and other regional organisations of councils (ROCs), to amplify WSROC's call to action.

Rubbish heaped on a footpath: WSROC has long advocated for the full reinvestment of the NSW Waste Levy into local waste reduction initiatives

"It's clear the status quo is not sustainable for councils and it's not fair on communities who will lose out..."

— Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Ron Hoenig in response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into local government funding.

WSROC member councils employ approximately 4,900 fulltime workers.



WSROC member councils have responsibility for over 4,500 kilometres of streets and roads.

Total household waste collected in Western Sydney is expected to be 890,000 tonnes by 2030/31.

And more than one million tonnes by 2040/41.

WSROC member councils operate more than 2,400 parks, sportsgrounds, sports courts, playgrounds and other recreational open spaces.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIY

Waste and circular economy

By working together, Western Sydney councils have successfully developed and delivered vital regional waste strategies, fostering a successful and collaborative working relationship to ensure improved services to residents and progress on the transition to a circular economy.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT...

Councils are responsible for providing essential waste and recycling collection services to households and managing the processing or disposal of collected waste.

Western Sydney is one of Australia's fastest growing communities. This rapid population growth and urbanisation is projected to see the region's domestic waste production increase by 6% to 1 million tonnes by 2041.

Councils are facing many consistent challenges delivering waste services:

Need for more waste infrastructure

There is a shortage of waste and resource recovery infrastructure to process recycling and dispose garbage waste to landfill.

By 2030, Sydney will face a critical shortage of landfill capacity.

Introduction of FOGO

The NSW Government has mandated the requirement for councils to introduce Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) services to each household by 2030.

Safe battery disposal

There has been an increase in fires in waste collection trucks and at waste management facilities from the incorrect disposal of batteries in waste and recycling bins.

Transition to a circular economy

Councils are working to keep valuable materials in use for longer by reviewing council policies, procurement practice and design of major projects.

Encouraging reuse and avoidance

Increasing consumption is placing significant pressure on disposal and reprocessing systems, sparking council conversations with the community about the avoidance of waste and reducing consumption.

Preventing litter in the environment

Councils are among many landowners working to prevent littering behaviour and to capture littered items before discarded items impact local amenity or the environment.

WHAT WE'VE DELIVERED...

Through WSROC's longstanding Regional Waste and Resource Recovery Program, eight Western Sydney councils are working together to advocate for better waste solutions.

This year has seen noteworthy outcomes, including:

- The release of a much-needed Draft NSW Waste and Circular Infrastructure Strategy.
- Improved FOGO mandate legislation in line with councils' concerns.
- Greater recognition of critical waste servicing requirements in planning reform.
- Development of NSW EPA led projects sought by councils to support the introduction of FOGO services.
- Coordinated advocacy to reform illegal dumping legislative powers across local government organisations in Sydney.

REGIONAL WASTE AND RESOURCE RECOVERY PROGRAM

This multi-award-winning program was launched in 2014 and is a collaboration between Western Sydney councils to strategically plan waste services for their community.

Working together helps to reduce waste sent to landfill and to support councils in their transition to a circular economy.

As councils join forces to reduce waste, recycle more and keep materials in use longer, cooperation between councils has reduced duplication, enabled sharing of learnings and accelerated progress.

WSROC and its partner councils have successfully developed and delivered three regional waste strategies, fostering a successful and collaborative working relationship.

In this time, WSROC has attracted over $9.5 million in funding to resource and deliver on these strategies and their priority actions.

The Western Sydney Regional Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2022-27 was developed by eight Western Sydney councils.

The strategy outlines a 20-year vision with a detailed 5-year focus on how the region will work collectively to deliver waste services that recover more resources and reduce carbon emissions.

To date, this longstanding, multi-award-winning waste and resource recovery program has delivered:

- **$5,146,894** in grants to deliver specific projects prioritised by councils.
- **119 projects** and resources to support councils deliver improved waste services.
- **519 council staff trained** in technical and specialty skills.
- **54 submissions** to government to reform policy and legislation impacting waste service delivery.

Proudly funded by

WHAT WE'VE DELIVERED...

WSROC has delivered a range of projects during 2024/2025, including:

FOGO support for councils

The biggest reform to household waste services this decade is being rolled out by Western Sydney councils.

To keep more waste out of landfill and reduce carbon emissions, WSROC member councils are providing households with Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) services from this year.

To support councils in delivering this monumental change, WSROC has delivered technical guidance and implementation support for councils and helped improve the NSW legislation that shapes how this new service is provided to residents.

Exploring waste services of the future

Western Sydney councils are working together with WSROC to plan household waste and recycling services for the future.

As the amount of waste created by each household increases and the population grows, councils are collaboratively exploring how they plan and deliver waste services for thousands of households across Western Sydney.

