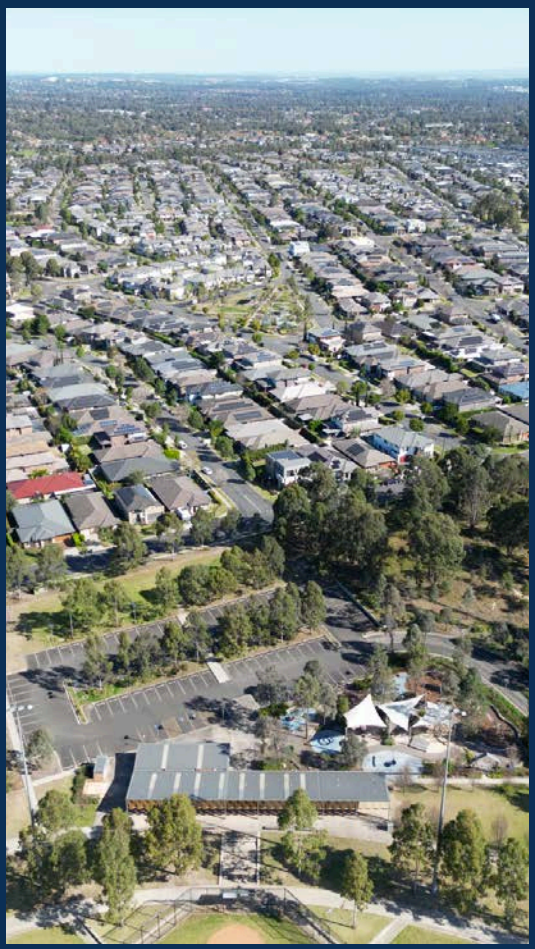
WSROC

Stronger together. Better together.

ANNUAL REPORT 2025–26











Working together for a thriving, sustainable and resilient Western Sydney

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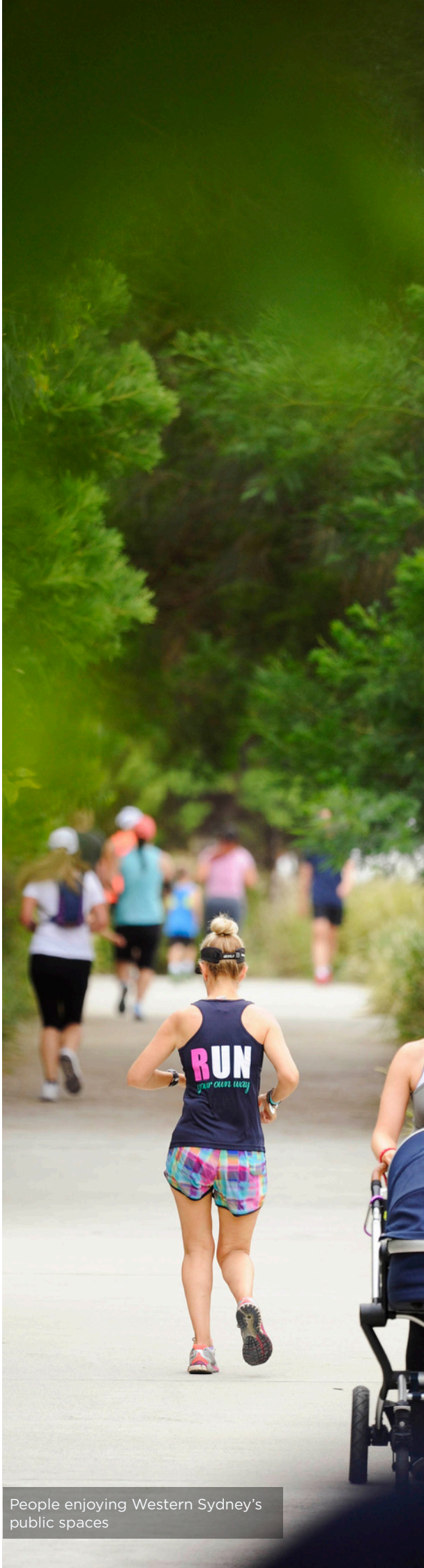
Looking ahead

19 Looking ahead

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WSROC acknowledges Aboriginal 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), Dharawal and Gundungurra peoples. We extend this respect to other First Nations people that currently reside in Western Sydney.



