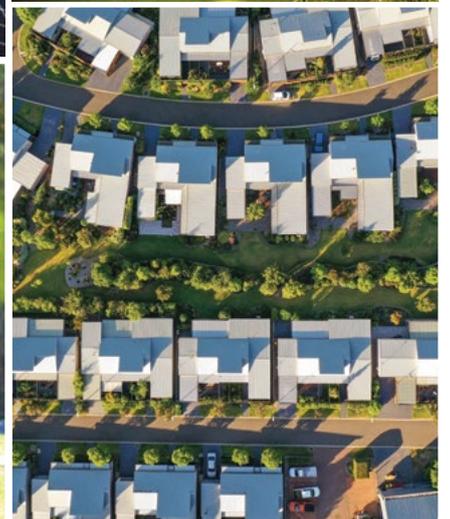




ANNUAL REPORT

WESTERN SYDNEY
REGIONAL
ORGANISATION OF
COUNCILS

2020/2021



FROM THE PRESIDENT



WSROC members know something about facing down natural disasters. Over the past two years, we have borne bushfires, extreme heat, and disastrous floods. Now, in the midst of the continuing pandemic, our communities' resilience is once again tested.

In the face of these challenges, our projects and partnerships have continued, with councils providing continuity and strength in the interests of the region. Councils have been at the forefront during the pandemic, striving to meet the needs of our communities, whose diversity defines the wonderful character that makes Western Sydney so distinctive.

Throughout the year, WSROC has been a force of strong advocacy and high-impact, collaborative projects with councils and stakeholders, focused on building regional liveability, sustainability and collective resilience.

Our engagement with state and federal Ministers has ensured our councils' priorities are at the fore in key policy-making arenas. WSROC project staff hosted more than 49 forums and made 11 submissions, purposefully and consistently advocating on the issues that matter most to our members.

WSROC's projects and partnerships are leading impactful regional change. In 2020/21, this included leading the development of urban heat planning controls in partnership

with industry leaders, providing input to the new Design and Place SEPP, engaging as advisory group members for National Construction Code reform, and presenting our world-leading work to a network of more than 17 global cities grappling with similar issues.

Our waste team's work was sought by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, to inform the NSW Waste & Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041. Their collaborative, strategic approach resulted in an invitation from Western Sydney University to be part of their presentation to the United Nations conference.

I commend the WSROC team for their fine work, often achieved without accolade. I also commend our councils, for their exceptional agility in navigating complex and uncertain dynamics, at this time. It is their commitment to safe service delivery that will help our region's cities and communities to emerge from tough times, with resilience and a renewed sense of possibility.

Councillor Barry Calvert

2020-2021 HIGHLIGHTS



WSROC Executive, (Senior Vice President Tony Bleasdale absent) with Craig Reucassel

Craig Reucassel at our AGM

Australian writer, journalist and activist Craig Reucassel, of ABC TV's War on Waste and Big Weather, addressed WSROC member councillors on the issues of waste, climate change and emergency preparedness at the Annual General Meeting.



WSROC Project Officer, Kelly Gee and Project Coordinator Judith Bruinsma, with Beck Dawson, Chief Resilience Officer Resilient Sydney

Greater Sydney Planning Awards

WSROC's Urban Heat Planning Toolkit and Cool Suburbs project won Best Sustainability Initiative at the Greater Sydney Commission's Greater Sydney Planning Awards.



City of Parramatta Lord Mayor Bob Dwyer, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Rob Stokes and Blacktown City Council Mayor Tony Bleasdale with NSW Parks staff and Walking Volunteers

Great West Walk wins

The NSW Government has committed to fund 26,000 new trees for Western Sydney's longest walking trail: A regional project facilitated by WSROC.



Bunnings partnership - Problem Waste? No Problem!

WSROC and nine Western Sydney councils partnered with Bunnings to promote responsible disposal and recycling of problem household waste, such as unused paint and batteries.

< Liverpool City Council Mayor Wendy Waller with Hoxton Park Bunnings Manager Dave Gray and staff



Joint bid with EV charging infrastructure providers to install fast-charging stations in Western Sydney.