Exploring potential alternative waste infrastructure and purchasing models helps councils keep domestic waste charges low for residents.

Community Recycling Centres

Western Sydney councils provide a network of Community Recycling Centres across the region for the disposal of hazardous waste that cannot be discarded in kerbside bins.

WSROC facilitated community outreach initiatives to raise awareness of these facilities among residents and to encourage safer community disposal of hazardous waste items. Keeping these hazardous items out of landfill provides a cleaner environment for us all.

Regionally consistent education messages

WSROC coordinates regionally consistent messaging between councils to support positive community behaviour.

This has included a summer campaign urging smokers to 'Bin their Butts' to reduce litter and bushfire risk, as well as regional messaging to support safe disposal of household batteries.

Learning support for councils

WSROC supports councils' professional staff by providing opportunities for staff to learn new skills, share information between councils, visit waste and recycling facilities and network with peers.

Collaborating on projects and learning from each other improves efficiency of project delivery and reduces duplication of effort across councils.

Couple using a new FOGO kitchen caddy

Site tour of Western Sydney waste facility with council staff

FLAGSHIP PROJECT: REGIONAL LITTER PREVENTION PROGRAM

This flagship project of the Regional Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy brings seven councils and WSROC together to address common causes of litter and deliver a cleaner environment for residents of Western Sydney.

In 2023, councils worked together to assess the biggest challenges to preventing litter and how a regional collaboration could deliver a reduction in litter across the region. As a result, the Western Sydney Regional Litter Prevention Plan was developed. Best practice litter prevention requires collaboration with stakeholders to ensure litter prevention and anti-littering behaviours are sustained for the long term. The Plan reflects the needs of participating councils, aligns with the programming and grant funding available through the NSW EPA litter program, and complements other litter reduction partnerships and initiatives in the Western Sydney region.

Following this, WSROC developed the Western Sydney Regional Litter Prevention Roadmap, which charts out actions for WSROC and the councils to work together on to tackle littering to 2027.

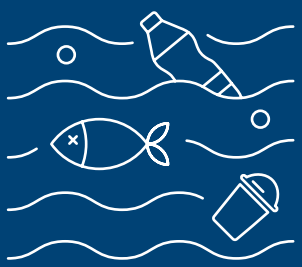
2024/2025 program highlights:

- $450,000 in grant funding secured to 2027 to deliver Western Sydney Regional Litter Prevention Plan.
- Employed an experienced Regional Litter Prevention Officer to provide direct support to councils.
- Over 154,000 community members were reached through a regional social media education program.
- 58 council staff upskilled in litter program design and enforcement training.
- $1 million in grant funding. WSROC has supported individual councils to secure funding for local litter prevention initiatives.

Upcoming key activities:

- Engaging with key landowners and litter producers to encourage and coordinate litter prevention activities across the region.
- Implementing projects to reduce councils' costs of litter management.
- Initiating the Western Sydney Litter Prevention Taskforce.
- Providing training for council staff to increase skills and deliver on-ground litter prevention actions.
- Hosting a Western Sydney Litter Prevention Summit.
- Working with councils to increase investment in litter prevention.

Western Sydney's litter crisis



What?

- Cigarette butts
- Takeaway containers, packaging, coffee cups

Where?

- Carparks
- Roadsides
- High-use locations with multiple landowners/managers
- Into regional waterways

Cost to Western Sydney councils

$31.2 million annually

It cost 147% more to pick up litter than if rubbish went in the bin.

Each year, local councils pick up **+3,000 tonnes of litter** - the weight of 551 elephants.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIY

Heat resilience

Heat – climate change, urban heat and heatwave – is a significant and growing risk for Western Sydney councils and their communities. Since 2016, WSROC has driven key policy reforms and attracted over $2.4 million funding for regional projects.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT...

Heatwaves kill more Australians than fire, flood and storms, and have significant impacts on our infrastructure, economy, environments and social wellbeing.

Climate change and urban heat also drive chronic heat impacts such as increased cost-of-living and reduced quality-of-life.

These issues are particularly pronounced in Western Sydney due to our local geography, community demographics, and the region's rapid urbanisation.

WSROC councils and communities are already experiencing major heat impacts and have identified heat as a regional priority.

Heat gun measuring the temperature of children's play equipment. Credit: Western Sydney University

WHAT WE'VE DELIVERED...

Cool Suburbs

Cool Suburbs is a practical, science-backed tool to help planners and developers make informed urban design decisions to manage heat impacts.

The easy-to-use platform was co-designed with industry and government alongside a panel of expert scientists.

Cool Suburbs (coolsuburbs.au) can be used across all development scales, and has already informed master planned communities, council planning clauses, and Green Building Council of Australia's Green Star Communities V2.

Heatwave Management Guide

Every summer, councils face heatwave risks in their operations, impacting staff, facilities, events, infrastructure and services.