People enjoying Western Sydney's public spaces

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A year of collective achievement



Western Sydney's councils achieve more when we work together, and this year has again demonstrated the value of that collective approach.

Through WSROC, councils have strengthened the region's voice, shared expertise and resources, and delivered practical outcomes for their communities.

This year, we:

- delivered more than $12.4 million in net value to member councils and partners
- advocated for fairer local government funding and reduced financial pressures
- progressed regional transport and toll reform priorities
- led regional work on heat resilience, waste, energy and the circular economy
- strengthened collaboration on housing, planning and infrastructure
- invested in the skills and capability of Western Sydney's local government workforce.

These results reflect WSROC's core value: bringing councils together to achieve outcomes at a scale that would be difficult to deliver individually.

On behalf of the Board, I thank our member councils, partners and the WSROC team for their contribution throughout 2025–26.

Together, we are strengthening Western Sydney's voice and building a more liveable, resilient and sustainable region.

Brad Bunting

WROC President and Mayor of Blacktown



Motorway in Western Sydney

CEO'S MESSAGE

Stronger when we work as one



Western Sydney is at an inflection point. With the Western Sydney International Airport on the horizon, major transport investment underway, and one of Australia's fastest-growing populations calling this region home, the opportunities before us are significant, and so too are the responsibilities.

WSROC's strength has always come from the collective. When Western Sydney councils work in alignment, we do not simply add our voices, we multiply our impact.

Through a coordinated strategy, shared programs and practical on-the-ground delivery, we are able to advocate for the investment our region deserves and drive the outcomes that no single council could achieve alone.

The challenges ahead are real and complex. From managing the pressures of rapid urban growth and the looming landfill crisis, to building resilience against natural disasters and extreme heat, and ensuring our communities benefit from, rather than bear the burden of, the airport and data centre boom. The agenda is ambitious.

But it is the right agenda. And with Western Sydney councils united behind a shared roadmap, we are well placed to deliver it.

This is what WSROC is for: turning plans into action, and ensuring Western Sydney gets the infrastructure, services and support its communities need to thrive.

Francine Binns

Chief Executive Officer

Aerial view of Western Sydney

OUR MISSION AND PURPOSE

Stronger together

WSROC strengthens Western Sydney's councils and communities by building trust and social licence, advocating for shared priorities and championing the region.

Stronger councils

We support member councils to:

- Identify and respond to emerging issues
- Respond more effectively to community expectations and needs
- Improve service efficiency within and across local government areas
- Deliver staff professional development and training

Stronger communities

We advocate for Western Sydney by:

- Securing infrastructure investment aligned with economic and population growth
- Pursuing more equitable public services across Western Sydney
- Supporting liveable, sustainable development that strengthens community resilience and eases cost-of-living pressures
- Promoting healthy environments that support community well being and quality of life

Our Board



Mayor Brad Bunting
Blacktown City Council



Cr Julie Griffiths
Blacktown City Council



Cr Nyree Fisher
Blue Mountains City Council



Cr Claire West
Blue Mountains City Council



Mayor Ola Hamed
Cumberland City Council



Cr Suman Saha
Cumberland City Council



Cr Amanda Kotlash
Hawkesbury City Council



Mayor Mary Lyons-Buckett
Hawkesbury City Council

Impact snapshot

WSROC turns regional collaboration into practical value for councils and communities.

In 2025–26, collective advocacy, shared programs, regional procurement, capability building and coordinated delivery generated measurable benefits across Western Sydney.

> *"WSROC provides strong regional leadership and coordination, enabling councils to collaborate effectively, share resources, and deliver better outcomes collectively than we could individually"*
>
> Council representative - WSROC Council Engagement Survey 2026

$12.4M+

NET VALUE DELIVERED

to member councils and partners

$143M+

ENERGY COST SAVINGS AND FINANCIAL BENEFITS*

delivered across the region

487,090

TONNES CO_2e REDUCED**

through regional projects

2.4M+

COMMUNITY REACH

through campaigns on waste prevention and biodiversity conservation

1,000+

STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED

across councils, government and industry

946+

CAPABILITY HOURS

workforce capability development delivered

**Accumulated cost savings to date across the region*
***Over the life of the assets*



> *"Being a small team here at Council, having the external support, and the external funding programs has made a huge difference in the amount and quality of what I can deliver."*
>
> Local government professional, WSROC Council Engagement Survey 2026.