ADVOCACY AND POLICY OUTCOMES

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

In 2020-2021, our work impacted:



Urban heat a priority in state planning: Urban heat is integrated into new state policy and planning documents.

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) review of Domestic Waste Management Charge: WSROC argues that councils' waste service charges are reasonable and transparent and that rate pegging is not appropriate for an essential service.

Thought leadership: Electric vehicle transition and promoting Western Sydney as a manufacturing hub.

Design and Place SEPP and Aerotropolis Planning Package: Ensuring new planning policy has strong minimum standards that support council service provision and ensure safe, liveable developments for communities.

NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041: WSROC waste research and reports, including infrastructure needs assessment and waste generation analysis, contributed to this blueprint for NSW waste management.

11 Submissions 

17 Letters to Ministers 

49 Forums 

FROM THE CEO

The NSW Government has continued to push ahead with its vision for Western Sydney over the past 12 months. This includes substantial change, not just in population growth, but operational changes to meet Net Zero 2050 targets, long-term waste strategies, planning reform and more.

WSROC's place is ensuring this vision aligns with the priorities identified by our members, and that councils are properly resourced to translate vision into real-world outcomes.

The NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 is one example of a vision that is very much dependent on local government to achieve its targets. WSROC has been advocating strongly to ensure councils are resourced to successfully manage the scale of change ahead, and that delivery plans are informed by the reality of service delivery.

Significant changes to planning systems have also been on the agenda. WSROC has been working to support councils through these changes. In 2021, WSROC's Urban Heat Planning Toolkit has assisted councils in meeting state requirements to address urban heat through their planning instruments.

WSROC has continued efforts to support council staff. While not always visible, regionally-managed programs for community education, policy and submission writing, as well as upskilling opportunities, have provided support at a time when staff have been contending with bushfires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the last 12 months have been trying, we must keep one eye on the future. An area where I see substantial opportunity is in digitisation of council systems and services.

A state-funded digital common operating environment would be a strategic first step in transforming the way councils do business. While transition has its challenges, the potential for increased operational efficiencies, customer service, and more informed decision-making are worth the effort.

We must also continue to hold the federal and state governments to account, in planning for our region. We all recognise the record investment in Western Sydney, however big-ticket projects like the Western Sydney Airport or North South Rail Links mean little if these plans don't place community at their heart.

Our transport vision must look beyond the aerotropolis and the Sydney CBD, to link in with suburban centres. Our infrastructure vision must look beyond international conference centres, to the community hubs, sports facilities, and parks that residents will use every day.

Our work, individually and collectively, is essential for a more liveable and prosperous Western Sydney.

Charles Casuscelli RFD



TURN DOWN THE HEAT

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

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



"Extreme heat impacts 100% of the Sydney population every summer. The way everyone builds and invests in our cities now will determine how safe and healthy we will be in the heatwaves to come. No one agency or organisation will cool the city alone."

– Beck Dawson, Chief Resilience Officer, Resilient Sydney

OUR PROJECTS

These projects are informed by the Turn Down the Heat Strategy and Action Plan (2018), developed by 55 organisations working together to create cooler, more resilient communities.

URBAN HEAT PLANNING TOOLKIT

A guide for councils on how strategic and urban planning can reduce heat. The Toolkit outlines science-based measures and highlights where state-level change is needed.

COOL SUBURBS

A design-support tool to reduce urban heat in new and existing developments using a 'cool rating'. Designed for use by both industry and government.

HEAT SMART WESTERN SYDNEY

Building resilience to extreme heat emergencies via a two-pronged approach:

- Enhancing policy and processes to support safety in extreme events.
- Building community awareness and preparedness for events.

CLIMATE RESILIENT STREET TREES

Over 30% of Sydney's street tree species are at risk from extreme heat and drought. This project tests the climate-risk and cooling benefits of tree species, with and without passive irrigation.