Many communities also seek council support in coping with extreme heat.

The Heatwave Management Guide was developed for councils navigating this new space.

The Guide has been informed by staff from 30 Sydney councils and includes such topics as risk, strategic planning, operations, community development and communications.

Heatwave Risk Assessment

WSROC's heatwave risk assessment methodology has been designed with councils, for councils. The risk maps can tell councils:

- The likelihood of extreme heatwave
- The likely impacts to human health
- How climate change changes risk
- Why risk is high/low in an area.

This allows councils to make informed decisions and targeted risk treatment.

Advocacy: Heat resilient planning

Since 2016, WSROC has strongly advocated for heat resilience to be reflected in urban planning and design. When the issue was first raised by councils during development of the Turn Down the Heat Strategy, urban heat was not addressed in any NSW policies.

After nearly 10 years of leadership by Western Sydney councils, heat resilient planning is now a key action in several state plans including the State Disaster Mitigation Plan, NSW Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan, and the State Heatwave Emergency Subplan 2024.

"If we want cooler, more liveable suburbs, and more valuable properties, we need to tackle urban heat, and it needs to be a shared effort."

"That's good for the property sector, and good for everyone."

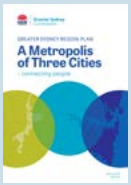
— Katie Stevenson,
NSW Executive Director,
Property Council of Australia

Timeline of heat resilient planning advocacy

2016 - 2018

Raising awareness

Turn Down the Heat Strategy developed



Heat in Greater Sydney Commission Dictrict Plans

Premier's Priority: 5 million trees

2020 - 2022

Building the evidence

WSROC guidance for council planners and industry

First LEPs and DCPs address heat.

Cool Suburbs used by industry and NSW Government.

2023 - 2025

Embedding change into policy

Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce established.

White papers on heat resilient planning and emergency management developed with Taskforce.

Heat Smart City Plan launched.

Heat planning included in NSW policies for climate, disaster prevention, and response.

FLAGSHIP PROJECT: GREATER SYDNEY HEAT TASKFORCE

In 2024/2025 WSROC established the Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce to lead Sydney's first coordinated response to heat risk; the Heat Smart City Plan.

Heat is a new policy issue with few defined roles and responsibilities. As such, Greater Sydney does not currently have coordinated arrangements to address the full spectrum of heat risk it is exposed to.

There was a need for key actors to come together and agree on a path forward.

The Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce was established with this goal in mind.

The Taskforce comprises executive leaders from sectors including health, urban planning, transport, research, community services, local, state and federal government, business, insurance and emergency management.

A new approach to heat

The Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce oversaw the development of the Heat Smart City Plan; a coordinated program of activities to improve heat mitigation, adaptation and emergency response.

The Plan was prepared through a codesign process involving 370 individuals across 13 workshops, 34 interviews and hundreds of discussions.

The Taskforce developed the Plan's vision and then worked with stakeholders to identify a broad spectrum of actions to meet the vision.

The Heat Smart City Plan

The Heat Smart City Plan was launched on 5 December 2024 by the Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC, alongside members of the Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce.

The Plan outlines six directions and 40 recommendations *'to ensure people living in Greater Sydney can survive and thrive in a warming climate and during extreme heat events.'*

"How we tackle rising heat in our cities is important for our future quality of life, the environment and our economy, and it's something NSW is taking seriously."

— The Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC, NSW Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage

Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce member representatives with the Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC, NSW Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage at the launch of the Heat Smart City Plan, 5 December 2024

OUTCOMES...

Developing the Greater Sydney Heat Smart City Plan has not only built understanding of heat risks across a range of sectors and scales – from local to federal – it has also accelerated action across the city.

At the time of publication, the following actions had already been delivered:

- Expanded Beat the Heat campaign
- Inaugural Australian Extreme Heat Awareness Day – 5 February 2025
- Heatwave Subplan review and appointment of NSW Ambulance as combat agency
- Cooler Places Hub – dedicated urban heat guidance from the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
- Powerhouse work with Western Sydney schools on heat awareness
- Economic analysis of heat impacts in Western Sydney: Burning Money.

NEXT STEPS...

WSROC continues to collaborate with the Taskforce on delivering the Plan and is currently seeking funding for the delivery of local government recommendations.

International cities partnership

WSROC has received funding from the US-based Resilient Cities Catalyst to progress applied heat-resilient design in consultation with local businesses and communities.

Elevated view of Sydney on a hot day

Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce

- Australian Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- Australian Red Cross
- Blacktown City Council
- Business Western Sydney
- Committee for Sydney
- Endeavour Energy
- Energy and Utility Services Functional Area
- Green Building Council of Australia
- Liverpool City Council
- NSW Ambulance
- NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
- NSW EPA
- NSW Health
- NSW Reconstruction Authority
- Property Council of Australia
- Resilient Sydney
- Sweltering Cities
- Swiss Re
- Sydney Water
- Transport for NSW
- Western Sydney Community Forum
- WSROC

'I think this plan is the best and most ambitious policy and planning work being done on heat across the entire country.'

