

Public Exhibition - Draft City of Sydney Resilience Strategy 2023-2028

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Summary

This report recommends that Council endorse the Draft Resilience Strategy (the Strategy) to be placed on public exhibition for six weeks for community comment. The Strategy sets the community resilience directions and actions for the City of Sydney local area.

This new Strategy outlines the City's commitment to strengthening community resilience by working in partnership with residents, business, and other levels of government to build a connected, prepared and resilient city. The Strategy describes our current and emerging challenges, and opportunities for action across five directions:

Direction 1: An equitable, inclusive, and connected community

Direction 2: A climate resilient city

Direction 3: Places, buildings, and infrastructure for resilience

Direction 4: A robust local economy

Direction 5: A prepared community.

This report recommends that Council endorse the Draft Resilience Strategy for public exhibition. Following the exhibition period, all public comments will be considered, and the Strategy will be presented to Council, with any required changes, for adoption.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve for public exhibition the draft Resilience Strategy 2023-2028 (the Strategy), as shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) Council note that the Resilience Strategy including any recommended changes, will be reported to Council for adoption following the exhibition period; and
- (C) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to undertake minor editorial amendments for clarity or correction of drafting errors prior to the exhibition of the draft Resilience Strategy.

Attachments

Attachment A. Draft Resilience Strategy 2023-2028

Attachment B. Draft Resilience Strategy Engagement Report

Background

1. In 2018, Resilient Sydney collaborated with all 33 greater Sydney councils to deliver and implement a metropolitan-wide Resilient Sydney Strategy. The Resilient Sydney Strategy provides the framework and guidance for individual councils to develop a strategy specific to their local area.
2. The City has developed a draft Resilience Strategy as a member council of Resilient Sydney network to contribute to local and metropolitan scale resilience. This is increasingly important in the context of ongoing and emerging shock events and disasters including severe storms, flooding, heatwaves, fires and pandemics.
3. 17 metropolitan Sydney councils have developed or are developing resilience strategies for their local area, including:
 - (a) Bayside Council
 - (b) Blue Mountains Council
 - (c) Burwood Council
 - (d) Campbelltown City Council
 - (e) City of Canada Bay Council
 - (f) City of Canterbury Bankstown
 - (g) City of Ryde
 - (h) Georges River Council
 - (i) Hawkesbury Council
 - (j) Lane Cove Council
 - (k) Northern Beaches Council
 - (l) Penrith City Council
 - (m) Mosman Council
 - (n) Strathfield Council
 - (o) Willoughby City Council
 - (p) Liverpool City Council.
4. The draft City of Sydney Resilience Strategy has been developed over the last 12 months. It localises the work of the metropolitan-wide Resilient Sydney Strategy and identifies ways the City can build on its existing activities to strengthen the resilience of our community to shocks and stresses. The project team has engaged widely with staff across the organisation.
5. Targeted community consultation was undertaken with priority communities during strategy development. A broader engagement campaign will occur during the public exhibition of the draft Strategy.

Resilience Strategy 2023-2028

6. Resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, business and systems within a city to survive no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience. It involves the social, economic and environmental systems that support urban areas, including physical infrastructure and places.
7. We are experiencing increasing shocks and stresses arising from climate change, geopolitical events and economic shifts. The impact that a shock has on a place depends upon the underlying stresses. For example, the shock of the Covid-19 pandemic exposed existing inequities and amplified chronic stresses affecting our communities such as housing affordability, social cohesion and food insecurity.
8. The City plays a major role in strengthening community resilience by providing infrastructure, programs and services to support local communities. We are already undertaking activities to support community resilience. The Strategy identifies ways in which the City can build on this existing work to further strengthen the community's ability to cope with shocks and stresses.
9. The Strategy provides a comprehensive explanation of the current and emerging shocks, stresses and resilience challenges our city and communities face, what we are currently doing to address these, and includes 15 Strategy Actions that respond to these challenges which are underpinned by an internal Action Plan.
10. The Strategy outlines five directions and 15 supporting actions:
 - (a) Direction 1 - An equitable, inclusive, and connected community
 - (i) Action 1: Advocate for safe, healthy, appropriate, climate-proofed crisis, social, affordable and rental housing.
 - (ii) Action 2: Monitor community wellbeing and equality to inform decision making about resilience initiatives.
 - (iii) Action 3: Improve food security and equitable access to food.
 - (iv) Action 4: Increase social connectedness within and between communities to strengthen their capacity to recover.
 - (b) Direction 2 - A climate resilient city
 - (i) Action 5: Support our community to cope with increased heat and drought.
 - (ii) Action 6: Update flood and sea level rise planning to prepare the city for predicted climate impacts.
 - (iii) Action 7: Improve the City's ability to understand and manage climate risks and equity implications.
 - (c) Direction 3 - Places buildings and infrastructure for resilience
 - (i) Action 8: Embed resilience principles in asset management.
 - (ii) Action 9: Collaborate with government and councils for accessible waste and recycling facilities with reserve capacity.