At a turning point

Western Sydney is entering a period of profound growth and transformation.

The opening of Western Sydney International Airport, major transport investment, rapid population and housing growth, and increasing climate and infrastructure pressures will shape the region for decades to come.

These changes create enormous opportunity, but they also require decisions to be made across council boundaries and government portfolios.

Regional coordination is therefore more important than ever. WSROC brings councils together to understand emerging challenges, establish shared priorities and work with government, industry and other partners to turn regional ambitions into practical outcomes.

2.9M → **~4M**

Population now and in 2046

1 in 10

Australians call Western Sydney home

475,000 → **755,000**

59% increase in Western Sydney jobs by 2046

$197.40B

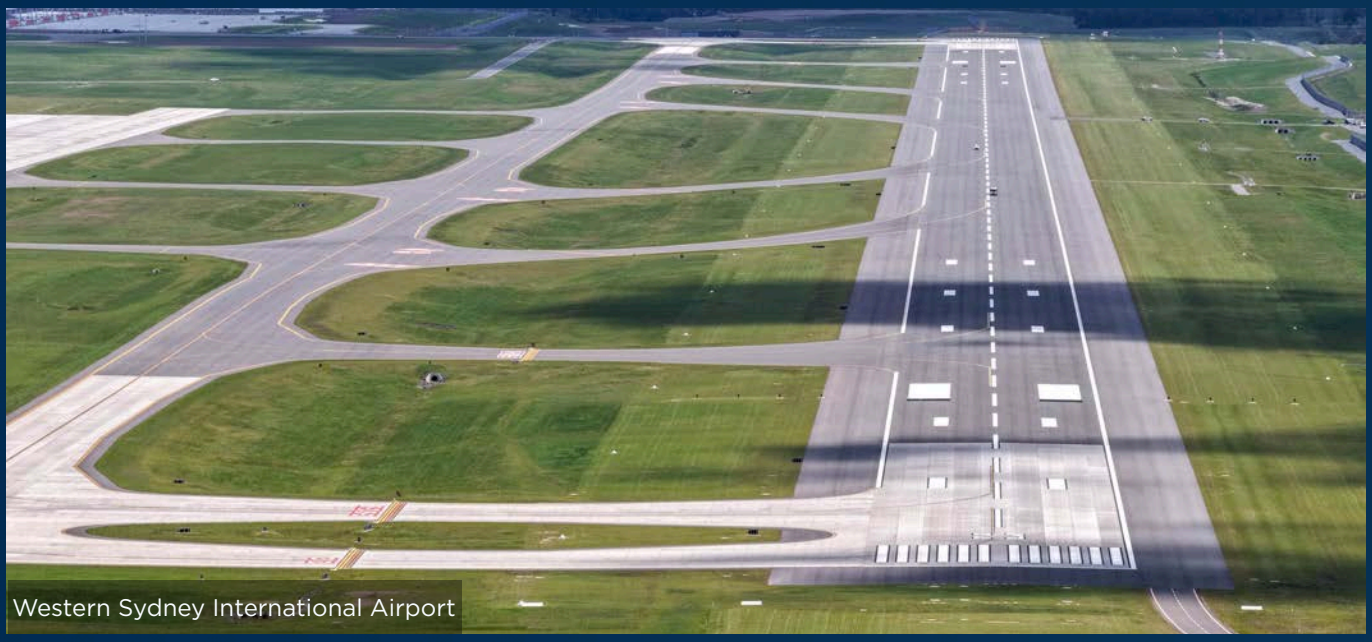
Gross regional product, 21% of NSW

673,958 → **~1.02M**

51% more domestic waste annually by 2046

29.1M

Domestic and international visitors to Western Sydney annually



Western Sydney International Airport

Advocacy, engagement and influence

A strong collective voice is central to WSROC's role. By bringing councils together around shared priorities, WSROC can build common positions, strengthen the evidence for change and take Western Sydney's priorities directly to decision-makers.