— Emma Bacon, Executive Director, Sweltering Cities

Supported by the Australian and NSW Governments

Australian Government

NSW GOVERNMENT

STRATEGIC PRIORITIY

Climate change and energy

WSROC works closely with Western Sydney councils on reducing emissions and energy costs through a range of programs, including smart street lighting, renewable energy, electric vehicles and skills development.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT...

Increasing energy costs place pressures on councils and the communities they serve.

Electricity use makes up more than half of Western Sydney's greenhouse gas emissions, with transport in second place at 21% and 22%.

All up, Greater Western Sydney generates around 30 million tonnes of CO_2e annually, representing 7% of Australia's total emissions.

Reducing our region's emissions is critical for mitigating the impacts of a changing climate including rising temperatures and an increasing frequency of natural disasters.

Currently in its sixth year, WSROC's Western Sydney Energy Program supports councils to implement emissions reduction, cost-saving, and climate adaptation opportunities through shared planning, coordinated advocacy, and collective action.

This collaboration has been critical to achieve efficiencies, avoid duplication, create stronger buying power, and build recognition as a respected voice for advocacy.

WHAT WE'VE DELIVERED...

Street lighting upgrades

Street lighting is a major component of council energy bills.

Our street lighting program has supported councils to transition to more efficient LED lights, saving costs and emissions.

The Western Sydney Energy Program also paved the way to innovative smart lighting solutions.

To date, the program has delivered:

- Over 100,000 streetlights have been upgraded to efficient LED technology, resulting in major energy savings across participating councils.
- $34 million savings in street lighting maintenance over the period of 2024-29 for Western Sydney councils.
- NSW's largest smart lighting upgrade, which is currently being expanded.

650,000 tCO_2e
Saved to date over the lifetime of the assets. This is equivalent to preventing 3 million one-way Sydney - Melbourne flights.

$75 million
Cumulative cost savings.

More than 100
Forums and workshops held since inception.

An LED streetlight at night in Cumberland City

FLAGSHIP PROJECT: WESTERN SYDNEY ENERGY PROGRAM

The Western Sydney Energy Program (WSEP) was launched in 2019 and is a collaboration between eight Greater Western Sydney councils. The program aims to support councils with energy, cost and emission savings for their operations as well as their communities.

Managed by WSROC and Ironbark Sustainability, the Program activities are driven by participating councils: Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden, Cumberland, Hawkesbury, The Hills Shire, Liverpool and Parramatta.

The Western Sydney Energy Program implements initiatives across four focus areas:

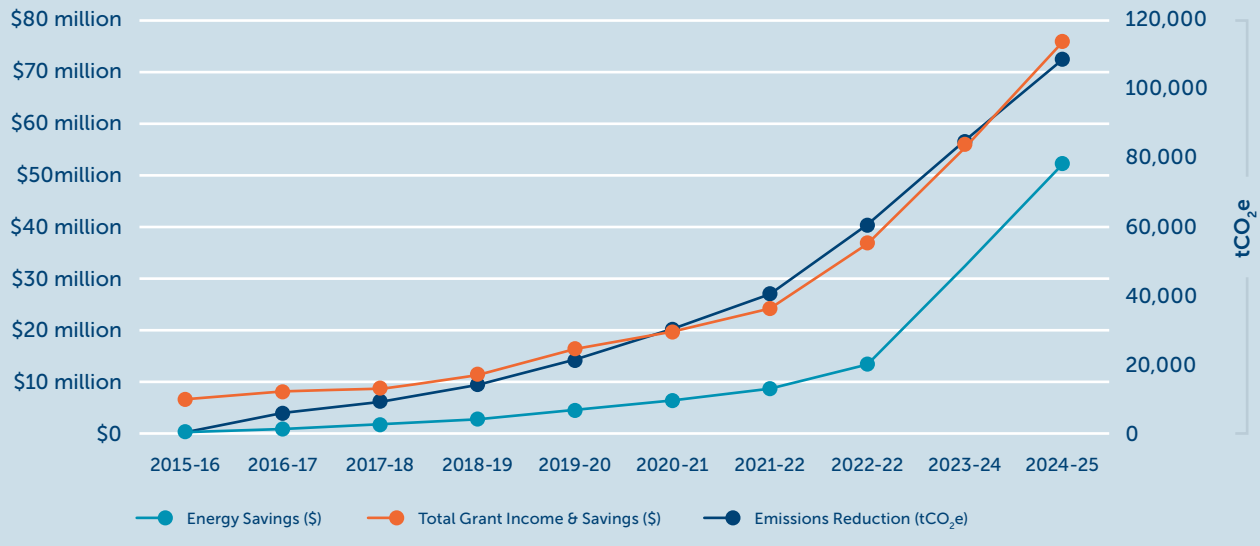
RENEWABLE ENERGY:
Installation of innovative low cost, low emission energy generation and storage.