2020 - 2021 has been a stellar year for WSROC's heat projects

- Nearly \$1 million grant-funded projects underway
- Urban Heat Planning Toolkit and Cool Suburbs win Best Sustainability Initiative at the Greater Sydney Planning Awards
- Presented best practice work to International 100 Resilient Cities Network
- WSROC planning work used to inform NSW Design and Place SEPP
- WSROC a member of the National Construction Code Advisory Group for Commercial Buildings



A resilience approach to heat



The Urban Heat Planning Toolkit and Cool Suburbs have been assisted by the New South Wales Government and supported by Local Government NSW.

Heat Smart is funded under the State Government Natural Disaster Resilience Program.

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

We would also like to acknowledge the more than 85 stakeholders who have given their time and expertise to ensure these projects deliver the

best possible outcomes. We would specifically like to acknowledge the following collaborators to these projects: Atelier Ten, Blacktown City Council, Cville, Cumberland City Council, Edge Environment, Greater Sydney Commission, HARC consultancy, Hawkesbury City Council, Kinesis, Liverpool City Council, Melbourne University, Monash

University, City of Parramatta, Penrith City Council, Resilient Sydney, Risk Frontiers, Stormwater NSW, Sydney Water, University of NSW, University of Adelaide, Water Sensitive Institute, Western Sydney Local Health District, Western Sydney University.

WESTERN SYDNEY ENERGY PROGRAM

What we achieved

Regional cost savings:

\$20 million*

to date

Emissions reduction:

338,134t CO²e**

equivalent to taking 78,636 cars off the road

Grant funding for the region:

\$2.4 million

for current projects including LED replacement and solar rooftop installation



The Pizza Boys Business co-owners Jason and John Chammas, WSROC President Clr Barry Calvert and Business Australia Chief Commercial Officer, Tim Haddow

"Energy is one of those costs that you can't afford to get out of hand."

– Pizza Boys, local Western Sydney business

KEY PROJECTS



Business Energy Advice Program (BEAP)

- Assisted over 600 Western Sydney businesses with energy savings. BEAP is a free service, funded by the Department of Industry Science Energy and Resources and delivered by Business Australia



Street lighting

- 51,000+ Western Sydney residential streetlights changed and counting. New energy efficient LEDs save councils money and emissions
- Western Sydney street lighting program moves beyond residential roads for the first time. 3,372 major road lights will soon be upgraded to smart technology, efficient LED lights in Parramatta. This pilot project will save Council an additional 700 tonnes CO²e



Electric vehicle transition

- WSROC's Western Sydney EV Roadmap will ensure Western Sydney is at the forefront of transition to electrification
- Our joint bid with EV charging infrastructure providers will prioritise installation of fast-charging stations in Western Sydney



Planning and design

- Developed policy and equipment specifications that will maximise social, environmental, and financial outcomes, ensuring the best energy saving and transition outcomes for the region



Advocacy

- NSW Government collaboration:** Advocating for better fleet procurement options for councils and public charging infrastructure for Western Sydney
- Ministerial advocacy:** Minister for Energy and Environment and Minister for Planning and Public Spaces regarding the new Design and Place SEPP and BASIX review
- Collaboration with Endeavor Energy:** Outlining key regional issues for Western Sydney councils including street lighting, grid resilience and demand management
- WSROC is a member of:** Endeavour Energy Peak Customer & Stakeholder Committee, Future Grid Reference Group, and the Regulatory Reference Group
- Challenging policy:** Promoting best-practice renewable transition by challenging policy that penalises solar installations

REGIONAL WASTE STRATEGY

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

In partnership with councils, WSROC works closely with the NSW Environment Protection Authority, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and other state agencies.

The regional waste program targets strategic waste issues including:



Litter management and illegal dumping prevention



Regional resource recovery projects and community campaigns



Helping councils navigate industry changes and regulatory frameworks

"Many people want to dispose of DIY and hardware waste but don't know how. Community Recycling Centres are where to go to safely dispose of problem waste."

– Mayor of Liverpool City Council, Wendy Waller

2020-2021 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- **\$887,756** in grant funding for Western Sydney waste and resource recovery projects
- Contributed to development of the newly-released NSW Waste & Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041
- Partnered with Bunnings Warehouse to promote council Community Recycling Centres and tackle household problem waste
- Investigated onsite food waste processing options in apartment buildings
- Partnered with Western Sydney University on a competition for young artists, promoting waste avoidance

MOVING?