Throughout 2025-26, our advocacy focused on six interconnected regional priorities:

- council financial sustainability
- housing and planning
- transport and connectivity
- waste and the circular economy
- energy transition and net zero
- climate and heat resilience.

> *"...bringing councils together to solve the big problems."*
>
> Council survey respondent on the value of WSROC

Our approach combines policy development, direct advocacy and broad-based engagement. Regional submissions and research establish the evidence for change; direct engagement with Ministers, agencies and industry takes that case to decision-makers; and forums, workshops and communications build alignment across councils and partners.

50+	events
14+	representations directly to ministers
350+	forum participants
14	submissions
500,000+	campaign reach
20+	media inquiries
30+	media stories and releases



WSROC Litter Summit


WSROC President joins forces with other ROCs to discuss the need to accelerate waste action with the Planning and Environment ministers.

Council financial sustainability

Strong, financially sustainable councils are fundamental to Western Sydney's future. As the region grows, councils need funding models that enable them to plan with confidence, maintain infrastructure and continue delivering the services their communities rely on.

Throughout 2025–26, WSROC strengthened the regional case for reform, representing member councils through submissions, government engagement and the Federal Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Fiscal Sustainability.

Advocacy focused on fairer and more predictable funding, rate peg reform, reducing cost shifting and improving disaster recovery funding arrangements.

Alongside these longer-term reforms, WSROC advocated on immediate cost pressures affecting council budgets, including escalating Microsoft licensing costs, while continuing to pursue practical opportunities to reduce unnecessary financial burdens on councils.

This included a significant Red Fleet advocacy outcome, with responsibility for firefighting vehicles moving from councils to the NSW Rural Fire Service, reducing an inappropriate financial burden on local government.



Road damage, Megalong Valley Road

Our call for reform

- **STOP** cost shifting to councils
- **RETHINK** short-term grant funding
- **REFORM** the NSW rate peg
- **IMPROVE** disaster recovery funding
- **RESTORE** financial assistance grants to 1% of total Commonwealth tax revenue

> *"Bringing councils together to address, respond to, and advocate on shared issues. WSROC plays a key role in coordinating regional positions and driving collective responses."*
>
> Council representative
> WSROC Council Engagement Survey 2026

Housing and planning

Councils play a central role in managing growth across Western Sydney. WSROC coordinated a unified regional response to the NSW Government's Sydney Plan and its climate change and natural hazard planning reforms. WSROC hosted workshops with over 200 council representatives to align positions and inform regional submissions that ensure housing growth is matched with services and infrastructure.

WSROC helped shape planning policy reform across rental energy standards, waste infrastructure, and climate and natural hazard resilience, as well as building more affordable, resilient and liveable communities.

WSROC's efforts have led to a new Housing Taskforce for Western Sydney, delivered in partnership with Western Sydney University and Shelter NSW.

200+ council staff engaged in planning reform workshops

Submissions delivered on planning reforms and housing policy

Policy influence across housing and planning

Housing Taskforce between WSROC and WSU



Housing construction in Western Sydney


Western Sydney housing development encroaching on bushland

Transport and infrastructure

WSROC's targeted advocacy and engagement delivered results residents can feel directly, including the $60 weekly toll cap.

WSROC secured representation on the NSW Motorways Customer Reference Group and boosted major infrastructure priorities, including the North-South rail link, now recognised as a national priority project.

WSROC responded to emerging issues such as data centre development, and continued representation to ensure Western Sydney International Airport benefits are maximised and impacts minimised.

- NSW Motorways Customer Reference Group member
- Toll relief following WSROC's advocacy
- North-South rail link recognised as a national priority
- Coordinated positions on emerging infrastructure issues, including data centres.

> *Quick and speedy advocacy for larger, Western Sydney issues."*
>
> Council representative on WSROC's value



Richmond train services

Waste and circular economy

Waste services are essential to every household and a significant cost for councils, making regional collaboration particularly valuable.