TRANSPORTATION:
Regional transport infrastructure that delivers a low carbon, low cost transport future for the region, supporting councils to lead by example.

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY:
Helping local businesses and homes to access services for low cost, low emission energy.

FACILITIES AND PRECINCTS:
Enabling best practice in the construction of council infrastructure and collaborative planning approaches for our fast growing region.

To date, this award-winning program has delivered approximately $75 million in cumulative savings and will reduce emissions by around 650,000 tonnes of co_2e over the lifetime of assets.



Western Sydney Energy Program accumulative savings

WHAT WE'VE DELIVERED...

Sustainability in planning

The Western Sydney Energy Program supports councils to embed sustainability in urban and land-use planning.

This is important for creating healthy, inclusive, and resilient places — not just for now, but for the long term.

EV transition

Transport is responsible for about a fifth of Western Sydney's carbon emissions.

The Energy Program delivered a gap analysis to identify opportunities for enabling a low-emissions future.

The analysis informed the Western Sydney EV Roadmap, a pathway to electrification of transport.

To date we have delivered:

- Identification of potential public charging sites.
- Fleet transition planning for five councils.
- Advocacy for a regional public charging roadmap for Western Sydney to address charging blackspots for our communities.
- A Regional EV Infrastructure Resource Hub.

Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD)

WSROC works with councils to develop policies, standards and practices for council facilities which maximise social, environmental and financial outcomes.

To date WSROC has delivered:

- ESD policies, standards and building equipment specifications.
- Support for councils to access federal and state grant and energy scheme opportunities.
- Feasibility studies and self-assessment tools for climate resilient infrastructure and electrification.

Electric vehicle charging at Lawson in the Blue Mountains

Climate reporting and training

The Western Sydney Energy Program helps councils build capability in emissions and climate risk reporting, including:

- Supporting councils preparing for the new Australian Sustainability Reporting Standards.
- Training for council staff on emissions reporting and climate risk.
- Greenhouse gas emissions inventories and analysis.
- Strategic planning support, including climate mitigation plans, climate risk assessments, and climate adaptation planning.

Community Energy Project

The Community Energy Project is a solar power and batteries bulk-buy program that will lay the groundwork for a Virtual Power Plant (VPP) network. A VPP links households into an energy-sharing system that improves grid resilience and reduces household energy costs. This program is currently being developed and is set to launch publicly in 2026.

Advocacy

WSROC continues to advocate for increased support for local government's climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

This includes the need for structural resourcing, as well as the development of consistent climate data and reporting standards to provide clarity and efficiencies for councils.

Workshops and events

The Western Sydney Energy Program hosts a range of professional workshops and knowledge sharing forums across such topics as sustainability, transport, planning, asset management and street lighting.

The program facilitates engagement between councils, industry, state agencies and other stakeholders to expedite action.

Rooftop solar panels being installed

The. Hon Penny Sharpe MLC and the late Tony Bleasdale OAM unveil a new trial community battery

WSROC conducts a tour of newly built Nexport EV commercial vehicles, Western Sydney

STRATEGIC PRIORITIY

Environmental management

WSROC supports councils in protecting Western Sydney's unique biodiversity hotspots. This is vital to creating a greener, more vibrant region that uplifts community wellbeing and enriches quality of life for all.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT...

Western Sydney is home to diverse ecological communities from the Cumberland Plain to Blue Gum Forest, freshwater wetlands, heathlands, dry rainforest, forest red gums and Turpentine-Ironbark Forest.

These ecological communities provide vital habitats for threatened and endangered fauna such as the grey headed flying fox, the Cumberland Plain snail, koalas, wombats and platypuses.

Rapid development, clearing and introduced weeds pose critical challenges to these areas, and result in fragmentation and loss of ecosystems.

For example, only around 6-8% of the original Cumberland Plain vegetation remains in Sydney.

This fragmentation affects the health of the region, threatening native species and leads to a sense of disconnect from the land, especially among First Nations people.

Without proper oversight and protection, Western Sydney's unique habitats and the species within them are at risk of disappearing from the wild.

The CPCP program effectively bridges the gap between state and local government, and local communities.

Young Koala by Freder

WHAT WE'VE DELIVERED...

WSROC in partnership with the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure is delivering a range of activities to support the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan (CPCP) that protects strategically important biodiversity areas within the Cumberland Plain.

