

Resolution of Council

12 May 2025

Item 3.4

10 Years of Resilient Sydney

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

On 29 April 2025, I was proud to launch the second Resilient Sydney Strategy 2025-2030 on behalf of the 33 Councils in Greater Sydney, alongside the Hon. Janelle Saffin, NSW Minister for Recovery, Mal Lanyon, CEO of the NSW Reconstruction Authority and Melinda Dewsnap, Acting Chief Resilience Officer.

Since 2020, Greater Sydney has endured 12 declared disasters including bushfires, storms and floods. We have gone through heatwaves, infrastructure and network failures, as well as the pandemic. All have affected the security and wellbeing of communities, and all have cost our economy billions of dollars.

Now more than ever it is important that through Resilient Sydney, councils across Greater Sydney work together to build resilience and prepare our communities for the shocks and stresses expected this decade.

More than 10 years of work on resilience

Increasing resilience in a meaningful way in Sydney was not something that any one council could do alone, it requires a whole-of-city approach.

In December 2014, the City of Sydney won a place in the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities initiative and in 2015 began hosting the Resilient Sydney program and set about establishing the network of councils across Greater Sydney.

The first Resilient Sydney Strategy was released in 2018. The city-wide strategy was developed through research and collaboration across Sydney. The process involved all 33 Greater Sydney Councils in consultation with over 1,000 residents and 100 businesses, departments and agencies from the NSW Government, and community organisations.

Our Chief Executive Officer, Monica Barone PSM, has also chaired Resilient Sydney Steering Committee with representatives from Local and State Government, business and the community sector, since its inception in 2015.

Achievements

The first Resilient Sydney Strategy served us well, as we lived through all 8 of the shocks and stressors in that plan, including a global pandemic. We learnt to work beyond our boundaries and truly collaborate.

The first big shock to test our collaboration was the Covid-19 pandemic. The Resilient Sydney Office was able to quickly draw on the established network of councils to develop and share practical resources (including templates and examples of emergency management pandemic sub-plans, business continuity plans, draft communications to employees and communities and recovery plans), share knowledge and expertise, collect data on impacts and coordinate on advocacy to the NSW Government.

The 2018 strategy, which I launched in July 2018, cemented the partnership between all 33 councils in Greater Sydney and guided the work to manage economic, social and environmental disasters and disruptions and to help our communities get through them.

Since then, including the City of Sydney:

- 21 councils have set net zero emissions targets
- 19 councils have developed local resilience plans
- 25 councils have signed a landmark \$180 million renewable energy supply agreement, resulting in 83% of our combined energy coming from renewable sources. This has reduced annual emissions by more than 187,000 tonnes – the equivalent of taking about 40,000 cars off the road every year
- 29 councils in the Ausgrid distribution area have converted their streetlights to LED resulting in a combined 69% of energy savings, compared with the peak of 2008, and cost savings of almost \$15 million a year
- 14 councils have affordable housing contribution schemes or are in the process of having them approved. The City led the way, with our strategic planning team sharing resources and knowledge to help other councils to develop their own schemes
- 16 councils have urban forest plans to increase the urban canopy and help keep our cities cool as our climate gets hotter.

In December 2024, Greater Sydney councils along with regional organisations of councils and Resilient Sydney signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the NSW Environment Protection Authority which established the Waste Leadership Forum to prioritise waste and recovery efforts to mitigate our urgent waste crisis.

Resilient Sydney is also part of the Greater Sydney Heat Taskforce which has developed the Greater Sydney Heat Smart City Plan to protect communities from our deadliest natural hazard – extreme heat.

Diversity equity and inclusion

Resilience goes beyond environmental challenges—it starts with strong, connected communities. In diverse Greater Sydney, councils are fostering social cohesion amid rising intolerance and inequity. Events like Neighbour Day, Youth Week, Seniors Week, and Harmony Week help build local connections. The City remains committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, reflected in initiatives like our second Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2025-2028 and sixth Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2025–2029, now before Council.

Resilient Sydney Strategy 2025 to 2030

The Resilient Sydney Strategy 2025-2030 ('the Strategy') builds on the achievements of the first strategy and responds to current challenges. It is an evidence-based framework for collective action that will increase the resilience of our communities to adapt, survive and thrive.

It identifies the top 15 shocks and 15 stresses most likely to impact our city, which include heatwaves, flooding, infrastructure failures, issues related to mental health and wellbeing, and access to affordable housing, health services and transport.

The Strategy draws on input from over 2,000 people and 200 organisations, including 10 community workshops, a survey with more than 1,500 responses, and targeted engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, young people and multicultural communities.

It recognises that each council faces unique challenges—Western Sydney is more vulnerable to heatwaves, the northwest to flooding. Across Sydney, communities want better connection and preparedness, as resilient communities recover faster from disasters.

This new critical 5-year Strategy focuses on greening and cooling communities, protecting nature, tackling the waste crisis, and driving the shift to a net zero economy. It also calls for climate-ready infrastructure to reduce disaster impacts. Sydney is one of only 3 cities globally to be this advanced on its resilience roadmap.

Funded through the joint Australian and NSW Government Disaster Risk Reduction Partnership, the Strategy outlines 30 actions across 5 key areas: caring for the environment, building equitable and resilient communities, strengthening social connections, improving disaster preparedness, and fostering trusted, coordinated governance.

Disasters, disruptions and chronic stresses know no boundaries, which is why this collaboration has been so effective. It is a proven network that enables us to act quickly, together. It is essential we keep it that way. Not only are we stronger together, but we are smarter together.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor

Moved by the Chair (the Lord Mayor), seconded by Councillor Worling –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council:

- (i) note the collective achievements over the past 10 years of the 33 councils of Greater Sydney that make up Resilient Sydney, a member of the global Resilient Cities Network; and
- (ii) congratulate the Resilient Sydney Office led by Chief Resilience Officer Beck Dawson and Acting Chief Resilience Officer Melinda Dewsnap and the Resilient Sydney Steering Committee led by Chair Monica Barone PSM on their achievements over the past 10 years and the development and successful launch of the new Resilient Sydney Strategy 2025-2030; and

(B) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the Resilient Sydney Steering Committee and Mayors of the 33 member councils congratulating them on their achievements over the past 10 years, and the development and successful launch of the Resilient Sydney Strategy 2025-2030.

Carried unanimously.

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