WSROC's Western Sydney Regional Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy sets the shared direction for collaborative action; from FOGO implementation and smarter waste infrastructure planning to stronger litter prevention, lower clean-up costs, and less duplicated effort across the region.

Training, forums and advisory support have also lifted circular procurement, litter enforcement and program design across councils, making waste services more efficient while accelerating the shift to a circular economy.

> *"With litter costing Western Sydney ratepayers more than $31 million annually, forums like this are critical to aligning efforts and accelerating practical solutions that reduce waste and improve recovery outcomes."*
>
> Litter forum participant

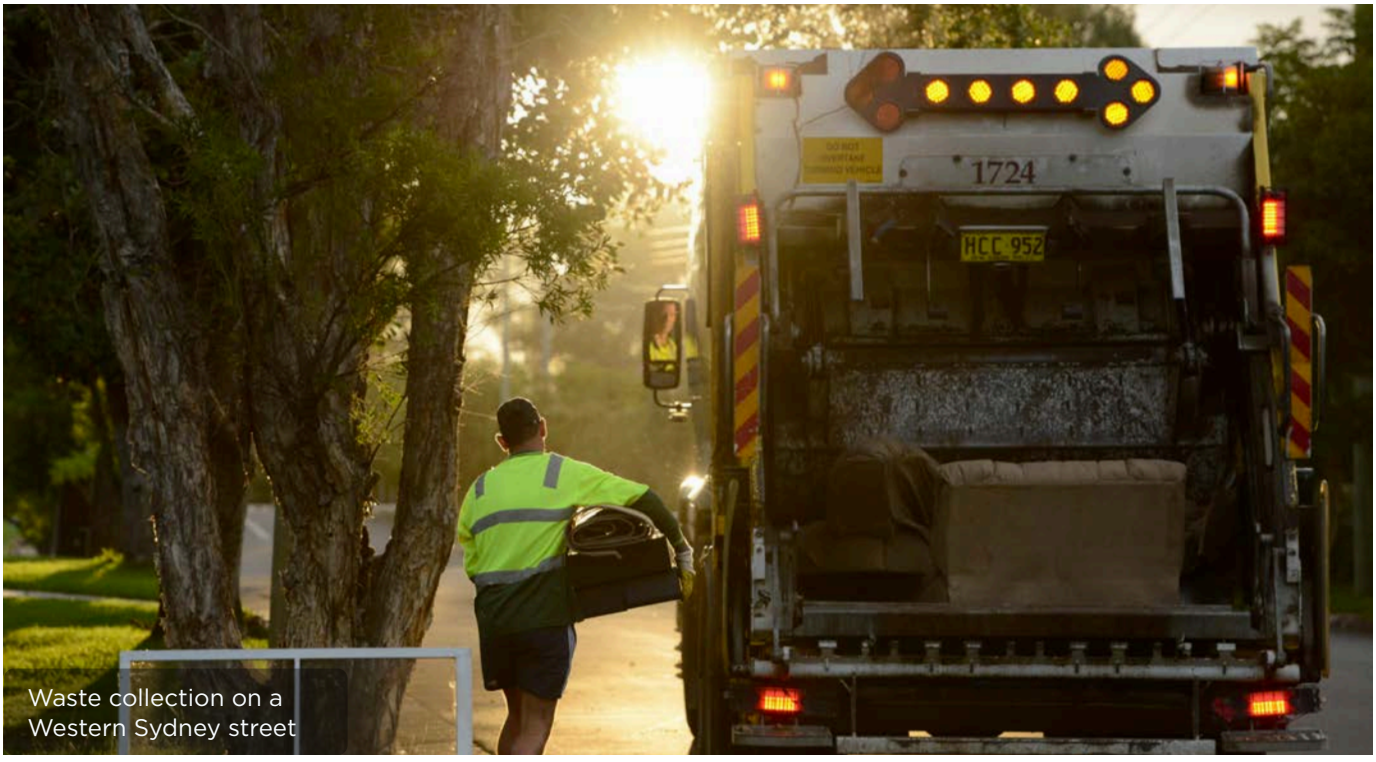
222,022 households
received a new FOGO waste service in 2025/26

176+ garbage trucks
further protected by the regional safe battery disposal campaign

55 businesses and government agencies
engaged on litter prevention

172 council staff trained
in litter prevention and circular procurement

2.44 million views
of waste and litter awareness campaigns



Waste collection on a Western Sydney street

Energy and net-zero transition

Energy is a significant and growing cost for councils. Through our Western Sydney Energy Program, WSROC supports councils to reduce costs, lower emissions and prepare for emerging energy and transport transitions.