Cumberland Plain Conservation Compliance Support Program

Councils have been identified as delivery partners under the CPCP to control illegal native vegetation clearing throughout the Cumberland Plain region. WSROC provides the eight Western Sydney councils within the CPCP region with support to fulfill this role.

The Compliance Support Program is a 12-month pilot to establish a regional resource where a dedicated team of professionals assists councils to deliver awareness, education, community engagement, compliance and regulatory activities.

The Caring for Country Grants Program

'Caring for Country' refers to the practice of First Nations Australians managing and protecting their land, water and natural environments based on deep cultural connection to the land. This practice provides a range of benefits across environmental and community health and wellbeing.

The $1.17 million Caring for Country Council Grants Program funds councils to support delivery of local, on-ground projects that support and empower First Nations Communities within the Cumberland Plain region.

The grants program is non-competitive and has been designed to support projects that meet the needs and aspirations of the Traditional Custodians and Aboriginal communities of the local area.

The Caring for Country Grants Program is an NSW Government-funded initiative delivered in partnership by WSROC and the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure under the Caring for Country Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy 2024-2033.

Education and awareness

In 2025, WSROC hosted its inaugural Educational Day for partner councils to learn more about the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan.

This event collaborated with stakeholders to refine and enhance ongoing engagement, available tools and resources with council staff, residents, and businesses.

A social media campaign was conducted to raise community awareness of the Cumberland Plain and illegal tree removal in the region. At the time of publication, the campaign had a reach of 70,000 in high priority areas of Western Sydney.

A bushland stream and waterfall

Proudly funded by

NSW GOVERNMENT

STRATEGIC PRIORITIY

Housing

Housing supply and affordability are among the greatest challenges facing communities and councils across Western Sydney. WSROC's housing advocacy takes a holistic approach that considers housing supply, purchase and rental prices, as well as running costs.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT...

Shelter is a basic human right that is fundamental to wellbeing.

Unfortunately, Western Sydney households are experiencing housing stress at far higher rates than other parts of Sydney with 29.5% of households on low incomes and 18.2% of households on moderate incomes in housing stress.

Whether you rent or own, housing payments are just one of many costs. Truly affordable housing must consider the costs of energy bills, insurance, transport and service access.

Over the last 10 years, WSROC has contributed to a range of policies relating to social and affordable housing quotas, increased housing diversity, housing density, quality and accelerated supply.

A multi-generational family preparing a meal in apartment kitchen

"Through our partnerships with local governments, we will continue to work... to embed the Guide's family friendly high-density housing and urban design principles in relevant local government strategies and policies..."

— Alison Derrett, Acting Chief Executive, Western Sydney Local Health District

WHAT WE'VE DELIVERED...

Family-friendly apartment guide

In some parts of Western Sydney more than 45% of pre-school aged children live in apartments. As more families seek apartment living for affordability, proximity to school, transport and services, new designs are needed. WSROC supported the Western Sydney Local Health District's Healthy Higher Density Living for Families with Children, a design guide outlining family-friendly measures including bedroom ratios, soundproofing, extra storage for prams, bikes and waste, and safe play spaces.

Future-proofing new homes for energy efficiency and heat safety

WSROC partnered with researchers from the University of New South Wales to model the performance of real Western Sydney homes in future climates and heatwave events.

The research found that significant updates to the National Construction Code (NCC) are necessary to ensure new homes are affordable to run, and safe to live in – and is currently being used to inform the next NCC updates.

Reducing disaster impacts and insurance costs

WSROC with its members has strongly advocated against policies that would allow more housing, and housing density in flood and bushfire-prone locations. Outcomes include exemptions to the NSW government's Transport-Oriented-Development policy in disaster-prone areas.

Collaboration on affordable housing tools for councils

WSROC supported Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC) and Resilient Sydney workshops, tools and resources to assist councils preparing Affordable Housing Contribution Schemes, and advocate for policy reform.

Heat safe rentals and social housing

A well-designed home is about more than just comfort, and can reduce energy bills, deliver better health outcomes, and support life safety in heatwaves.

WSROC's Heat Smart City Plan outlines various recommendations for delivering heat resilient social housing and rental properties, as well as adapting existing homes to heat. Between 2025 and 2030, WSROC will work with Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce partners and councils to deliver these recommendations.

Solar program for communities

WSROC councils are working together to make solar power more affordable for Western Sydney communities. A solar and battery bulk-buy program is currently being developed for implementation in 2026.

Aerial view of a new housing development in Western Sydney

STRATEGIC PRIORITIY

Transport and infrastructure

Improving transport infrastructure to support Western Sydney's growing population has been a long-term priority for WSROC councils. Advocacy has focused on accessible, affordable and fairer transport for our region.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT...

Western Sydney has long experienced a backlog in transport infrastructure. As a result, nearly half of residents rely on their car to get to work, travelling longer and further on average than other Sydney residents.