- (d) Direction 4 - A robust local economy
 - (i) Action 10: Analyse and communicate changes in the economy to help businesses and communities to adapt to changing conditions.
 - (ii) Action 11: Promote economic diversity and inclusion to strengthen the innovation economy and the skills needed for a resilient future.
- (e) Direction 5 - A prepared community
 - (i) Action 12: Develop disaster preparedness and climate adaptation initiatives with priority communities who require additional support .
 - (ii) Action 13: Enhance community facilities to assist priority communities who require additional support during shock events.
 - (iii) Action 14: Support businesses to become more resilient and to contribute to community resilience.
 - (iv) Action 15: Strengthen the City's emergency communications channels, ensuring they are accessible to diverse communities.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

11. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This plan is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 1 - Responsible governance and stewardship - the Strategy ensures that the City continues to be an active contributor to metropolitan governance as a member council of the Resilient Sydney network by contributing to local and metropolitan scale resilience.
 - (b) Direction 2 - A leading environmental performer - the Strategy addresses how we are adapting to a changing climate by understanding risks and creating equitable solutions.
 - (c) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - the Strategy describes how will collaborate with partners and community to increase equity and create connected communities that are more resilient to shocks and stresses.
 - (d) Direction 7 - Resilient and diverse communities - the Strategy describes how we will work with communities and government to prepare organisations, services, infrastructure and people to respond to and recover from shock events.
 - (e) Direction 9 - A transformed and innovative economy - the strategy describes how we will improve community economic resilience through diversity, inclusivity and revitalising of our city.

Organisational Impact

12. In developing the Strategy, significant consultation was undertaken with City staff across all divisions and many business units.
13. Strategy actions build on the work we are already doing to strengthen resilience and have been developed and agreed in partnership with relevant City staff.
14. Many aspects of the Strategy can commence implementation in the 2023/24 financial year with existing resources, and the need for further resources to deliver on the Strategy over subsequent years will be considered in future year's budget and business planning.

Risks

15. The successful implementation of the Strategy is subject to risks arising outside the City's control, including:
 - (a) Inadequate state and federal policy and legislative frameworks to manage resilience challenges that exceed the City's regulatory remit.
 - (b) Lack of partner funding from other levels of government to support community resilience initiatives.
 - (c) Unwillingness of residents, government and business community to collaborate on the delivery of Strategy actions.

Social / Cultural / Community

16. The Strategy addresses our key social resilience challenges including inequality in Sydney, homelessness, community safety, housing, increasing food insecurity, social cohesion, loneliness and isolation, and digital literacy and inclusion.
17. The Strategy addresses our key cultural challenges including the role of community facilities in providing enhanced services to support the community as trusted places to access resources, programs and training, and develop relationships - increasing community connection.
18. Cultural and community challenges and opportunities expressed by priority communities during consultation activities have been included in the Strategy. Priority communities include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people with disability, and culturally diverse communities.

Environmental

19. The Strategy acknowledges that the community is already feeling the impacts from climate change, particularly priority communities who are more adversely affected than others. We need to plan and adapt to the changing nature of climate risk. Protecting our communities will require greater investment in resilience, adaptation and mitigation planning.
20. The Strategy outlines our key climate related resilience challenges and opportunities for action including understanding climate risk, adapting to heat, drought, bushfire impacts, storms and flooding, sea level rise, and equity in our climate response.

Economic

21. Economic recovery, lack of economic diversification, skills and labour shortage, supply chain disruption, and innovation and creativity in the economy have been identified as key challenges under the Strategy.

Financial Implications

22. Many aspects of the Strategy can commence implementation in the 2023/24 financial year with existing budget and resources. The need for budget and resources to deliver on the Strategy over subsequent years will be considered in future iterations of the operating budget and business planning and incorporated into the City's approved Long Term Financial Plan which is subject to Council approval.
23. The City plans to identify funding opportunities for some actions through grant programs available from state and federal governments, and international networks e.g., C40.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

Commencement of public exhibition period of six weeks	July 2023
Conclusion of public exhibition	August 2023
Final Strategy submitted to Council for endorsement	November 2023

Options

24. Urgent action to strengthen community resilience is needed and not proceeding with the Strategy would impact the City's ability to deliver against our commitments as a member council of the metropolitan Resilient Sydney Network, and our community's resilience to increasing shocks and stresses.

Public Consultation

25. From 8 March to 21 April 2023, we asked the community to share their experiences with emergency situations, their ideas on how our communities can be more prepared for emergencies and their thoughts on what will help our communities cope with the impact of shocks and stresses.
26. The consultation focused on understanding community concerns, interests, and diverse perspectives on resilience challenges and inequities. We asked about four key topic areas: safe places in our community, the impacts of climate change, food security, and communication.

27. Feedback was gathered through conversations with community members at pop-ups in Redfern, Glebe, Woolloomooloo, and Green Square, as well as social housing meetings. A hard copy survey was distributed at those events and through community centres, customer services centres and library branches. An online survey and social pinpoint tool to map places of safety were available on our website. We ran a workshop with international students to capture a youth voice.
28. The Strategy engagement report summarises the feedback received during the consultation.
29. Targeted consultation has also been undertaken with priority communities through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel, Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel, and Multicultural Advisory Panel.
30. Following endorsement by Council, the draft Strategy will be placed on public exhibition for six weeks.
31. Public exhibition will be undertaken through the Sydney Your Say web page and advertised via the City's communication channels.

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