Key initiatives this year included progress toward a regional solar and battery program for residents, as well as support for councils responding to electric vehicle uptake, climate risk, street lighting and planning and design challenges.

Regional collaboration through joint procurement and shared planning improved pricing, reduced risk and accelerated delivery of energy initiatives. WSROC also represents councils in regulatory processes, including the Endeavour Energy pricing review.

$143M+ cost savings
delivered to date*

487,090 tCO_2e,
emissions reduction**

8 councils
collaborating



Electric vehicle charging

Accumulated Energy Savings, Total Savings & Emissions Reduction



*Accumulated cost savings to date across the region
**Estimated over the life of the assets

Climate and heat resilience

Urban and extreme heat are among the most significant and growing risks facing Western Sydney, affecting health, infrastructure, liveability and productivity, and WSROC continues to lead regional action in response.

In partnership with Resilient Sydney, WSROC delivered the internationally recognised Greater Sydney Heat Smart City Plan, a five-year roadmap to support communities in a warming climate, and facilitates the Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce, bringing together government, industry, research and community partners to drive its implementation.

This work supports practical tools, pilot projects and policy development to embed heat resilience across urban planning and design, health and emergency management. This strengthens the evidence base for reform and growing recognition of heat as a key issue in NSW and national policy.

WSROC's heat resilience program demonstrates global leadership, including in the past year:

- UN roundtable on disaster risk reduction
- presentation at New York Climate Week
- partnership with Resilient Cities Catalyst (USA)
- hosting international delegations, including Tokyo and Singapore
- case study in UN Climate Programme

Impact snapshot

35 events
delivered, including workshops, forums and knowledge sharing events

500 professionals
engaged across government, industry, research and community organisations

60+ organisations
engaged to improve heat resilience across the city

3 awards
received, including for climate adaptation, planning and national resilience



Cooling a Western Sydney home and garden before a heatwave

How WSROC works: turning evidence into action

Heat resilience is a powerful example of how WSROC works: identifying emerging regional challenges, building the evidence for change, bringing the right partners together and turning shared priorities into practical action. A decade of sustained collaboration has helped move urban and extreme heat from an emerging issue to a recognised policy and implementation priority.

How WSROC drives change: the heat resilience story

	Identify	Inform	Equip	Influence	Embed
WSROC's role	Brought councils, government, researchers and industry together	Built awareness of urban and extreme heat as a growing risk	Developed evidence, tools, guidance and practical solutions	Influenced policy, planning and government responses	Supported collaboration, governance and implementation
2016 → 2026					
Impact	Urban and extreme heat recognised as a strategic policy issue	Heat considerations increasingly embedded in planning and policy frameworks	Research, evidence and practical tools adopted by government and industry	Heat incorporated into strategic, EM & disaster resilience planning	Collaborative governance established to drive coordinated regional action

A decade of leadership has helped move urban and extreme heat from an emerging issue into a recognised policy and implementation priority.



Heat Smart Forum: facilitating cross-organisational collaboration

Cumberland plain conservation

The Cumberland Plain and surrounding subregions are home to unique Australian ecosystems that have been shaped over thousands of years. Today, only around 10% of their original extent remains, with extensive clearing and fragmentation affecting native species, ecological health and connections to Country.

In partnership with the NSW Government, WSROC supported councils to navigate native vegetation compliance requirements through a 12-month Regional Compliance Support Pilot.

The program provided practical guidance, training and resources, helping councils build internal capability and improve consistency in managing Cumberland Plain vegetation. Regional coordination also created opportunities for councils to share experience and develop practical approaches to protecting this increasingly scarce ecosystem.