As our region grows, public transport investment is needed to address congestion, reduce cost-of-living, support local economies, improve access to services, and meet NSW's Net Zero targets.

WSROC strongly advocates for a fairer transport system including accelerated investment in the region's public and active transport networks, and for lower tolls in areas without public transport.

Climate resilience is also a critical consideration for Western Sydney's transport network. Extreme weather can significantly impact safety via service disruptions or inadequate amenities like shade.

WSROC's key transport advocacy priorities include:

- Accelerated delivery of the full North-South Rail Link.
- Completion of the Leppington extension to Western Sydney Airport.
- Increasing the frequency and reliability of Western Sydney local bus networks.
- Climate adaptation for public transport including provision of shading and water at stations and bus stops.
- Reforming the NSW tolling system to provide fairer outcomes for all.
- Ensuring Western Sydney communities are protected from, and compensated for, adverse impacts of the new Western Sydney International Airport.

Commuter cashback and toll reform

WSROC's campaign for a fairer NSW tolling system commenced in 2015 and has spanned four NSW Premiers, and three state inquiries. WSROC has been successful in driving changes including rego rebates, pricing reviews, and reinvestment of WestConnex proceeds into our region's infrastructure.

In 2024, the NSW Government finally delivered on a $60 weekly toll cap to reduce costs for motorists and in 2025, established Motorways NSW, an independent entity tasked with advocating for communities and reviewing governance of our state's toll roads.

WSROC continues to call for:

- A fairer tolling system
- Clarity and transparency of tolls
- Different charges depending on people's circumstances e.g. distance
- More road revenue invested in Western Sydney's public transport network.

'Tolls should be based on a declining distance basis charged on a per kilometre basis but with the per kilometre rate declining the greater the distance travelled. This would deliver greater fairness to motorists in Western Sydney'

– Recommendation from Independent Toll Review, July 2024.

Vehicles travelling west along the M4 motorway

WHAT WE'VE DELIVERED...

Better outcomes for Western Sydney Airport

Western Sydney Airport is one of the most significant infrastructure projects of our time.

While perspectives vary, all councils are seeking the best possible outcomes for their communities. WSROC has led three joint-technical reviews in partnership with councils across Western Sydney and the Macarthur region, being the only organisation to do so.

These reviews assessed noise, transport, environmental impacts and community health, driving improved outcomes including:

- A fairer distribution of noise impacts away from Springwood
- Commitment to airport rail connections from St Marys and Leppington
- Federal commitment to noise amelioration and acquisition impacted for communities.

With the airport due to open in 2026, WSROC advocacy continues to demand better outcomes including noise protections, transport investment, and better consultation.

Western Sydney International Airport opening in 2026

Commuters enter a Western Sydney train station

Rail connectivity

Fewer than 20% of Western Sydney residents live within walking distance of a rail station. This is set to worsen with the allocation of new growth areas away from public transport networks.

Where rail links do exist, they focus on linking Western Sydney with the Sydney CBD, rather than supporting residents to move freely within the region.

For the last four decades, WSROC has campaigned for more north-south rail links to improve connectivity between our region's centres.

The last decade of advocacy has solidly established a North-South Rail Link in the government's infrastructure pipeline; however ongoing advocacy is needed to accelerate delivery.

'The Western Sydney International Airport is a seven day a week, 24-hour operation and the possible harm to health from this is one of the chief reasons our latest review has focused carefully on night-time noise...'

– former WSROC President, Cr Barry Calvert

Transport and infrastructure

Climate-resilient transport

WSROC advocates for improving the climate resilience of Western Sydney transport services.

Examples include:

- Advocating for funding to deliver bus shelters in hot suburbs.
- Supporting research into the thermal safety of train carriages during service disruptions in extreme weather.
- Supporting research that allows greater canopy cover for active transport routes.
- Working with Transport for NSW as part of the Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce.

Bus stop sign attached to a power pole in Western Sydney

A bus shelter in Western Sydney

TRAINING, EVENTS AND NETWORKS

WSROC delivers a range of training and professional development opportunities for council staff - building council capacity and regional networks.

TRAINING:

Postgraduate Certificate in Business (Local Government)

WSROC has worked with Western Sydney University to establish a postgraduate course specifically designed to build capacity of council staff.

The Postgraduate Certificate in Business (Local Government) is designed to be relevant to councils regardless of their size.

Cultural competency training

WSROC's Caring for Country team hosted a cultural learning event for 30 council and state staff. The session was designed to build capability to engage and form stronger relationships with Western Sydney's First Nations peoples through 'Courageous Conversations'. This included focus on the Dignity Framework and respectful, safe communication.

Cumberland Plain Compliance codesign

WSROC brought together eight councils to understand support needed for compliance around the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan.

This has informed the design of a state-funded regional resource.