- Find your dream home
- Declutter
- Book a council clean up
- Click here for a complete checklist to help you move

Moving house campaign

- 700 real estate agents involved
- 1.6 million+ impressions
- 5,500 website hits
- 800+ checklist downloads

Digital campaign to promote responsible disposal of household waste when moving house.



Green Caffein swap-and-go cup program

- 36,000 single use cups avoided
- 45 local cafes
- > 1000 residents registered

Western Sydney cafes and coffee lovers saved thousands of takeaway cups from landfill over the 15 months of WSROC's Refill Don't Landfill swap-and-go program, in partnership with Green Caffein and seven councils.

Image: WSROC waste team, Guada Lado, Wendy Xing, Amanda Bombaci, Rey Behboudi



Waste planning training

- 3 training courses
- 22 metropolitan councils
- 75 council staff participants

Delivered online training for council planning and waste management staff to improve assessment of development applications. These modules have since been taken up by the NSW EPA.

Image: Waste planning training with Sydney metropolitan councils

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP: THE BOTTOM LINE

WSROC member councils benefit from collaborative procurement and projects that generate significant savings and regional improvement.



"Partnering both with WSROC and individual councils has resulted in clear benefits to our customers and to communities across Western Sydney. As we face the challenges and opportunities that both growth and climate change bring to Western Sydney, outcomes can only be achieved through a partnership model when all parties are committed to collaboration."

– Scott Ryan, Chief Asset & Operating Officer, Endeavour Energy



COST SAVINGS

\$18.9 million

saved regionally by members of the Western Sydney Energy Program to date

\$1.1 million

saved through WSROC-negotiated tariff and maintenance charges for sustainable energy projects to date

\$85,000

for community engagement, education and staff training on waste management and resource recovery

\$172,542

in tools to facilitate improved residential waste service delivery

\$6.6 million

total grant funding attracted to date to deliver current waste, energy and heat projects for Western Sydney councils

POWER IN PARTNERSHIP

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

- **Working with councils and Local Health Districts** to develop a resilience framework for better heatwave management
- **Ongoing collaboration with Resilient Sydney and Greater Sydney Commission** to tackle one of Western Sydney's most pressing challenges: heat
- Partnership project with **Western Sydney University** to trial passive irrigation
- Working with **Business Australia** to support local businesses
- Partnership with **Bunnings Warehouse** to promote council Community Recycling Centres
- Collaborated with the **Greater Sydney Commission and the NSW Environment Protection Authority** to include the assessment of waste infrastructure in the new Place Infrastructure Compact model



COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- **Reduced waste generation**
Reduced waste generated in homes to 7.2kg/household/week, down from 7.4kg in 2016
- **An additional 26,000 trees** from the NSW Government tree planting initiative, for the Great West Walk, facilitated by WSROC
- **Emissions reduction of 338,134t CO₂e*** regionally - equivalent to taking 78,636 cars off the road
- **Heatwave education and preparedness**
Development of community education materials to support communities in preparing for extreme heat

*Across the life of the assets



SUPPORTING COUNCILS

- **The Urban Heat Planning Toolkit**
Guides councils on strategic and urban planning to reduce heat, developed by WSROC
- **The Cool Suburbs Tool**
Provides a 'cool rating' for use in assessing building design and development, created by WSROC
- **The Food Waste Recovery Tool**
Maximises food waste recovery from red-lid bins in apartment buildings, developed by WSROC
- **Online facilitation training**
To assist council staff transition to online engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic, delivered by WSROC

WORKING FOR WESTERN SYDNEY

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

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



1,070,904
Local jobs

2,592,234
Population

35
Median age

8,872km²
Area

49%

of people speak a language other than English at home

\$150.42

billion GRP:
Australia's third largest economy

1.8%

of people are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent

309,500

resident workers commute outside the region

WORKING FOR WESTERN SYDNEY

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

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WSROC

Advocating for the people of Western Sydney



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Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC)