$1M+
grant funding delivered to councils

110,000+ reach
through awareness campaign

11+ events
delivered to support community education

400+ native plants
distributed to support biodiversity



A visit to one of Western Sydney's bushland areas

Caring for Country

Protecting and restoring Western Sydney's natural landscapes, including the Cumberland Plain Conservation Area, is important not only for biodiversity, but for the health, resilience and liveability of everyone who calls Western Sydney home. It also provides an opportunity to strengthen connection to Country and support the knowledge, culture and priorities of First Nations communities.

In partnership with the NSW Government, WSROC is delivering the Cumberland Plain Caring for Country Grants Program. This program supports councils to deliver biodiversity outcomes while strengthening cultural capability and connections with Traditional Custodians.

Projects delivered under the program include:

- habitat restoration
- cultural burning
- waterway health initiatives
- junior ranger programs
- development of Reconciliation Action Plans.

$1.1M+
grant funding
delivered to councils

9 councils
participating

40 staff engaged
through workshops and
on-country activities

professional development
including: recruitment of
First Nations staff, cultural
competency, and more.



Cultural burning draws on generations of First Nations knowledge to care for country

Skills, leadership and capability

A skilled and adaptable workforce is essential to meeting the growing demands on councils. WSROC supports councils to strengthen workforce capability and share knowledge through targeted training, professional development and regional learning opportunities.

This includes tailored programs that respond to emerging needs and build practical skills across areas such as leadership, governance, circular procurement, litter prevention, Caring for Country and biodiversity. One example is the Graduate Certificate in Business (Local Government), delivered in partnership with Western Sydney University, which supports professional development, succession planning and the pipeline of future council leaders.

By bringing councils together to learn, share experience and access specialist knowledge, WSROC helps strengthen capability across the region and support councils to respond to emerging challenges.

32
council staff
enrolled in WSU Graduate Certificate of Business

$288,000
professional development
subsidised for councils

946+
hours
of workforce capability and leadership training

13
councils
participated in training and workshops across programs









> *Thanks very much for supporting the training, I found it incredibly informative and helped me put procurement concepts into context in a way that I had struggled to understand prior to this"*
>
> Circular Procurement training participant

> *By co-developing Australia's first Graduate Certificate in Business (Local Government), we are successfully equipping the next generation of council staff … needed to serve our growing communities."*
>
> Dr Geoff Lee, Deputy VC, Western Sydney University



LOOKING AHEAD

Turning strategy into delivery

Western Sydney's remarkable growth presents an exciting opportunity to shape a region that works for everyone. In the years ahead, WSROC will continue to unite councils around a shared roadmap, driving collaborative planning and delivery across the region's most critical growth initiatives, from the new airport and transport networks to climate resilience and beyond.

Together, we are focused on turning strategy into delivery, creating real outcomes that improve liveability and resilience for the communities of Western Sydney.

We will continue to grow WSROC's role as a delivery partner for state and federal government, building on proof-of-concept models like the Heat Taskforce, Waste and Resource Recovery and Energy programs, and extending that to our other initiatives, including our Affordable Housing and Litter Taskforces.

Through our 2027-30 Strategic Plan we will continue to bring councils together around the issues that matter most.

PRIORITIES →

FY2027-30 Strategic Plan

- Transport & Connectivity
- Housing & Planning
- Waste & Circular Economy
- Heat & Climate Resilience
- Energy Transition & Net Zero
- Council Financial Sustainability

ROADMAP →

From shared challenge to collaboration

Councils identify shared challenges. WSROC brings councils together, builds the evidence and develops a practical regional response.

Recent examples:

- Heat Smart City Plan
- Regional Waste Strategy
- Western Sydney Energy Program
- Cumberland Plain Conservation Program

DELIVERY ✓

WSROC-led, council-owned

WSROC coordinates delivery across stakeholders. Councils shape the work and apply the outcomes locally. No single council carries the load alone.

Recent examples:

- Cool Suburbs NSW
- Litter prevention projects
- EV charging support program
- Caring for Country Council Grants
- Affordable housing taskforce
- Bus and active transport taskforce

WSROC

Advocating for the people of Western Sydney

Stronger together. Better together.

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