IAP2 Essentials of Engagement

WSROC engaged Sarah Wilcox, Australia's only First Nations person accredited by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), to deliver regional IAP2 training. The training, delivered to 28 staff, focused on purposeful engagement strategies to facilitate meaningful relationships and outcomes with First Nations and wider communities.

This included tailored training on cultural safety.

Workshops for CPCP concept of operations

WSROC's Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan (CPCP) Compliance Support Team brought together the eight participating CPCP Program councils to discuss how they would like to see WSROC operate in the CPCP Compliance space.

This provided exceptional insight into what councils expect from both WSROC and the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure through the course of the pilot program.

Council waste network members attending a facility tour in Western Sydney

Cumberland Plain Education Day

WSROC hosted an Inaugural Educational Day to kick off delivery of the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan. The event aimed to improve knowledge and enhance the ability of council staff to take proactive steps in protecting and enhancing local native vegetation, as well as enhancing their ability to engage with professional and community stakeholders.

Western Sydney Energy Forum

This biannual event brings together councils, state government, energy networks, and other key stakeholders to discuss critical regional issues, explore potential solutions, and shape future directions related to emission reduction and climate resilience.

Litter prevention and enforcement

WSROC has developed and facilitated two training offerings to help councils manage common local litter issues:

- **Introduction to Litter Prevention**: enables participants to identify the causes of littering in public spaces and design interventions to address these.
- **Litter Enforcement for Authorised Officers:** assists council rangers to better understand legislation, increasing their knowledge and confidence issuing littering fines.

EVENTS AND NETWORKS:

Issues-based forums

WSROC leads local government discussions on a range of emerging policy issues. In 2025 this included dedicated forums on policy assessment of 'in sink' food waste disposal infrastructure, and updates to tendering regulations for waste contracts.

Regular professional networks

WSROC leads a range of regular cross-council and stakeholder networks to facilitate information sharing and networking between professional staff. These include:

- Western Sydney Waste Educators Network
- Western Sydney Waste Services in Multi Unit Dwellings
- Greater Sydney Waste Planning Network
- Regional Litter Prevention Steering Group
- Western Sydney Energy Program EV working group
- Western Sydney Energy Program ESD working group
- Western Sydney Energy Program Community Energy working group
- Western Sydney Energy Program Public Lighting working group
- Western Sydney Energy Program Steering Committee
- Heat Resilience council network
- Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce
- Cool Suburbs – Design Book working group.

Western Sydney Energy Forum

Council staff at Greater Sydney Heat Symposium

Representation on external committees

WSROC also plays a key role in a range of industry and government committees, networks and working groups, including:

- Western Sydney International Airport Stakeholder Planning Forum
- WESTIR
- Caring for Country Working Group
- CivicRisk Mutual Finance Committee
- National Construction Code Section J Working Group
- Green Building Council of Australia's Sustainable Precincts Expert Reference Panel
- NSW Government Nature-Based Solutions Working Group
- Endeavour Energy Consumer Advisory Committee
- Greater Sydney Waste Leadership Forum
- NSW Government Waste Infrastructure Strategic Planning Working Group
- Natural Hazards Research Australia Stakeholder Advisory Group
- Western Sydney Diabetes Leadership Alliance
- Wentworth Healthcare Ltd.

REMEMBERING CHARLES CASUSCELLI

In June 2025, we were deeply saddened to hear of the sudden passing of Mr. Charles Casuscelli RFD, our long-serving Chief Executive Officer of the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils.

Mr. Casuscelli was a dedicated public servant, community leader, and tireless advocate for the people of Western Sydney.

Appointed WSROC's Chief Executive Officer in 2015, Charles was a proud spokesperson for Western Sydney, having had lifelong personal connections to the region.

Charles devoted his life to serving others.

From his early years as an officer in the Australian Army, through to his later service in the Army Reserve — for which he was awarded the Reserve Forces Decoration — Charles always carried himself with discipline, integrity, and deep respect for duty.

His passion for community service continued in civilian life through an impressive career in government and the transport industry, before entering the NSW Legislative Assembly where he served from March 2011 to March 2015.

Charles always brought strength, purpose and unity to his work — and inspired many of us along the way.

Charles took particular pride in his Italian heritage, and in his many connections to the diverse, dynamic communities of Western Sydney.

He was a colleague, a mentor, and a friend to many of us.

Above all, he was a man who gave much — and asked little in return.

Charles Casuscelli will be deeply missed but never forgotten. His legacy will live on in the countless lives he touched — and in the communities he so proudly served.

Mr Charles Casuscelli RFD, December 2024

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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)

WSROC

Advocating for the people of Western Sydney

Blacktown City Council

blue mountains City Council

CUMBERLAND CITY COUNCIL

Hawkesbury City Council

LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL